

How to Deal with Difficult People at Work

I know you've selected this article, because you want a 1-2-3 step formula for dealing with the jerk down the hall or in the next cube to make them permanently go away and possibly even like you for it.

And you know it doesn't exist, so don't be irritated with me. I do have the solution, but it's going to be less fun than you thought. You can opt for FUN and back space and find another article on the Internet, or you can fix this crappy situation right now.

Right on. You're still here. Okay. Here's how this works:

1. Write down a list of everything you hate about this person. This is NOT the time to be spiritual or introspective (He probably had a rough childhood, for instance). This is the time to let all those thoughts that have been bombarding you day in and day out and find a place on the page. And if you are just reading this and NOT doing the actual work of long-hand writing (no computers) on a piece of paper, then this process won't work. Go do it right now. Stop reading and do it. What are you still doing reading? WRITE.

2. Okay. That probably felt great by the way. You've been battling with your thoughts more than you've been in actual battle with this person. And speaking of this person...they aren't the first idiot you've had to deal with in your work life, are they? Some variation of this yo-yo has been at every job, right? Bingo. This is always true and I don't even know you. It's true for all of us, so don't start sweating my words. It's fixable and it's about to happen for you.

3. Now, a bit of tough love, but it's going to be like pulling an infected splinter from your palm: it will hurt a little, but be SO much better in a minute. I want you to find examples of the OPPOSITE traits in this cat and write those down next to your list. Your page might look like this:

*He's always late to meetings. Thinks his time is more important than anyone else's.
(He was on time a couple of weeks ago. He's on time for starting work).*

*He talks so LOUD. Thinks we all want to hear every word he has to say!
(He can talk quietly. Sometimes he doesn't say anything for a couple of hours).*

*He has stupid ideas.
(He had a good idea about the parking deck last month).*

I know you are invested in really disliking, and even hating, this person. And he or she is mostly wrong about things and you find you are mostly right.

And that's part of the problem here: having to be right. You want this person to be more like you because you are living your life right. And if he/she would only see how you do things and say things, they'd be much better off. And maybe that's true. But here's the deal: they are already raised. They are grown. You aren't their mother or sister or spouse. They are not your business. They are not changing. They are who they are. And it sucks, I know. But the only thing that will actually work here is for you to stop trying to make them different. It doesn't work and it never has and you are just upsetting yourself. Probably no one else. Even your co-workers who agree with you aren't as riled up as you are about all this. They are just enjoying the gossip. You are the one in pain. This person probably goes whole hours without thinking about you even once.

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