

7 STEPS TO RESOLVE PERSONALITY CONFLICTS IN THE WORKPLACE

When you just don't get along with someone at work, it can make life miserable for you both. And though you might wish for a personality transplant for your annoying co-worker, that's probably not going to happen. Here are seven steps you can take that may help make things better.

Personality conflicts are the most commonly reported problems in the workplace. Too often these conflicts go unresolved because people concentrate on the personalities rather than focusing on the issues. When they escalate they create a TOXIC work environment. In any relationship, both people influence the other's behaviour. In personality conflicts both parties bear some responsibility for where "things are at."

Use these 7 steps to help de-escalate or resolve conflict with a co-worker:

1. Avoid discussing the issues with other colleagues

Many people who are involved in personality conflicts recruit allies among their co-workers. This can create polarization among co-workers and it escalates the situation. While you are passionately upset about this, others are not and most often co-workers are uncomfortable and sometimes frightened over the situation. This behavior is disruptive to the organization and makes it more difficult to fix the situation. FOCUS on what you can do to make things better!

2. Never respond immediately to the person who is irking you

They know how to push your buttons and they have done so over a period of time. By not responding immediately you give yourself some time to think through your response and this pause may cause the other person to think that you are backing down and they will begin to de-escalate.

3. Look in the mirror

How are you contributing to this situation? What role are you playing in the escalation of things? The key is to focus on what you can do differently! What can you do to make things

better? If you can figure out your role in the dynamic you'll learn something important about yourself and you will be able to de-escalate the conflict.

4. Refrain from the situation

For instance, the individual you are dealing with is screaming and yelling and wanting to be right! Instead of becoming annoyed and irritated at their unprofessional behaviour, picture them as a child wearing a diaper and throwing a temper tantrum. This allows you to take a step back and not engage.

5. Focus on the other person strength

Remind yourself of the contributions that the other person brings to your company or your team.

When things are going badly, we have a tendency to focus on what doesn't work and all of the negatives. Focusing on the positive helps us to at least get back to a neutral space and look at things a little more objectively.

6. Use cooperative communication

Say things such as "I've noticed that we seem to have differences. I have some ideas about how we might be able to work together more effectively and I would like to hear your thoughts." Invite them to be a part of the solution and really listen to their ideas. If you are unable to communicate either because you are too angry or the other person is, then walk away gracefully rather than standing your ground and allowing things to escalate

7. Use cooperative communication

It is important to keep track of the confrontations. If you are not able to de-escalate the conflict early on, take the issue to your immediate supervisor or someone in your HR department and have a neutral party mediate the situation.

Conflicts should never be swept under the rug. If you are the supervisor or manager and have employees that are involved in a personality conflict, coach them to resolve their own situation and if that doesn't work step in! You have a responsibility to the other employees to get control of this situation.

By Carol Fredrickson

<https://www.businessknowhow.com/manage/persconflict.htm>