

## Rise Above the Fray: Options for Dealing with Rude Behavior

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### *Set a Good Example and ALWAYS Act Appropriately*



There's no way around it... difficult people do exist at work. They come in every variety and no office is without *at least one* rude person. You may have co-workers who attempt to undermine you and make you feel as if you need to watch your back. You may have a colleague who plays favorites. Or, people around the office may form cliques and leave you out.

Truth be told, though, dealing with difficult people may be just as infuriating as bearing the brunt of their obnoxious behavior. How you react depends deeply on your **self-esteem**, your **self-confidence**, and your **professional courage**.

Here are few productive ways you can deal with a rude co-worker.

#### **1. Examine yourself first.**

Be sure that you're not over-reacting and that the other person is really the problem. Ask yourself:

- **Does a pattern exist in your interaction with specific co-workers?**

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- **Do you have certain buttons that are easily pushed?**

A thorough self-examination will determine if your agitation is really the result of a difficult person's actions.

## **2. Open up to a friend or colleague.**

Start brainstorming ways to address the situation. But remember, your goal is to be **objective**. Seek assistance from a close friend or colleague who is removed from the situation. Unlike you, they won't be feeling anger, pain, or humiliation, and will be able to give you sound, objective advice.

## **3. Approach the person and request a private discussion.**

Be pleasant and agreeable as you talk with the other person. They may not be aware of the impact of their words or actions on you. In fact, they may be learning about their impact on you for the first time. Worst case? They may know their impact on you and deny it or try to explain it away. Unfortunately, some difficult people just don't care.

## **4. Follow up.**

Has the behavior changed? Gotten better? Or worse? Determine whether a follow-up discussion is needed or if it will have any impact. Decide if you want to continue to confront the difficult person and try and be a peacemaker. If your answer is "yes," then it's worth it to hold another discussion.

## **5. When all else fails, avoid the person altogether.**

Protect your needs and the needs of your practice by avoiding the problem person altogether. You may have to leave voluntary committees or begin choosing projects he or she does not influence.

Bottom line: **Always take the high road. Don't challenge someone who is being rude.** Be a good example yourself. And, be sure to offer comfort to a person who may be on the receiving end of rudeness.

Consideration and respect ALWAYS win out over rudeness and incivility.

*Adapted from article [Options for Dealing with Difficult People at Work](#) by Susan M. Heathfield.*

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