

Develop Good Coworker Relations

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We spend a good part of our lives "at work" - it is important that we enjoy what we are doing and whom we are doing it with. This month we will discuss coworker relations. Sometimes the "job" itself can become stressful so it is helpful when we can depend on those we work with to be supportive. You don't need to be friends with your coworkers but you do need to be friendly.



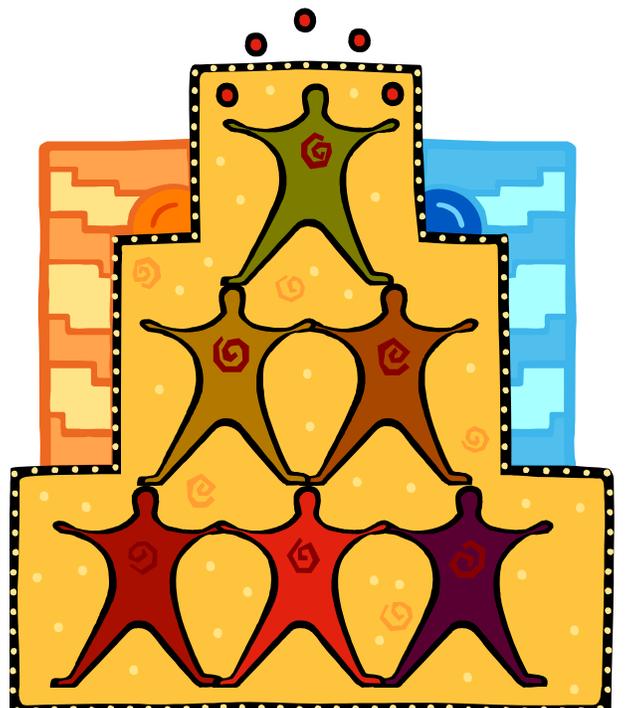
We need cooperation and good will in order to get our jobs done. According to Stealth Health "studies find that disagreements with coworkers and interoffice relationships deflate morale and impair performance even more than rumors of layoffs."

When a team or group of coworkers get along well it shows in the quality and quantity of the work. Good working groups can be amazingly productive, there is less turnover leading to increased benefits for both the employee and the company.

So, over the next four weeks take some time to think about your relationships with coworkers and how you can personally make a difference. We will address some things you can do to improve your day and that of your coworkers.

"From the backstabbing coworker to the meddling sister-in-law, you are in charge of how you react to the people and events in your life. You can either give negativity power over your life or you can choose happiness instead. Take control and choose to focus on what is important in your life. Those who cannot live fully often become destroyers of life." -Anais Nin

What kind of message do you convey to your coworkers? Do you slink into the office, hunker down at your desk and work on being invisible? Or do you "make an entrance" - push the door open so hard it slams against the wall, loudly complain about crazy drivers on the road and whine because the coffee isn't made yet and you can't begin your day without coffee?



If either one sounds familiar to you perhaps some suggestions for improving behavior are in order.

1. Say **“Good Morning”** as if you mean it and with a smile. You may be surprised by the response you get. Coworkers may start to smile too.
2. Practice **small talk in small doses**. It is ok to bond with coworkers but not spend an hour with idle chatter.
3. **Ask for the opinion of others**. Sometimes others have a clear vision about a topic you have been struggling with. Thank them for the help.
4. **Don’t get involved in the “gossip mill”**. Gossiping can lead to more serious situations, can be hurtful and may not be true. If you don’t want someone gossiping about you return the favor and don’t gossip about anyone else.
5. **You may think about joining** the office baseball team or a group working on a special project such as a fundraiser.

“It is by acts and not by ideas that people live.”
- Anatole France



The good news is that we are all different - the bad news is that we are all different. Each of us brings ideas, beliefs and attitudes to our workplace.

1. **Respect each other’s differences**. Not everyone thinks the way that you do. They may not understand your position just as you don’t understand theirs. Part of getting along with coworkers is learning to accept and learn from each other. Sometimes it is a challenge to co-exist with others that don’t think the way we do but we owe each other the respect to do so.
2. **Get your job done**. Your employer and your coworkers have certain expectations about you doing the best you can. Hold up your end of the agreement.
3. **Help each other out**. Just because it is not your job is no excuse for not getting the job done. There are times when we all could use a helping hand. Let’s say a coworker has a deadline to meet, has been working away to get it done and time is running out. Offer to help out - you may need a helping hand sometime in the future.
4. **If you make a mistake take responsibility for it, apologize gracefully and move on**. We all make mistakes sometime in our career, owning it teaches you about yourself and you are seen as honest and straightforward by you coworkers.

“Beware of self-styled experts: an ex is a has-been and a spurt is a drip under pressure.”
-Darryl Wagoner

There are times when you will work with people you don’t agree with or like. If you feel you have moral or ethical differences that you cannot overcome then you may need to think about another job. You don’t have to settle for an unpleasant work environment. But before you go

take some time to look at your own behavior and attitude to see how you are contributing to the unpleasant work environment.

1. If you are dealing with a difficult coworker pretend your mother or your kids are watching you. Because they are acting in an unbecoming manner doesn't mean you have to. **Never lower yourself to their level.**
2. **If a coworker has done a good job and you are aware of it complement them on it.** We all want and like to be acknowledged for a job well done.
3. **Don't take credit for something you did not do.** A new idea was developed and people are giving you credit which you (and the person who originated the idea) know it was not you. Stand up and give credit to the person who deserves it.
4. **It is so easy to think that you are working harder than anyone else,** but that may or may not be accurate. Toxic thinking can spread very quickly and then contributes to an unpleasant work environment

"He will have to learn, I know, that all people are not just- that all men and women are not true. Teach him that for every scoundrel there is a hero that for every enemy there is a friend. Let him learn early that the bullies are the easiest people to lick."

-Abraham Lincoln



Having a full well rounded life will influence how you approach your work environment. Take care of "YOU".

1. Develop hobbies, sports, reading, travel or other interesting things
2. Exercise - whatever works for you.
3. Socialize - do not make work the focus of your life.
4. Leave work and its challenges at work.

When you have a well-rounded life out of work it is easier to be a well-rounded employee while at work.

"As far as service goes, it can take the form of a million things. To do service, you don't have to be a doctor working in the slums for free, or become a social worker. Your position in life and what you do doesn't matter as much as how you do what you do."
Elisabeth Kubler-Ross

Thanks to [Stealth Health](#) for much of the information included in this etip.

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