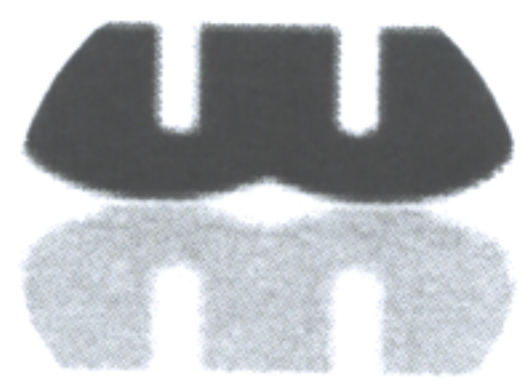


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How To Work With People You Don't Like



WomensMedia [ⓘ]
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By Dianna Booher

Being locked into a leadership role or project with a person who rubs you the wrong way produces stress—and often collateral damage and bad decisions. We see the results played out at the highest levels of government, corporations, and nonprofits. You can probably think of a good example.



Here are 4 ways you can do this. ICLIPART

So how do you neutralize such situations, focus on resolving issues, and work together smoothly without creating havoc for a project, organization, or country?

4 Ways To Work With People You Don't Like

1. Pursue a Third-Party for Perspective

Several years ago, I hired a general manager responsible for the profit and loss of a particular division. When his division started to lose money, he began to make excuses for his unfocused activities, his ill-suited hires, and high salaries. In our discussions, he complained that I just “didn’t get it” and couldn’t understand how his approach would pay off in the long-term. He became so passionate in his position that I began to wonder if maybe I was wrong, if his belligerent communication style was the put-off, or if I was becoming as obstinate as he.

So I approached an outside CPA firm to look at the situation. After seeing all the facts, her response was this: “Your GM is totally off-base in his thinking. You should have him go find a job somewhere else. That might give him a good dose of reality.”

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Her objective third-party perspective gave me the confidence and impetus to stand my ground and set the appropriate controls around the GM.

Being honest, most of us would have to admit that we lose objectivity on occasion, particularly in personal situations. Parents start to ask themselves questions like these: “Am I being too hard on my teen to demand that she ...” “Am I not being strict enough on my kids; will they ever learn self-reliance?”

Spouses may start to question themselves about relationships: “Am I being too demanding?” “Is it even reasonable that she expects me to quit my job and move across the country just because ...?” Talking to other parents, spouses, or friends for their input helps you regain perspective.

Likewise, when you have a personality clash with a client or coworker, you’ll find it easier than ever to lose perspective about what’s “fair,” “reasonable,” or “understandable in the circumstances.” So a red flag should go up, waving the words: “Don’t trust your gut on this.” Your gut will be wrong if it’s already poisoned with disgust for someone’s attitude, communication style, or past actions.

Bottom-line: Find a confidante who doesn’t report to you and who has absolutely no stake in the situation. Give them the facts as objectively as you can. Get their perspective on the situation and take it to heart.

2. Install an “Attitude” Screener

When face to face or when emailing the person who “rubs you the wrong way,” take extra care to keep a neutral attitude. Have another person review your emails for tone before you send them. Ask them specifically to point out any “hot words or phrases.”

For example, note the difference between these two statements:

“I’ll expect to have this report from you no later than close of business, May 3.”

“Would you please send this report to me by May 3.”

If you’re in a face-to-face discussion, ask a neutral party to signal you when your “attitude” is showing.

3. Minimize Contact

Consider changing your typical schedule so that you’re eating lunch in the cafeteria at a different time. Walk different hallways. Leave through different doorways. Email instead of meet face to face. Send a representative to the meeting to share information rather than go yourself.

As you minimize contact, maybe absence will make the heart grow a little fonder—or at the least, a little less stressed.

4. Hand-off the Role or Task

If none of the above suggestions work, delegate. Assign the project or role to someone else, reserving only a few key decisions as yours. Be sure to let the responsible person know which decisions they have authority to make and which you’d like for them to get your approval on before moving ahead.

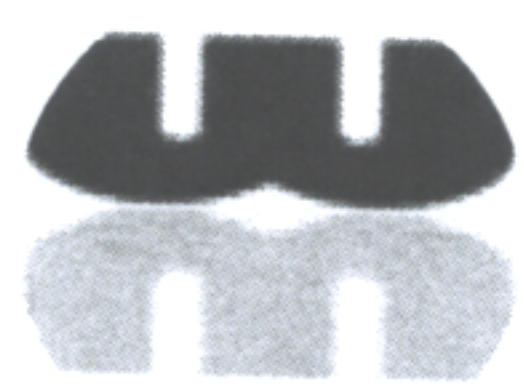
Better to lead from behind—than blow up the entire parade.

Few people will have the pleasure of working with best friends for an entire career. But identifying ways to work with those you dislike can make life much

more pleasant—and more productive for your team.

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