# Are you always raising your voice?

You know when you raise your voice at the office, right? Not always. People who yell usually grew up in a home where the typical way of communicating was to shout at each other. No one took it personally, and after a while he or she came to believe this was normal behavior. But in an office setting, yelling and screaming at employees can have a detrimental effect on morale and will often result in a mass exodus. Ask yourself these questions:

1. Does an employee ever ask whether you could take the conversation into a private room?

2. Do colleagues tell you to calm down or lighten up?

3. When employees come into your office, do they decline your offer to sit down?

4. Do you find it difficult to confide in others and ask for help?

5. Has upper management or human resources inquired about why there is an unusually high turnover in your group?

If you answered "yes" to three or more of these questions, you're likely raising your voice more often than you should. Your first step in changing the habit is to ask yourself what could be the cause. If you didn't grow up in a household that shouted, perhaps you are under a lot of stress, overloaded with work or distracted by a problem at home.

If you can identify the trigger that makes you lose your cool, try to remove yourself from the situation. Take a breather outside the building or make yourself a cup of coffee. If you feel as if you are about to explode, the old countto- 10 technique along with taking deep breaths really does help. And there's no shame in checking out the company's counseling services or confiding in a close friend for advice.

Unless you work in a setting with a lot of noise and you need to shout to be heard, save the yelling and screaming for when the referee rules against your favorite sports team.