

## THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE I HAVE FACED

### in dealing with an unpleasant situation at work

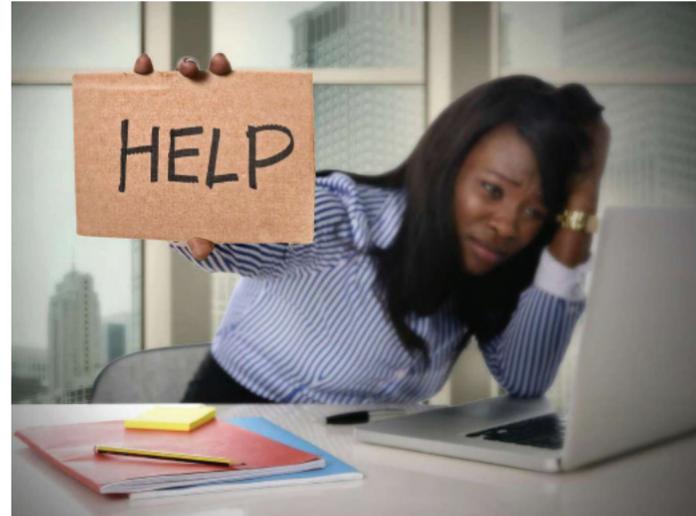
by Chipoy Moyo

There are many challenges we have to face and deal with in the work place, but how we deal with them may erode or enhance our dignity. I am going to share my story of having to deal with being an "outsider".

Have you ever had to take cover from a 'brewing storm'?

When I joined my previous employer as PA to CEO, I was an external appointment, not knowing the internal politics and being the naïve person that I am at times, I thought all was good. As time went on I picked a sense of resentment each time I tried to reach out and build relationships with other PAs. I had not even realised it but it turned out that I was the only PA of a different race, came from outside and took a position which one of the internal candidates wanted.

Sally\* who wanted the position had access to the board of directors as she was in the Company Secretary's office. When my boss left the company, she seized the opportunity and embarked on a back-stabbing mission. Few days after my



boss left I was removed from my office. Sally was excited about this and started preparing to move in. She packed all her things on a Friday and instructed the IT guys to move her. IT declined and requested that the instruction should come her HOD. Guess what! She did not move. Kim\* from the CFO's was appointed into that position, we swapped positions. Sally was livid as she became the laughing stock of the organisation.

What if the 'office storm' keeps raging!

When the new Chairperson was appointed, Sally managed to convince the chairperson of the board that she required a PA. She insisted until she got that position of PA to Chairperson. A month or so later, she started

- Demanding a salary equivalent to mine.
- Ordering the company driver around on personal errands
- Whenever she got instruction from the Chairman she would instead want to do things her own way.

Where do you seek refuge?

When all this drama was unfolding I took a step back and kept a low profile despite her doing things or saying things that wanted to show that she is now in control. All I did was pray to God that the real truth about Sally be exposed.

A new CEO was appointed a few months later. He had a discussion with the chairman and they decided that the chairperson did not require a PA and Sally had to explain how she knew what I was earning. The position was not on the organisation structure. There were also several complaints regarding her abuse of office. Within 6 months she was removed from the Chairman's office.

Before she came back to her ex-boss, the company secretary came to me and apologised for being mean to me. My values are that when someone apologises, you must accept

the apology. I did accept the apology but kept her at arm's length.

Her boss the Company secretary refused to take her back. She was retrenched.

What are the lessons?

What I learnt from this situation is that

- When one wants to embark on a fight with you, do not respond. Responding will give her ammunition to take it further. The saying goes "do not argue with a fool because people won't know the difference" is very true
- When you are pushed and you fall, get up, shake yourself off and move on.
- Be true to yourself and maintain your integrity. The truth, in any situation, will set you free.



Chipoy Moyo, PA and CSI Coordinator, FirstRand Limited.

Chipoy has been an OPSA Finalist in the National Professional of the Year 2013, and was invited to be PAFSA Judge for PA of the year 2014-15.

She is a member of PAFSA's AoE.

She believes that:  
*A positive attitude makes a difference in how you look at life.*