



My Co-Worker Is Driving Me Crazy!

By Dr. Linda Hancock

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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Not everyone in the workplace is a happy and healthy individual. Some, in fact, are extremely difficult and it can take a toll on you to be around them. There are several things, however, that you can do to protect yourself and lower your stress:

1. Do not continue to listen to the same complaints and concerns over and over again. Tell the other employee that you know clearly how they feel about the situation but do not want to hear about it again.
2. Remind the other person that you do not have the power or ability to change the situation (if that is true).
3. Make a few thoughtful suggestions about how the issues might be resolved.
4. If the person disrespects your request to stop talking to you about the problem, indicate that they need to stop now or you will be talking with the supervisor about this.
5. Know your role and focus on doing your job. You are not the therapist for the co-worker.
6. Treat the other person with respect and politeness.
7. Ensure that you have set up self-care practices that will help you to deal with stress and stay healthy.
8. Associate, as much as possible, with people who have good attitudes and positive moods.
9. Do what you say that you will do. If you have made a promise or given a warning that is not respected, follow through with your commitment.
10. Consider your options. You cannot change another person but you have control over where you will work and how you will function in that setting.

There are several different outcomes that might occur in your situation:

1. Nothing will change
2. The other person will decide to change for the better
3. The other person will decide to change for the worse
4. The other person will leave the employment
5. You will decide to leave the employment
6. You or the other person will be moved to a different job within the company

The important thing to remember is that you are responsible for your actions, mood and health. If the stress from your difficult co-worker is threatening any of these, your own employment and well-being will be at risk so you need to ensure that you have taken the necessary steps to protect them.

It is important that you do not transfer the burden of this situation to members of your family who may also become stressed but not have any power or ability to make the changes that are necessary.

You may wish to consult with a professional who can provide confidential and wise advice as you ponder the options you have and make decisions about which ones you will initiate.

One of my clients told me that she believes everyone should have a psychologist because there are always things in life that can be handled better with this help.

Whatever you do, make sure that you have taken the time necessary to weigh all the pros and cons so you do not have any regrets in the future.