

A Helpful Guide to Handling Personality Conflicts at Work

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Personality clashes at the office cause tension and reduce productivity. It can be difficult to reconcile different work styles and value systems, but **it's important for colleagues to find a way to get along.**

If you're losing your patience, consider these tips before you say something that you'll regret to the guy in the next cubicle. You'll find advice on how to deal with some of the most common conflicts too.

General Principles:

1. **Examine your part.** The most effective thing you can do is to acknowledge what you're contributing to the situation. **You can control your own feelings and responses** even if you have little influence over your coworker's actions.
2. **Develop compassion.** If your coworker's habits are troubling for you, imagine what they're doing to them. You may find it easier to accept their flaws when you remember how you struggle with your own.
3. **Think positive.** There's more to your colleagues than the quirks that bother you. **Focus on their strong points and what they contribute in the workplace.** You'll appreciate them more.
4. **Listen closely.** Letting your coworkers know that you care can prevent misunderstandings. **Ask them to discuss your differences and work on solutions together.** Pay attention to what they say instead of making assumptions about their intentions.

5. **Reach out.** You may be tempted to send an email rather than speak face-to-face with someone who annoys you. However, this may be a case where more contact will help you find common ground.

6. **Set boundaries.** On the other hand, if your efforts to make peace keep stalling, you may need to agree to disagree. Limit your interactions to business essentials.

7. **Ask for help.** If you're unable to resolve the conflict on your own, consider bringing in a third party. Tell your boss or your PR representative about your concerns. They may want to intervene or recruit an outside mediator.

8. **Recognize other issues.** Be prepared to take a different approach if your conflict is caused by something other than personality traits. For example, there may be contradictory business goals that would create friction between employees in certain positions.

Specific Examples:

1. **Be humble.** How do you deal with a coworker who thinks they know it all? Keep in mind that they may be trying to compensate for their own insecurity. Avoid being drawn into an argument and be firm if you want to discourage unsolicited input.

2. **Stay on schedule.** A colleague who misses deadlines and arrives late can hold up the whole team. Let them know how their actions affect others and set interim deadlines to help keep projects on track.

3. **Avoid griping.** What happens when a little venting turns into chronic

complaining? You may be able to help a coworker who tends to see themselves as a victim. **Try to validate their feelings while encouraging them to take responsibility for their actions and focus on solutions.**

4. **Reduce the drama.** Maybe you find mood swings and intense emotional displays a bit unsettling. If your office is starting to feel like an opera company, take a deep breath and maintain a calm demeanor.

5. **Lighten up.** It's natural to feel undermined when you're being micromanaged, but it usually says more about your supervisor than it does about you. You might be able to head off the situation by giving them detailed updates to ease their concerns.

Conflicts are natural when you're spending 40 hours a week with someone you might not choose for a friend. Knowing how to handle personality conflicts at work will help you to increase cooperation and reduce misunderstandings.