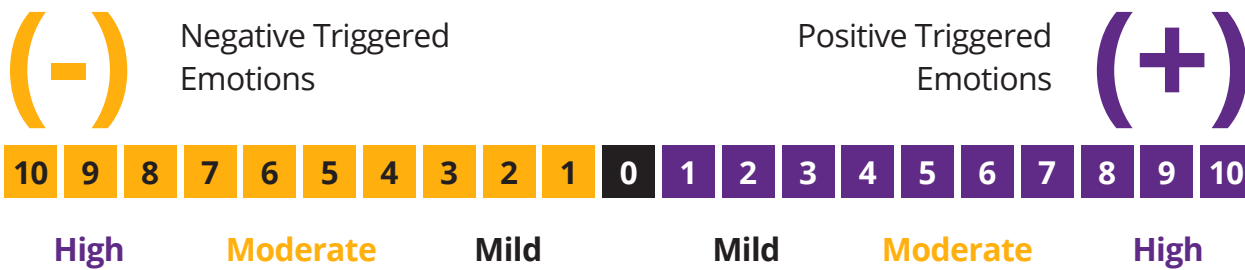


# STEP 1: IDENTIFY YOUR COMMON HOT BUTTONS

**Directions:** Below is a list of some of the difficult workplace situations people have shared with me over the years. As you read each one, consider how much of an emotional reaction you would most likely have in that situation. Use the following -10 to +10 scale to rate each item.



## A When someone (colleague, direct report, supervisor, client, etc.):

- Doesn't do what you ask or follow your instructions
- Doesn't acknowledge or respect your leadership
- Takes over as you are leading a meeting or making a presentation
- Doesn't follow through on what they said they would do
- Produces low-quality work
- Keeps making the same mistakes
- Is not very competent at their job
- Takes advantage of you
- Takes your idea and presents it as their own
- Takes credit for your work
- Keeps you out of the loop or excludes you from important conversations

- Lies to you
- Engages in side conversations during meetings
- Is on their computer or cell phone during meetings when you are talking to them
- Gets distracted when they are talking to you
- Goes behind your back to undermine you
- Gossips about you
- Gets angry about what you said or did
- Is moving too slowly, slowing down your agenda
- Tries to derail the planned approach or agenda
- Is late and keeps you waiting
- Interrupts you or others
- Ignores your ideas
- Cuts off the conversation before you have a chance to express your thoughts
- Loves an idea only after someone else suggests something very similar to what you had recently said
- Dismisses your ideas
- Rephrases or rewords your comments
- "Corrects" you in public
- Is belittling or demeaning
- Is controlling
- Dominates the air time
- Continually brings the conversation back to their ideas and opinions
- Will not consider your input and thoughts

- Keeps pushing their point
- Is unwilling to listen to others
- Has a very blunt or impersonal style
- Has an aggressive or forceful style
- Disrupts the conversation with “jokes,” inappropriate laughter
- Makes snide, sarcastic, or passive aggressive comments
- Is arrogant or self-righteous
- Is patronizing or condescending
- Makes an insensitive or offensive comment
- Raises their voice to try to silence you or others
- Demonstrates bullying or threatening behavior
- Wants others to calm down, just “get over it,” and move on
- Accuses others of complaining when they raise concerns about exclusion or what is not working well
- Only focuses on how much progress has been made, rather than on how much more needs to change
- Shuts down and withdraws if you try to confront them
- Is “set in their ways” and unwilling to shift their perspective
- Pressures you or others to assimilate, fit in, and “not rock the boat”
- Mistakenly assumes someone else is the leader when you are
- Gives excuses or PLEs (Perfectly Logical Explanations) for disrespectful comments and behaviors
- Rationalizes away disrespectful and inappropriate treatment of others as individual incidents or the result of something the target of the behavior did or failed to do
- Defends others whose behavior is disrespectful and offensive

- Colludes and “goes along to get along”
- Will only focus on their “good intent,” and not the impact of their behavior
- Is only focused on themselves as a “good person” and refuses to acknowledge the cumulative impact of their repeated negative behaviors
- Refuses to consider feedback from you or others
- Debates and disagrees with everything you say
- Believes they are always right
- Pouts if they don’t get their way
- Challenges the validity of the information or statistics being presented
- Criticizes your style or approach
- Never gives any positive or appreciative feedback
- Questions your competency or that of others
- Gives unsolicited coaching or advice on how you should act, think, or feel
- Only appreciates and acknowledges other people’s work, not yours
- Is given a prime opportunity to advance but you are not, even though you have far more experience and competence
- Doesn’t volunteer for difficult team assignments and you end up doing all the work
- Does something unethical or dishonest
- Is talking loudly in an impromptu meeting outside your office or cubicle
- Introduces your peers with their titles or degrees, and introduces you by your first name
- Sends you a blasting, critical email and copies your supervisor
- Is more concerned with protecting their “turf” than achieving the overall goals

## **B** When your supervisor or manager:

- Insists on you doing something a certain way, then changes their mind after you have invested significant time and energy in the project
- Micromanages and second-guesses you
- Is controlling rather than inspiring and empowering
- Expects that you stop what you are doing and focus on what they want you to do
- Doesn't ask for your input in decisions that affect your work
- Doesn't give you as much guidance and direction as you ask for, and then is highly critical of the outcome you produced
- Expresses their disappointment in you, your work
- Gives you very vague, critical feedback
- Is more ego-driven than mission-driven
- Wastes your time in mismanaged meetings
- Doesn't pass along critical information from senior leaders
- Avoids holding all employees accountable for high-quality work
- Has favorites and "go to" members of the team
- Avoids making the hard decisions and makes you play the "bad cop"
- Does not hold people accountable for low quality work, poor performance
- Accuses you of something you did not do
- Gets defensive and argumentative
- Confronts you about your behavior but not others who do the same thing
- Expects you to work late and come in early for no additional compensation

- Is angry with you
- Is only concerned with “moving up the ladder” and “looking good” to the leader
- Gives you a challenging “stretch” assignment (something “positive” can still be triggering)

### **C** When you

- Make a mistake or an error
- Do or say something inappropriate or offensive
- Do not know the answer to a question
- Don't know what to say or do next
- Don't have a solution to a problem
- Can't figure out how to effectively respond in a difficult situation
- Believe the conversation is about to “get out of control”
- Are the only person to bring up controversial issues
- Have a strong opinion and no one else agrees with you
- Get promoted to an exciting new position (something “positive” can still be triggering)