

Strategies for dealing with a difficult colleague



Unfortunately, one's work environment is not always a harmonious place. Individual personalities and opinions clash. Colleagues come from varying backgrounds. Due to these factors, it's sometimes difficult to get along.

The good news is this. There are numerous things you can try when dealing with a difficult colleague. As you can see, it's basically a matter of common sense. If the first suggestion doesn't work, go on to the next. You'll probably be surprised by what a positive attitude and respect (among other things) will accomplish.

Stay Positive

Constant negativity from co-workers can impact your work life as well as your personal life. It's important to focus on the positive aspects and tone out the negativity, so you can do your job effectively.

If it's difficult to see the good things about your work, try to focus on what you have achieved and the opportunities that have been made possible in your personal life due to your efforts in the workplace. For example, paying off student loans, buying a new home, going on a vacation, or even starting a family.

Be Respectful

It can be challenging to have a respectful attitude towards a difficult co-worker, especially when it feels like they have no respect for you in return. However, it's important that you don't stoop down to their level by disrespecting them because you're not seeing eye to eye. This only makes matters worse between you and your colleague and will push you farther away from coming to an agreement or resolution that works for both sides.

Keep Calm

Difficult colleagues can unhinge even the calmest and collected employee. But, lashing out at them in retaliation is not the answer. Staying calm during an altercation and focusing on what needs to get done will defuse the situation and may calm your co-worker in the process.

Separate from the Difficult Co-worker

If a difficult colleague continues to make your workplace experience unpleasant despite your best effort, you may want to consider removing yourself from the situation and avoiding future interaction. If you haven't talked to your boss or supervisor by now, it may be the best option for you to request a different work schedule, or transfer to a different branch. If all else fails, seeking employment elsewhere may be something to consider.

Step into Their Shoes

Sometimes an argument among co-workers is due to a simple misunderstanding. It can become increasingly frustrating to explain something over and over again because your colleague doesn't understand. While you may feel like your colleague isn't listening to you, consider that they may not understand due to different perspectives.

If you are having a difficult time seeing eye to eye, try to understand how your colleague is feeling about the matter. Listen to what they are saying and ask thorough questions at the end, to ensure that you fully understand.

Confront Your Co-Worker

Try confronting them about their behavior face to face in a positive, professional manner. Often when people are being negative they don't realize how it is affecting the people around them. Tell them in private that you're trying to have a positive outlook on the day and that you would appreciate their help. Keep in mind that if you're in a good mood, there's a good chance it will alter their outlook and put them in a good mood, too.

When it comes to dealing with a difficult colleague, chances are you won't see an improvement overnight. But, don't give up. In this case, patience is the key to success. Remember, "you catch more flies with honey than vinegar!"

Another thing that can make work life difficult is when you have far too much to do - simply because you find it difficult to say no.

Fill in the blanks

Sometimes an argument among coworkers is due to a simple_____

Debate/misunderstanding

You catch more flies with honey than _____

Vinger/water

Step into their _____

feet/shoes