

How to Work with Difficult People without Losing Your Mind

Andrew Henry Jacobs

“Disrespect is the weapon of the weak.”

- Alice Miller

Reasons for Difficult Behavior

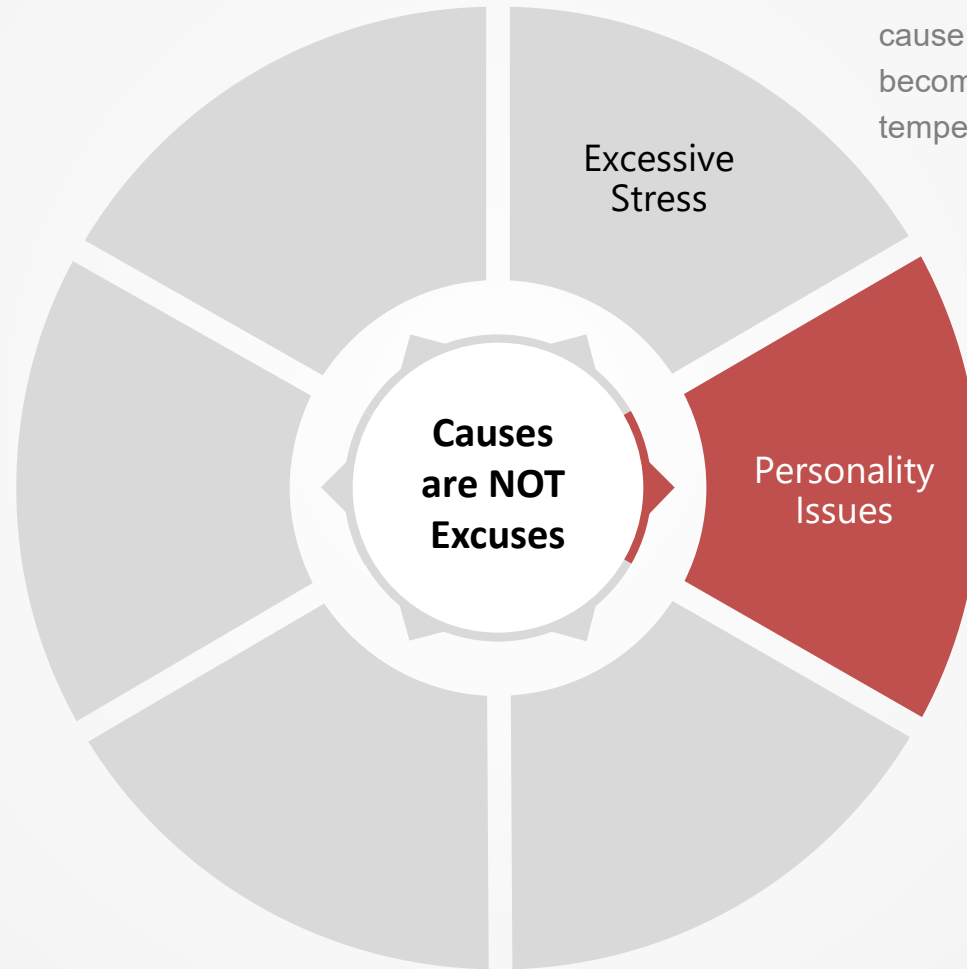


Reasons for Difficult Behavior

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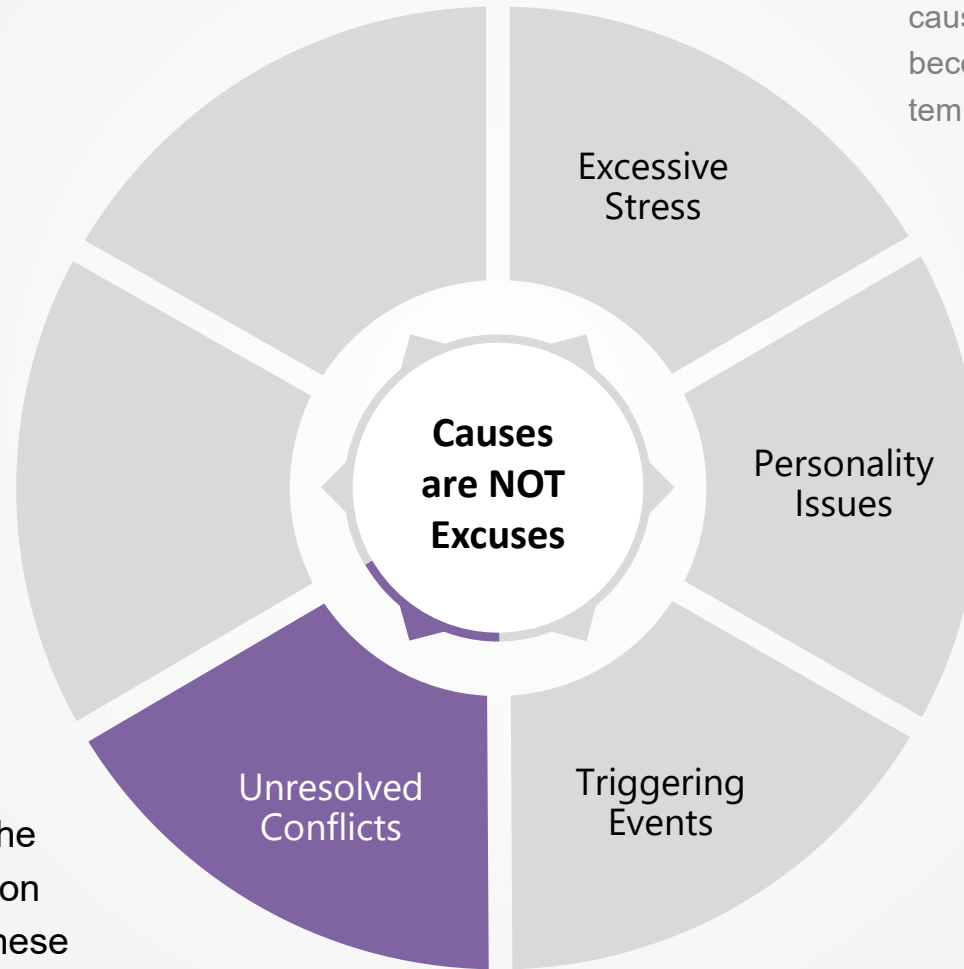


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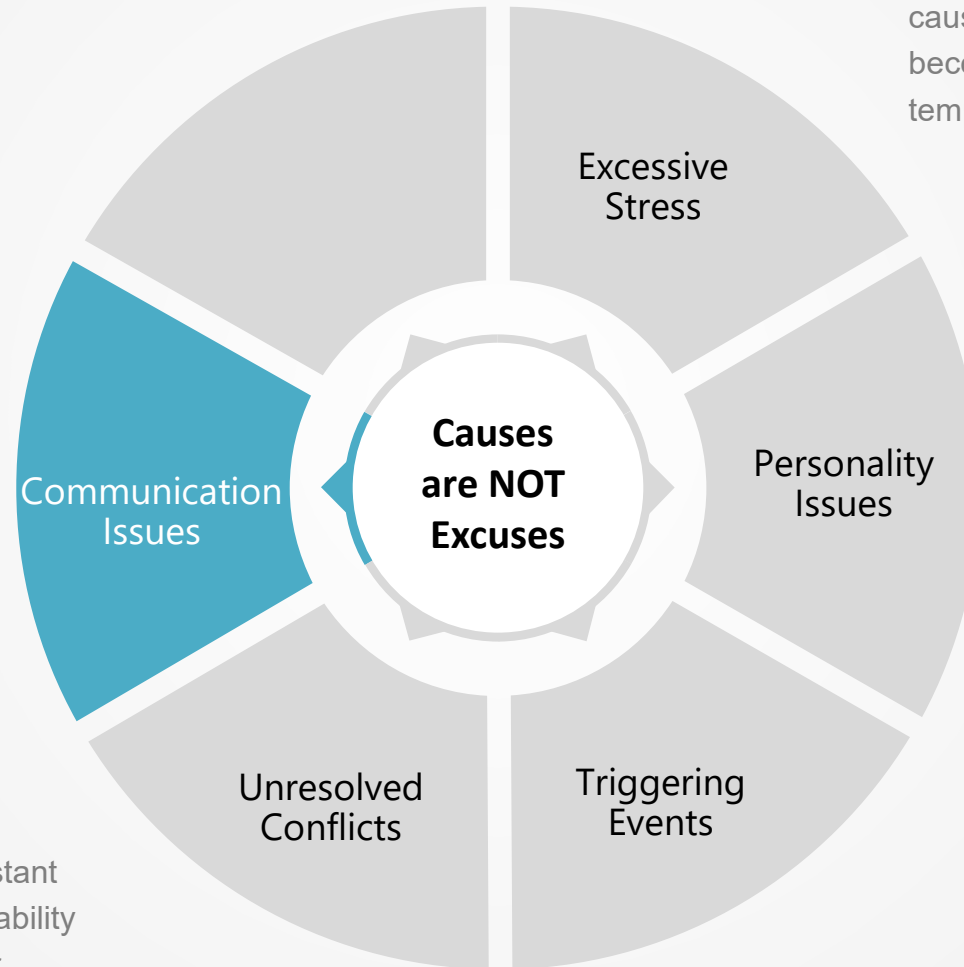
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Communication Issues

Unresolved Conflicts

Triggering Events

Excessive Stress

Personality Issues

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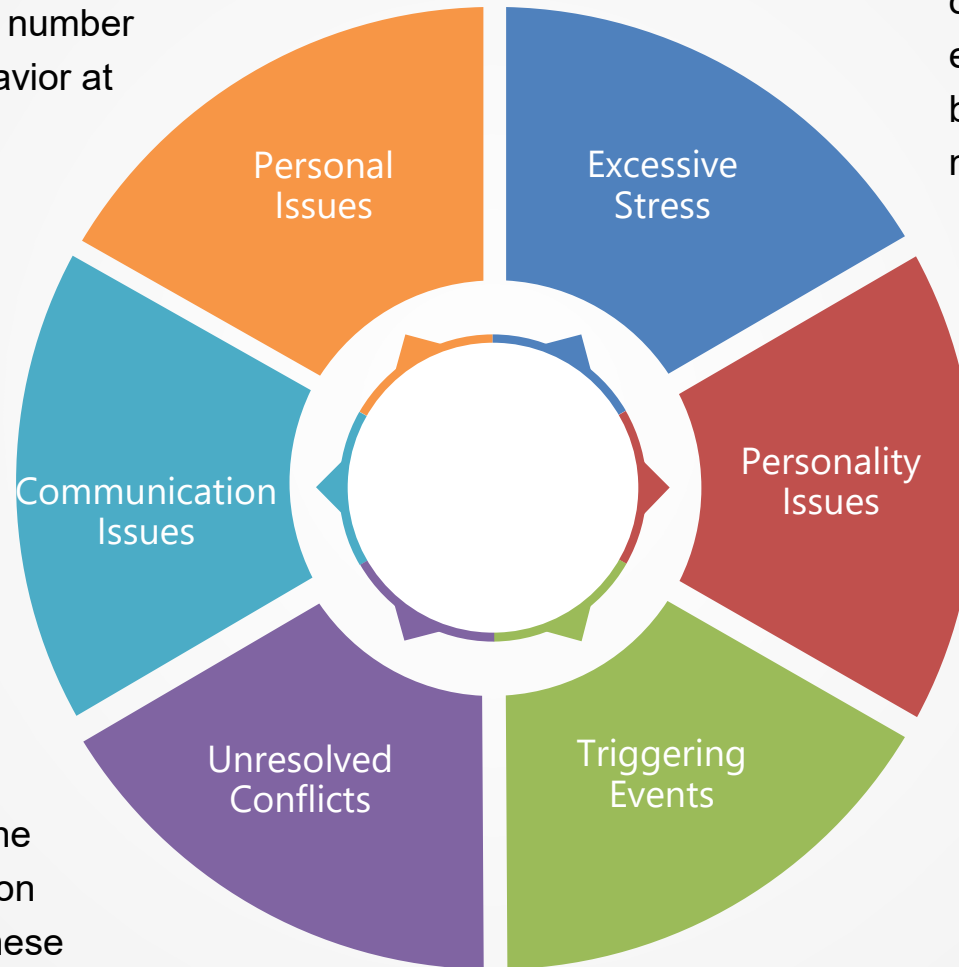
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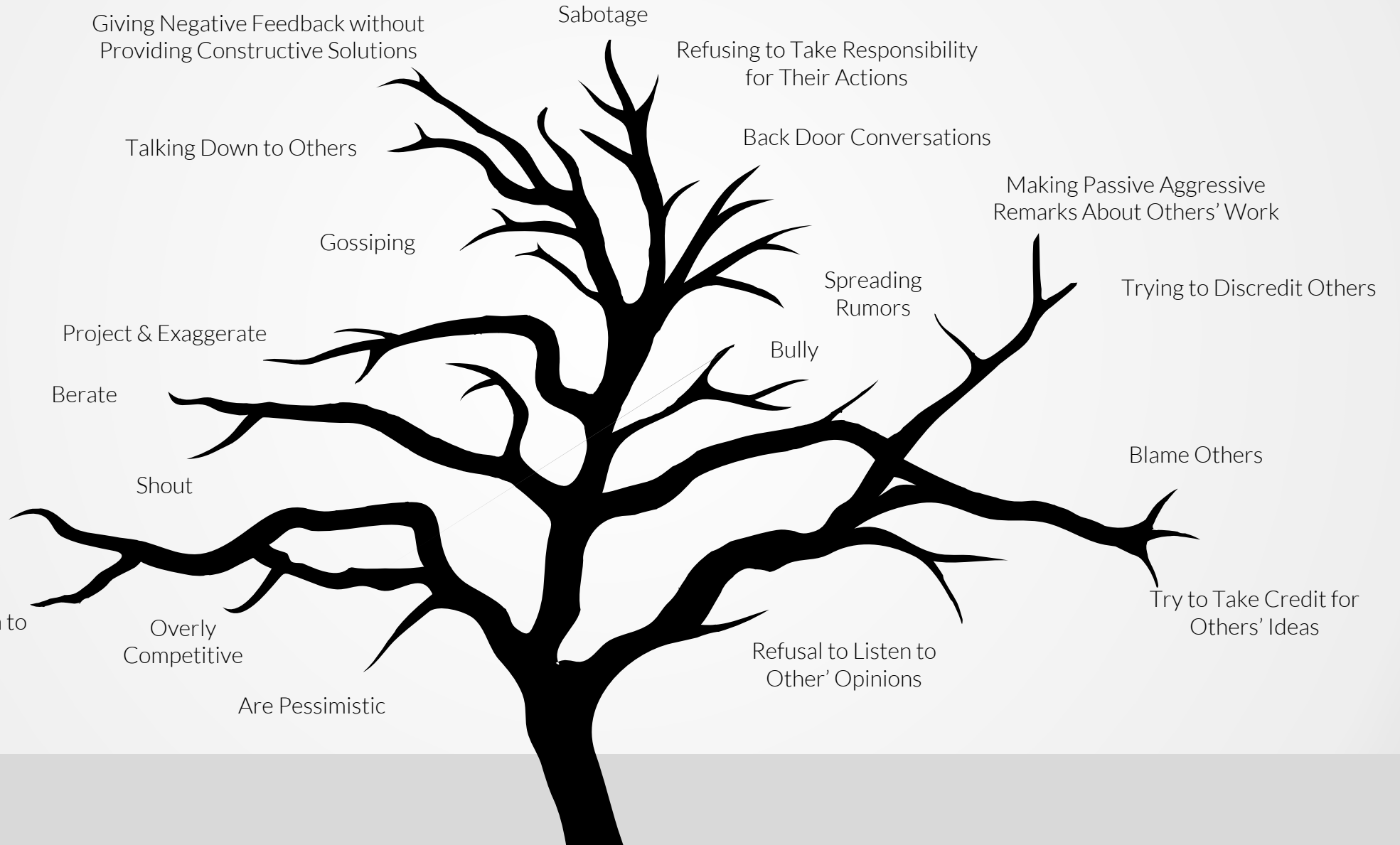
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“If you disrespect others, how in the world do you expect others to respect you.”

- Aretha Franklin

Difficult People

Undermine Others



“Don’t let people who do so little for you, control so much of your mind and emotions.”

- John Sutton

7 Reasons Coworkers are Difficult

1

Your Co Workers are Threatened by You

- A colleague who feels threatened by your success may try to undermine you in to make themselves feel better.
- If you find that your coworkers are threatened by your ambition and success, it's important to remain focused on your goals and not let their behavior derail you.

2

You're Competing for the Same Resources

- If two coworkers are vying for the same resources, such as a project budget or a high-profile assignment, it can lead to competition. This can lead to one person trying to discredit the other to gain an advantage.

3

Your Co Workers May Be Jealous

- If your coworkers feel like you're getting more attention, recognition, or resources than they are, they may try to discredit you to level the playing field.
- Envy is a powerful emotion, and it can lead to destructive behavior in the workplace.

4

Your Co Workers Don't Trust You

- If there is a lack of trust between coworkers, one may try to undermine the other to feel more secure and in control.
- This can be particularly true if the coworkers have had a history of conflict or disagreements.

7 Reasons Coworkers are Difficult

5

Your Co Workers are Worried About Job Security

- If your coworker is worried that their job might be in jeopardy, they may try to discredit you to make themselves look better and protect their own position. Their fear can be the cause of their undermining behavior.

6

Your Co Workers May Be Trying to Make Themselves Look Better

- If your coworker is vying for a promotion or looking to impress their boss, they may try to make themselves look better by making you look bad. This can be especially true if the coworker feels like you're in competition with them for the same job.

7

Sometimes, it's a Matter of the Heart

- When it comes to workplace conflict, it's important to remember that sometimes the issue is personal, not work-related. If a coworker has a personal grudge against you this could be a contributing factor in why they are acting out against you.

8

They are...

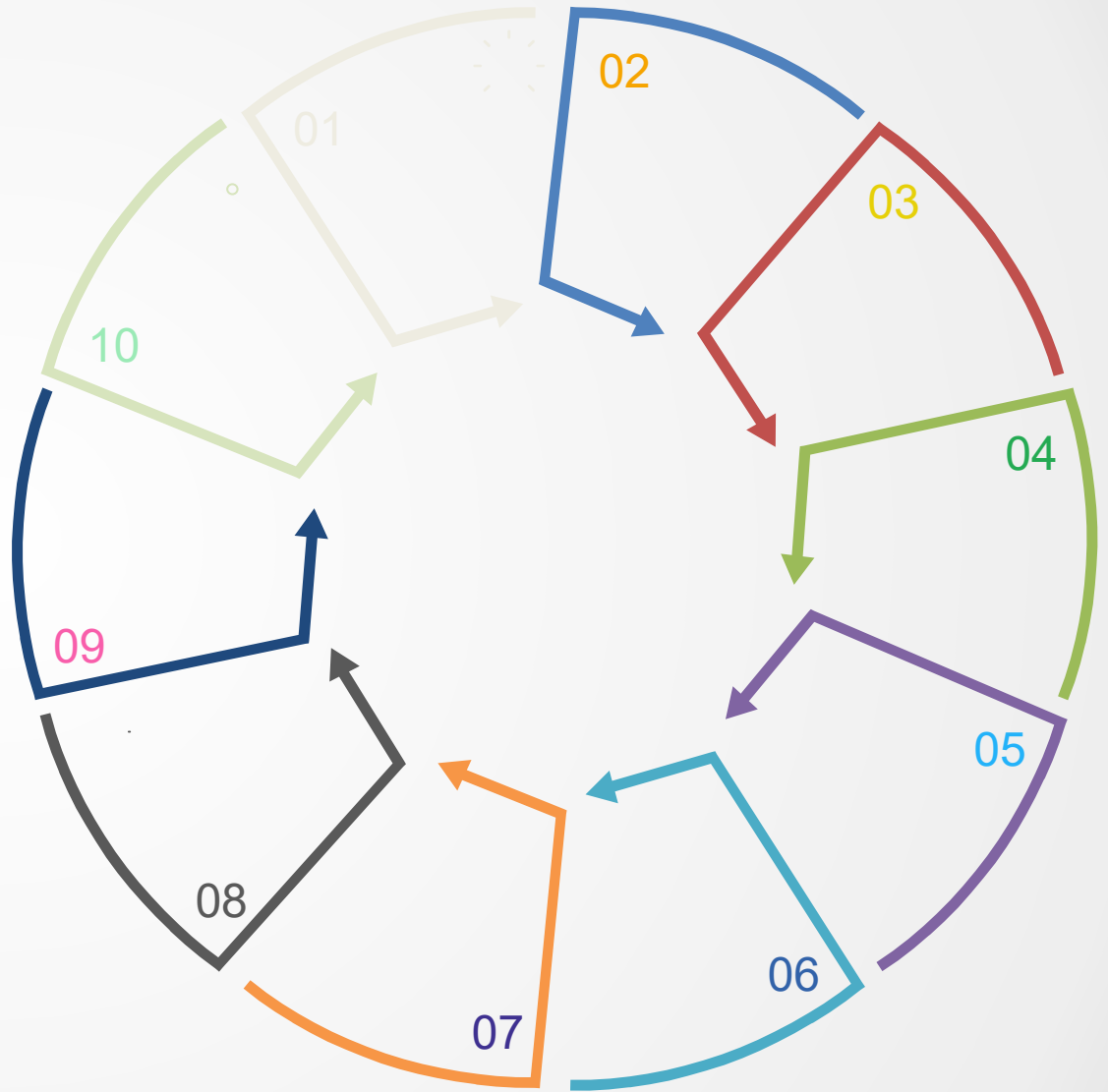
...ASSHATS

“When faced with senseless drama, spiteful criticisms, and misguided opinions, walking away is the best way to stand up for yourself. To respond in anger is an endorsement of their behavior.”

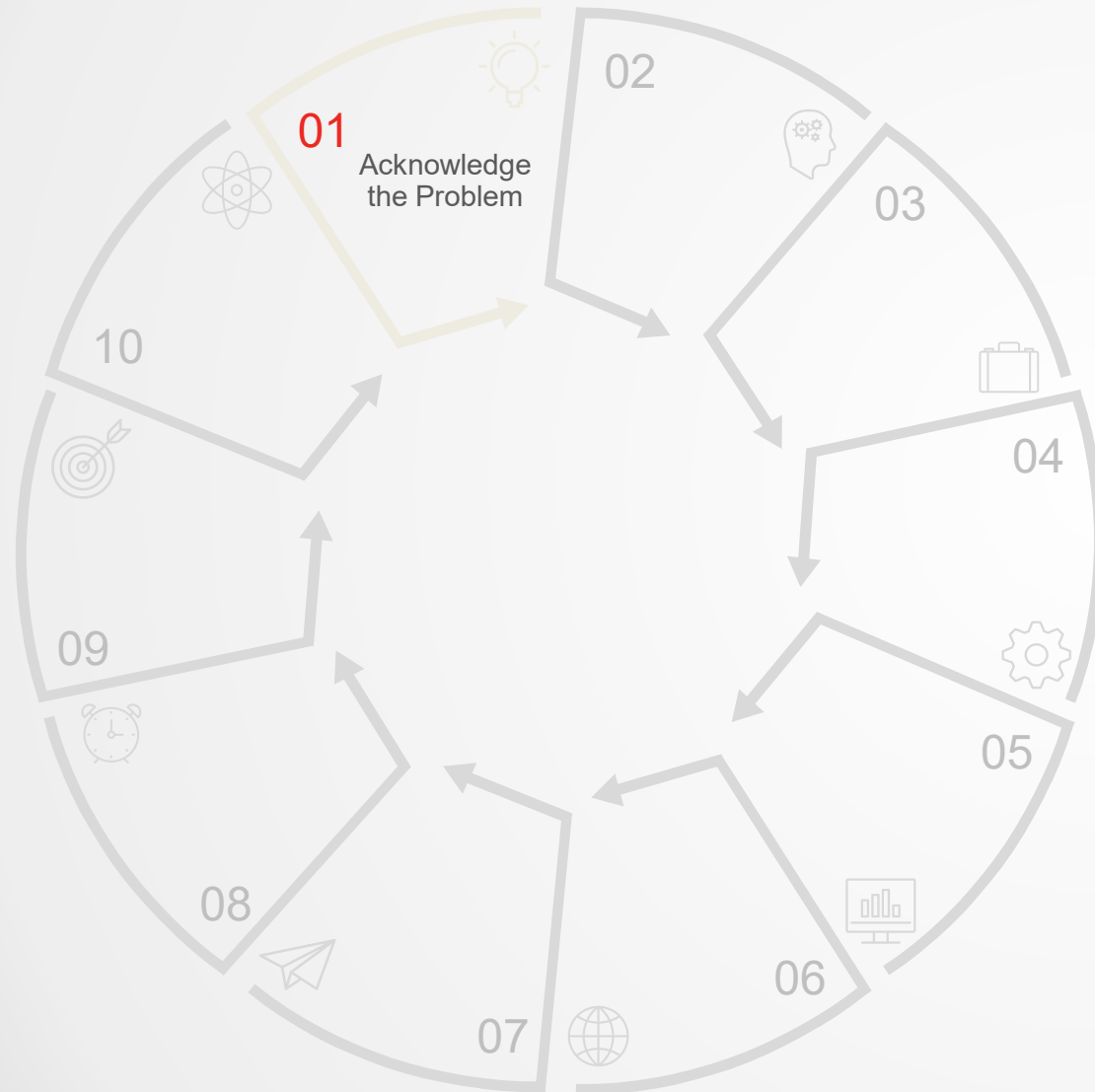
- Dodinsky

11 Effective Ways to Deal with Difficult Co-workers

Without Losing Your Mind



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Acknowledge the Problem

The first step in dealing with coworkers who undermine you is to recognize that it's happening. It's easy to ignore or let negative behavior slide, but this will only encourage the behavior to continue. If you notice any signs of toxic behavior, it's important to address the issue early on before they have a chance to escalate. Preventing the problem is just as important as addressing it.

Tips

- Start paying attention to patterns or reoccurring behavior that could be considered toxic
- Watch out for gossip or criticism of yourself and other colleagues
- Have a clarifying conversation
- Engage the Proper Protocols

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Remain Professional

Although it can be tempting to retaliate or act out against your colleague, this will not help the situation. Remain professional and remember that your actions should reflect positively on you and your employer. The way you communicate and handle the situation can make all the difference.

Tips

- Keep your conversations focused on facts (not emotions) to remain neutral
- Stay calm and be mindful of your tone and body language
- Avoid making any assumptions or jumping to conclusions

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Set Boundaries

It can be difficult to confront someone who is trying to sabotage you. However, it's important to set boundaries with your colleagues and let them know that their behavior is not acceptable. Address the behavior head-on by making it clear that you won't tolerate their negative actions. Remember to remain firm and professional, even if the situation is difficult.

Tips

- Speak to them privately to address the situation
- Be clear about what behavior is and isn't acceptable
- Explain how their actions affect you and the team

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Document Their Actions

When dealing with a toxic coworker, it's important to document their behavior and any conversations that take place between the two of you. Keep a record of emails, texts, or other evidence that shows they are trying to undermine you. This will provide evidence if your situation ever escalates to a point where you need to involve your manager, HR, or take legal action.

Tips

- Keep a written log of events and interactions
- Save emails, text messages, and other evidence
- Make notes during meetings to keep accurate records

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Stick to Rules & Protocols

When dealing with a difficult coworker, it's important to stick to the company policies and protocols. Follow the chain of command when addressing any issues. You may need to address the issue with your direct supervisor first before escalating the situation to HR. If you have a trusted mentor or colleague, you can also seek their advice on how to best handle the situation.

Tips

- Set up a private meeting with your direct supervisor to share your perspective and provide evidence
- Review company policies and protocols to determine the best course of action
- If possible, reach out to a trusted colleague or mentor and discuss your situation

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Involve HR

If the situation is still unresolved after speaking to a direct manager, it may be time to contact your Human Resources department. They will have the necessary tools and resources to address any issues that arise between coworkers professionally and can take the appropriate steps toward resolving the problem.

Tips

- Be prepared with evidence to back up your claims
- Gather witnesses and any other people in the know
- Organize your thoughts in advance to effectively communicate your concerns

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Don't Take It Personally

It can be difficult not to take a coworker's behavior personally, but it's important to remember that their actions likely have nothing to do with you and more to do with their own fears and insecurities. Try to keep your emotions in check and stay focused on resolving the situation in a professional manner.

Tips

- Remind yourself that the situation is not your fault
- Focus on solutions rather than dwelling on the problem
- If feeling anxious and stressed, practice deep breathing exercises or take a short break to refocus

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Avoid Gossiping

Gossiping about your coworkers can be tempting when upset, but it's important to avoid getting involved in workplace drama. Not only is it unprofessional, but it can also make the problem worse and can lead to more conflicts with your coworkers. Gossiping can easily escalate into hurtful rumors and false information that can damage your reputation in the workplace.

Tips

- Focus on your work and stay out of office politics
- If someone tries to involve you in gossip, politely decline and change the subject
- Don't share confidential information with others

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Practice Self Care

Dealing with a toxic coworker can be an emotional and stressful situation, so it's important to find ways to manage your stress levels outside of work. Take time for yourself to relax and unwind by doing activities that make you happy. Whether it's exercising, reading, or spending time with family, having a healthy outlet will help you stay focused and productive at work.

Tips

- Focus on the positive aspects of your job
- Take breaks during the workday to clear your mind
- Visualize a positive outcome to help you stay grounded

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Get Outside Help

If the situation has become unbearable and you're feeling overwhelmed, it may be time to speak to a professional. A therapist or counselor can provide insight into how to best handle the conflict, as well as provide tools for dealing with difficult people in the workplace. Getting outside help can also help increase your confidence and self-esteem so that you can approach the situation with a clear head.

Tips

- Check if your organization offers an Employee Assistance Program to work with a counselor who specializes in workplace conflicts
- Search online for resources and books that can provide tips on dealing with difficult coworkers
- Don't give up when facing a toxic coworker; it's important to remember that you have options.

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Walk Away & Move On

Sometimes simply keeping your distance from the situation and avoid any further interactions with your toxic coworker. See if there is an opportunity to work on a different project or team. If that is not an option, try to limit any contact and conversation with them and focus on your own work.

Tips

- Remember that it's ok to be assertive without having to resort to arguments
- Take the high road and focus on staying positive
- Distance yourself from the situation when possible



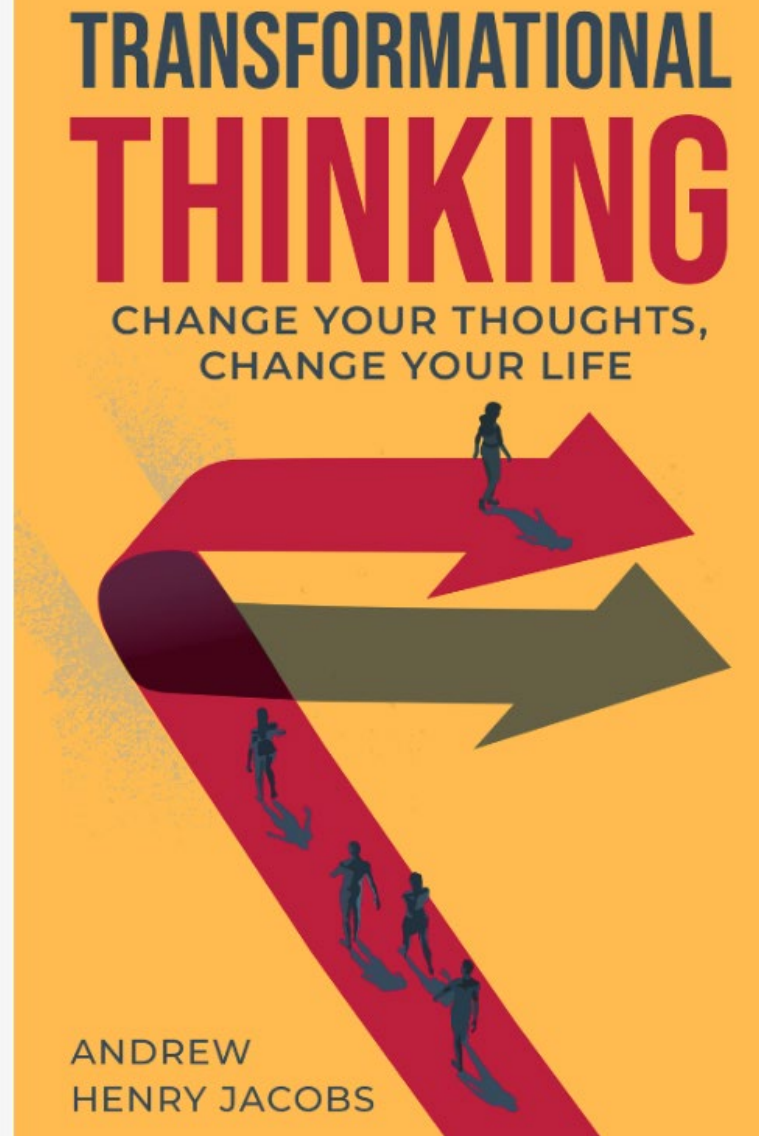
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