

Just one more thing

By Bonnie Wooding

I have been following a thread on one of the forums I belong to, entitled "what is your least favourite task?" For Admins, filing is still considered the number one "yuck", closely followed by kitchen duties (*nobody ever wants to wash someone else's dishes*).

My least favourite is the request for "just one more thing". I am up to my "elbows in alligators" and someone always comes along with that final straw. This is the one that makes me grit my teeth, bite my tongue and keep the letter opener locked up.

It's funny what triggers our ire – usually it is something trivial that in itself is not important. And sometimes these triggers are not really very rational. For me then, the important thing becomes figuring out WHY – why did this request upset me? Do I find it demeaning? Or am I not quite confident of my ability to do it? Is my professionalism or integrity being challenged? Am I experiencing a physical reaction (allergies?).

I have discovered that by finding my "why", I am able to recognize the tools I need – extra help (*is it time to hire?*), more training (*and confidence*), talk it out (*is this really my responsibility?*), or take more drugs (*for the allergies, of course*).

I can recall more than a few days of muttering to myself, slamming drawers and growling at the world. My stomach churned, my head hurt and by the end of the day I was ready for a good cry. And for what? Is it really, really worth all that emotion?

Now I take a deep breath (or two or three), count my blessings (*I like my job, I earn enough, my understanding partner*) and then I smile. A little humour can go a long way. I have found it is impossible to grind your teeth when you are laughing. If I am calm, I can ACT instead of REACT. I can offer solutions instead of attitude:

"I have a deadline – can this wait until after then?"

"If this is really urgent, perhaps I can ask someone else to help?"

So much safer than the letter opener ...

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