

VERBAL VOMIT #0418

1) We have all been exposed to situations in which people verbally express their anger. While it is never acceptable to verbally attack someone, it happens every day.



2) Many times the anger comes out “sideways”. This means that the source of a person’s anger comes from somewhere other than the situation where the anger is being released.



3) For example, let’s say you come to work one day and before you can even start the day, a co-worker verbally attacks you for doing something. You stand there in disbelief because you don’t have any idea what is happening.



4) A very common reaction is to send your anger back to them because you don’t like being verbally abused.



5) It is never acceptable to verbally abuse anyone—even if you are the one defending rather than attacking. We must speak to each other with a calm tone, average volume, and even tempo.



6) We must also choose our words carefully and engage in the communication process without frustration or anger.



7) If you are not able to speak to someone calmly, then it is recommended that you remove yourself from the situation until you can do so.



8) Maybe try counting to ten. And, depending on the severity of the situation, it might take counting to one hundred to regain your composure.



9) There will be times when the tea-pot inside of each of us blows off steam – whether we want it to or not. While we know that it is unacceptable, we also know that it will happen.



10) When a person vents, they are releasing verbal energy. This can be referred to as “verbally vomiting.” Verbally vomiting is similar to physically vomiting.



11) When a person is physically sick with the flu, that person may need to vomit. It is messy, it's embarrassing, and it stinks! Yet, we recognize that the person is sick and will soon regain their health. We do not reject that person because they got momentarily sick. We step aside so we don't get messy.



12) The same is true of verbally vomiting. The person sending the message with anger or frustration is venting. It is not about us personally, it's merely a moment of temporary illness.



13) If you see the verbal vomit coming from someone's mouth, step inside an imaginary Plexiglas cocoon for protection.



14) If the vomit is really strong, get out a hose and turn on the windshield wipers to wash the vomit away.



15) Don't break eye contact with the person vomiting. To break eye contact or to walk away would only add to the illness.



16) Once the person has finished venting and it's safe for you to come out from the Plexiglas cocoon, reach out to the person with kind words. You might say something like, "What would you like to do next?" Or "Can someone else help us with this problem?"



17) Never vomit back at them. This only makes for two sick people and a really big mess.



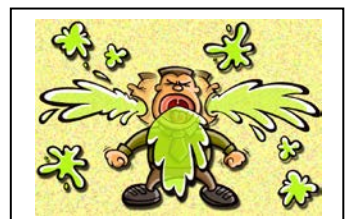
18) Learning the skill of stepping into the Verbal Vomit Cocoon is not easy. It will take practice. At first, you might not be fast enough in jumping into the cocoon and you might get "hooked" with the anger.



19) It might be a natural reaction to fight back to "protect" yourself. What you will soon learn is that if you truly want to protect yourself, you do not need to vomit back. The only thing you have to do is jump into your cocoon.



20) There may be people who verbally vomit all the time. That person will need to get help because they are obviously very sick.



21) It is difficult to determine if someone is just a little sick or if someone is "really" sick. While we will excuse temporary illness, we will not tolerate bad mental health.



22) If you just finished venting or vomiting, you need to recognize the mess that you created and begin cleaning it up.



23) You should accept your mistake and apologize for it. But don't get too upset at yourself. We all make temporary judgment mistakes.



24) However, in the future, if you think you're about ready to vent or vomit – run for the bathroom or outside, but don't vent in public.



25) It is never acceptable to verbally vomit and we do not expect you to accept anyone's vomit. If someone is sick, we need to know about it.



26) This is true for anyone – customers, suppliers, temporary employees, bosses, co-workers, anyone! No one, not your spouse, children, or parents, have the right to verbally abuse you. This is just as unacceptable as physical abuse.



27) If you feel that someone is verbally abusing you, you will need to check it out. You must set your boundaries with people and tell them when you find their communication style (which includes their tone, tempo, volume, body language, timing, and place) to be unacceptable.



28) Many times, we collect all the "bad" incidents and just accept it. Our society views this "taking it" as a good thing. How many times have we heard the expression, "Turn the other cheek?"



29) It is not a good thing when the collection becomes so burdensome that you no longer can contain it all. The result is venting or verbally vomiting.



30) You must take control of your role in the communication process and let people know when you feel awkward. No one can read your mind so if you don't feel good about something, tell the person to stop.



31) You can also take a time out. If you decide to take a time out, agree to talk at another time before walking away. For example, "I really cannot talk with you right now. I don't feel like this conversation will result in a productive message. I would like to take a time-out. Is it OK if we continue our conversation in one hour?"



32) Treat yourself with kindness and take care of yourself. If you don't, the pain will just keep on building and you will likely vent or vomit at the most awkward times.



33) Communicating is not easy. Good luck, you can do it.

