

## Conflicts with Co-Workers Out of Control; Take Action!

Is there someone at work who you think is annoying, mean, a clown, or cranky? Do you get in some kind of argument with them too often? If you do, then you're not alone, many people get in some kind of conflict with a co-worker at some point in their career. The fact that conflict in the workplace exists at all is not surprising, after all work environments bring together people of various backgrounds, personalities, and experiences.

Having a conflict with a co-worker can make your job very unpleasant. It impacts not only you but the other person involved, often times the other employees and the customers. The situation may even impact your productivity at work resulting in disciplinary action or worse termination. In order to keep the situation from getting out of control there are steps you can take to minimize or solve the conflict.

The first thing you should do is **consider what it is you want to address** (you'll have to be specific) and practice articulating it. How does it sound when you say it out loud, is it rational, something still worth bringing up. If not then figure out how to keep it from upsetting you, but if it is still worth addressing, then you should **privately confront the person** or schedule a time to confront them. You do not want to get outside parties involved yet because s/he may not even know their actions are upsetting you so why get anyone else involved if the two of you can handle the situation alone. When you speak to the individual **stay calm** and **show respect**. **Explain your view** of the situation as practiced and **offer a solution or compromise** to resolve the situation. **Listen, without interruption**, to his or her response and see if any other solutions are necessary, **you may have to compromise too**. If the situation does not improve shortly after this then make an appointment with your supervisor, human resource director or boss to explain the situation. They may have a talk with that person or the both of you at the same time in order to resolve the situation.

While managing your conflicts remember to stay professional at all times. You are still in a place of business and you don't want to jeopardize the company's reputation in front of customers. When handling your problems with co-worker stay calm, listen to their side of the story, and try to come up with a solution that works for the both of you. Learning to resolve conflicts on your own will give you better concentration and higher productivity. Just as my previous tips and hints columns on budgeting and managing your time, resolving conflicts is a skill that takes practice and can be used and developed at work as well as your personal life.

Remember if you have questions or comments; contact me at [staff@dcwib.org](mailto:staff@dcwib.org). Names aren't necessary, but give your city or town. I look forward to hearing from you. - Vee

