

3 Things to Do Immediately After an Argument at Work

Many of us would rather *not* engage in conflict, argument or debate. We work hard to minimize interpersonal tension, avoid disagreements, and even stay quiet in the face of differences of opinion or perspective. This can be a mistake. We should be disagreeing *more* at work, not less. Benefits include: positive creative friction that leads to better work outcomes; opportunities to learn and grow; higher job satisfaction; a more inclusive work environment; and even improved relationships.

These benefits come with a condition, though: that you engage in healthy disagreement and productive conflict. When, we can't or don't express our emotions, like feeling aggravated, disappointed, or even helpless, we are more likely to act out after.

You can go from placid and serene to explosive and combative in the blink of an eye. This can quickly undermine the trust you've built with others, and make you seem unpredictable and erratic. If and when that happens, you have some personal work to do, so that you can identify, manage and express your emotions in a healthier way next time. You also have some relationship repair to engage in if you want to prevent a similar scenario from repeating itself.

Here are three things to do after you have a big blow up at work:

1. Make a reparation.

Offer a genuine apology for your tone of voice and the content of your message, especially if it may be perceived as aggressive, rude, defensive, critical or condescending. Blaming the other person for your inability to behave professionally is an unprofessional move.

2. Express appreciation.

Chances are, there's something to be grateful for, even when you're feeling bad about what happened. A little gratitude will go a long way.

3. Offer an invitation.

Just because the argument might be over doesn't mean that the relationship will immediately bounce back. And just because you may have moved past it doesn't mean the other person has.

Offer a genuine invitation to continue the discussion and hear their perspective -- whether it's about the content, or the impact that your behavior had. You could start by telling the other person how much you value your working relationship.