

Actively Finding Peace in the Workplace

How to Recognize and Fix a Toxic Environment

"I have better things to do than baby-sit my co-workers"

"Communication is usually the cause and the remedy to Conflict"

"Life is 10% what happens and 90% how you React to it."
-Lou Holtz

"You can't always get what you want
But if you try sometimes,
You might just find,
You get what you need"

-Mick Jagger and Keith Richards

"My boss is literally killing me!"

"I feel sick when she walks by my desk or calls my name"

"Conflict lies at the core of innovation"

- Emanuel R. Piore

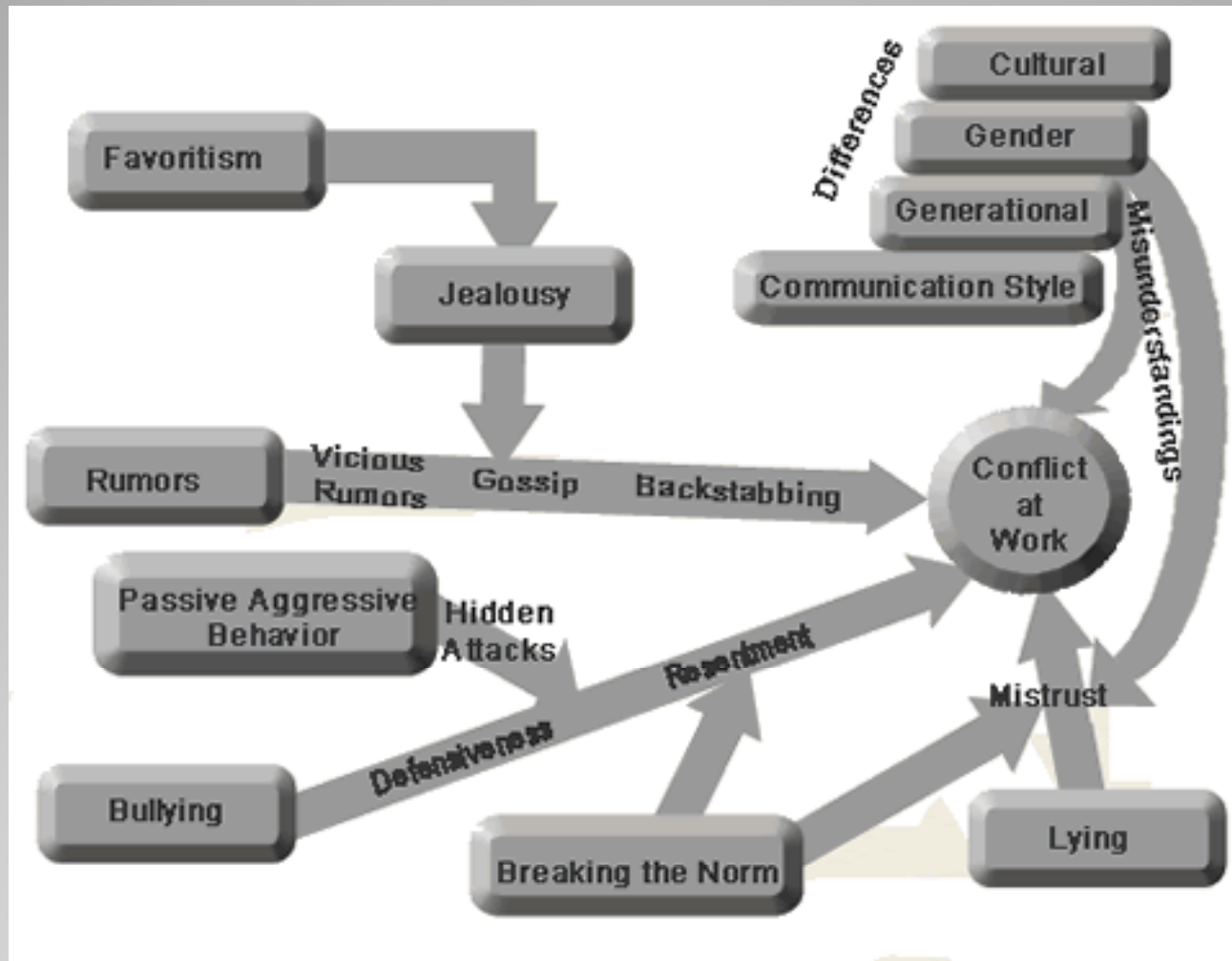
Where do you work?

Management experience?

Years in development?

What did you do before development?

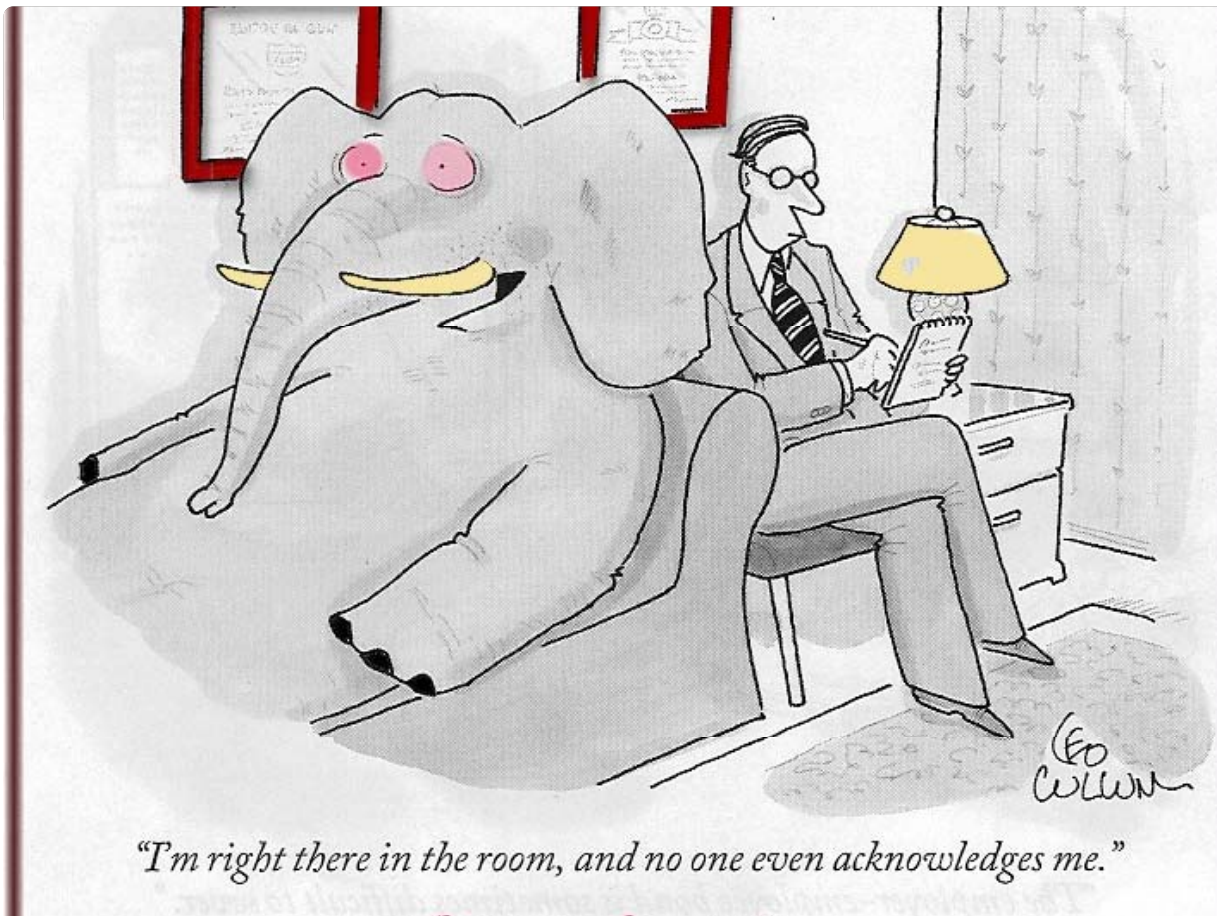
Who are you?



How Conflict Begins

- Excessive employee turnover
- Difficulty recruiting quality employees
- Low morale
- Reduced productivity
- Increased stress/sick days/medical costs
- Reduced collaboration
- Damaged management credibility/
institutional reputation
- Split alliances (factions & cliques)
- Costly litigation (\$400-\$1000 an hour)

Cost of Workplace Conflicts



- ❖ Ineffective Organizational Systems and Unpredictable Policies
- ❖ Incompatible Goals
- ❖ Scarce Resources
- ❖ Poor Communication
- ❖ Personality Differences and clashes

What are some causes of conflict?

- **Problem**

- Masquerades as interpersonal conflicts
- Without rules there is chaos

- **Solution**

- Create comprehensive set of rules and policy
 - Ensure the rules apply to everyone equally
- Create conflict management system
 - Ensure everyone is willing to participate in this system

- **Result**

- Predictability
- Sets clear boundaries
- Protects employers and employees

**Ineffective organizational system
and unpredictable policies**

Problem

- Feeling that one party's gain will be the other's loss.
 - Individuals may have specific goals for their department or the organization as a whole. Those goals may be quite different than the goals that someone else in another department might have. It is often easier for an individual to see him or herself as the "good guy" and see the person who is a threat as the enemy.

Incompatible Goals

Solution

- Managers working together to provide clear and consistent goals. Requires top down leadership.
- IBA Process
 - Focus on issues not personalities
 - Focus on interests not positions
 - Create options to satisfy mutual and separate interests

Incompatible Goals

Result

- Mutual gains are possible (Win/Win)
 - Morale increases
- Open discussion expands mutual interests and options
- Finding solution promotes relational growth- allows us to consider new ideas and solutions to old problems

Incompatible Goals

Problem

- Employees feel they have to compete for available resources in order to do their job.

Solution

- Open and honest communication regarding available resources and allocation of those resources

Result

- Trust
- Peace

Scarce Resources

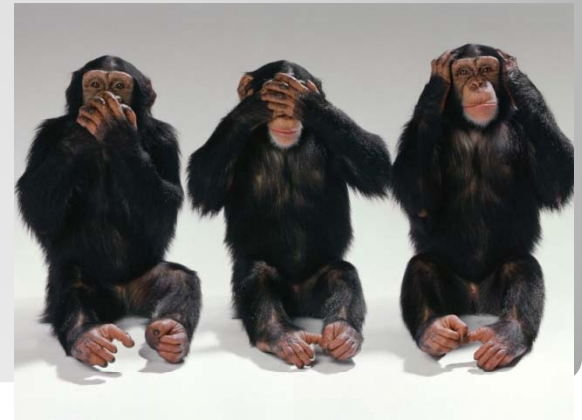
Problem

- One of the most common sources of workplace strife, and interpersonal difficulties are magnified when conflicting communication styles coexist in one setting. No two persons think alike here are potential sources of office misunderstandings:
 - Generational differences (baby boomers vs. GenX-ers).
 - Personal management styles.
 - Educational background
 - Cultural/ Gender diversity

Poor Communication,

Solution

- Get to know your coworkers in a realistic light
- Steer clear of becoming the gossipmonger
- Better sooner rather than later
- Respect individual differences while avoiding controversial topics- This may seem overly trite, but it is true nonetheless
- Avoid getting personal on the job -Your workplace is not your therapist office
- Morale Booster
- Master the art of listening, and observing



Poor Communication

Result

- Effectively communicating with your colleagues seems like a sensible task to accomplish, yet more often than not it is underestimated, or even worse ignored.
- Can enhance your quality of life at work, so that you will become a winning and shining star not just in the eyes of your colleagues, but in the eyes of your employer as well.

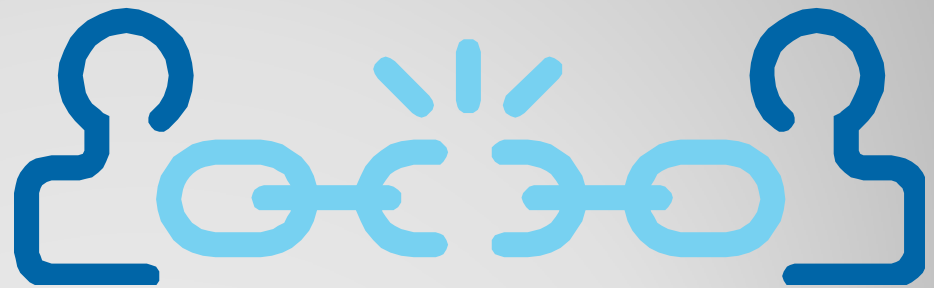
Poor Communication

Managers

If turf wars, disagreements and differences of opinion escalate into interpersonal conflict, you must intervene immediately. Not intervening is not an option if you value your organization and your positive culture

Personality Differences and Clashes

You have to disconnect from
confining roles, toxic
relationships, boundary busters,
and emotionally charged
situations at work



**Change your reaction change
your life!**

If you are continually upset, angry or complaining about something or someone, you need to set a boundary.

Basic Boundaries

- Time
- Personal Space
- Keeping your Word
- Personal Information
- Emotional Expression
- Manners/Courtesy
- Noise

Protect your Boundaries

***Be aware of the role
you might be playing***

Is your problem YOU?



Superhuman of the workplace:

- Do not take on additional responsibilities that are not your job

- Leave work on time

- Take a vacation a year

- Do not take work home

The HERO



Counselor of the
work place

-Keep talk about
personal lives to a
minimum

-Do not allow people
to confide in you

-Do not make excuses
for people because of
their problems

- You are not a
therapist!

The CAREGIVER



Which one of these is not like the others?

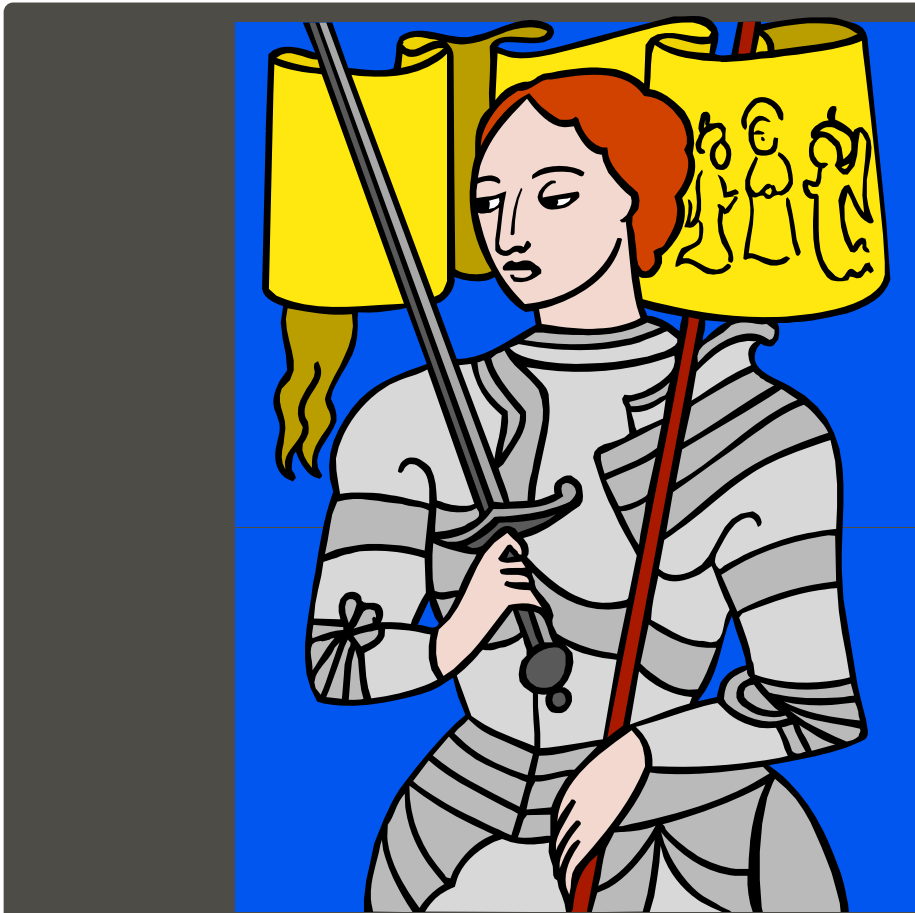
--Practice impulse control

--Have someone edit anything in writing

--If you do not agree with your boss, wait 24 hours

--When in doubt say you are sorry

The REBEL



Professional Sufferer

-Do not take on others work as a favor

-Delegate a task and give credit for a job well done

-Leave work at the office, no cell phone or email at home

-Limit number of hours you work

The MARTYR



Crowd Pleaser

- Focus on career goals

- Do not fill tense moments or silence with a joke

- Do you want something... ask for it without apologizing or joking

- Be respected not popular

The ENTERTAINER



Mediator of the workplace

-Learn to say NO

-Be firm on what you need, regardless of people liking you

-Do not mediate office fights

-Do not try to fix all problems

The PEACEMAKER



The unseen worker

-Be seen, attend meetings and participate

-Speak up

-Brag about your accomplishments

-As for what you want, raises or promotions. Do not wait for them.

INVISIBLE !!!

What if the manager/boss is the person causing the conflict?



Too Often the Issue

Toxic Ties

The
Exploder

Empty
Pit

The
Saboteur

Pedestal
Smasher

Chip on
the
Shoulder

Good Bosses Gone Bad

- Often charismatic and charming from the get go. Exudes decisiveness, confidence and determination



A mistake is made, obstacle arises and the Exploder ignites.

➔ In a flash a new side emerges that is loud, harsh, accusatory, and irrational.

The Exploder

- Accept that this person has unresolved rage.
- Accept that this person is going to explode no matter what you do.

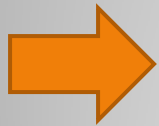
Survival Skill: Watch the exploder blow and do not let it affect you. Document all requests generated by the explosion and address with concrete actions

Escape Plan

- Kind person with lots of problems. They solicit your sympathy early on. You are rewarded with praise.



You are dumped on more and more
Professional and personal lines blur



This person really wants attention
and not your help.

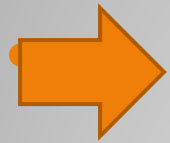
The Empty Pit

- This person's problems will not go away regardless of your actions.

Survival Skill: Do not solve one more problem. Document and watch your time. Listen, but do not give any advice.

Escape Plan

- Pay attention to the fact that this person may be telling others false information about you



This person destroys others to further his or her own career.

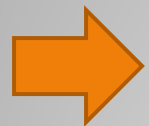
The Saboteur

- Know that this person does not believe in themselves. They do not think they can succeed on their own merit, that is why they put others down.

Survival Skill: Stop the chatter. Try to uncover the things said about you. Keep records of everything.

Escape Plan

- They provide large doses of compliments at the beginning of the working relationship



Know that nothing you do will reinstate your original statuesque position... NOTHING!

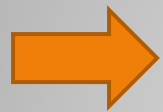
The Pedestal Smasher

- Know that this person has a very shaky sense of self and that is at the heart of the devaluing remarks about you.

Survival Skill: Quit trying to get back on the pedestal. Wage a positive campaign for yourself. Get validation regarding your work for other “experts” .

Escape Plan

- Repeatedly tell tales of woe, being wronged and/or slighted by others. They are bright and capable, but feel wronged in some way (this is usually an employee not a boss)



They start off friendly, but then turn on you and treat you like you are “the other”. They think you have had it easy compared to them.

The Chip on the Shoulder

- You can not alter this persons negative attitude. Any demands you make will be seen as unfair.

Survival Skill: Stick with fact when you talk with this person. Use job descriptions and policies. If they do not play by the rules... seek a new employee.

Escape Plan

- There is a large number of bad managers, ill-equipped for the job.
 - Companies promote for a number of reasons, usually it has nothing to do with the ability to manage.
 - Three reasons: Technical expert, Seniority and politics.
 - Once promoted, there is little or no training offered.

What happened?

- Meet with your boss on a regular basis
 - 15 minutes saves you hours of frustration
- Create an agenda for every meeting
 - Keep minutes, create folder, bring to every mtg
- Be aware of your boss's changing priorities
- Anticipate problems and offer solutions in a manner non-threatening to your boss
- Give an IPR

Improve the dynamic by taking control



QUESTIONS/ Comments