

Keeping Productive in Mean and Crazy Workplaces

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A lot of our emotional tension and feelings of discontent can stem from stressful working environments. Too many employees can identify with feeling unfulfilled, underpaid, overworked, and very unappreciated at their jobs. For many the initially promising career has become just a job. Not only is a lack of passion of the culprit, but also having to deal with so many other job-related matters can be the cause of our discontent. Many employees testify to laboring in emotionally unhealthy environments filled with mean colleagues, overbearing bosses, impossible workloads, and unfair work policies. While this may seem like the typical description of many working environments there are emotional backlashes. We may take home the residues of our stressful workplaces with us. As a consequence, our children, spouses, friends and relatives are the ones who receive the brunt of our job dissatisfaction. We are often too tired to function properly or even normally in our homes.

This emotional job un-satisfaction can lead us to be in a constant state of moodiness and fatigue. We can become so overwhelmed by this *employment fatigue* that we begin to find ways to avoid social interactions and even intimacy with those who are closest to us. We may even begin to prefer isolation instead of human interaction.

Unless we find another job with safer emotional working conditions our work environment will continue to seriously affect our interactions with those who are closest to us.

And while finding another job is a viable option, perhaps it is something that you are not prepared to do right now. However, in the meantime you can find ways of dealing with your reality. In other words, if you do stay in your crazy workplace, your situation is not hopeless. So,

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here are some suggestions to exercise noticeable change in your workplace:

1. **Optimize your work space** - The lighting, seating, even noise level in your workspace can affect your mood and therefore your effectiveness. If you can't get your employer to finance a physical makeover of your space, invest in it on your own. Find ways of re-arranging, and sprucing up your space.

2. **Keep your workspace clean and organized – even if no one else does** – There's nothing more telling of a working environment than how its workspaces are kept. Disorganized offices, cubicles, and desks are an indication of careless workers. Your workspace is a reflection of the quality work you deliver.

3. **Say what you mean and mean what you say** - Stay out of office politics, but make sure that whatever you say within closed quarters you can repeat in public. Communicate in a clear and confident manner.

4. **Cancel your membership to the workplace clique** – Every work place has a clique, it is comprised by senior employers or by those who are treated with more deference than the rest. New and unpopular workers can feel at a disadvantage if they don't belong to this circle. Reality is that these cliques can be cut-throat. Stay away from them.

5. **Don't take work home** – Don't call colleagues after work to gossip about work. Remember that you do have another life; invest time in it and in those who form part of your real life.

6. **Keep your privacy settings on**– Leave your personal issues at home. Make a distinction - your colleagues are your professional work partners. They are not your therapists or counselors.

7. **Be committed to doing your job** – It's simple. It doesn't matter who isn't doing their job or doing it right, you do yours. That's what you are being paid for.

8. **Live up to your personal principles** – Be clear about who you are and what you stand for. Don't compromise your values. Remember what you need is respect for your value system not approval or acceptance.

9. **Be professional** – From flipping burgers to running an executive office, every job has its protocol and policies. Follow them. Dress like a professional and act like one, even if you are washing dishes or cleaning bathrooms.

10. **Hold yourself to a higher creed** – It's not about pleasing your boss or making the company look good, it's about maintaining a personal reputation. Everything you do carries your name on it. Do a good job because it represents you.

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