



Timely Information for Personal Success

## How to Deal with Annoying Co-Workers

By Ford R. Myers

**D**o you work with one or more co-workers who SERIOUSLY annoy you? Is there someone in your office whose habits and behaviors just plain “drive you crazy?”

When you’re working eight hours a day in close quarters – or even in cubicles – some would say that it’s only a matter of time before some of your colleagues will really start to get on your nerves. This problem is much more common than you might think!

It’s hard to believe that some individuals can be so unaware of how their behaviors are affecting others in the workplace. Yet, we see these sorts of issues at almost every company!

I offer the following three techniques to stay focused on your work despite the influence of annoying co-workers:

### 1. Annoying co-workers impact your productivity:

Annoying behavior, and the interoffice bickering it often creates, can be costly. If the annoying behavior doesn’t stop, it will definitely decrease your productivity. You’ll do just about anything to avoid the annoying person, which can keep important work from getting done. You’ll be frustrated and grow unhappy on the job, so you’ll probably start arriving at work later and leaving earlier than usual, which also diminishes productivity.

### 2. Annoying co-workers affect your morale:

If you can resolve the issue with the perpetrator within a reasonable period of time, your morale shouldn’t be affected very much at all. But if your complaints go unanswered, and nothing is done about the problem, you may become very disillusioned and demoralized. Nobody likes to be in a work situation where they don’t feel listened to.

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## Healthy Recipe: Apple-Cranberry Oatmeal

### INGREDIENTS:

- 1 cup water
- 1/2 cup oatmeal
- 3 tablespoons chopped, tart apple
- 3 tablespoons dried cranberries
- 1 teaspoon brown sugar

### NUTRITIONAL VALUE:

- Calories per serving: 266
- Protein: 7 g.
- Carbohydrates: 54 g.
- Sodium: 3 mg.
- Fat: 3 g.
- Fiber: 7 g.

### DIRECTIONS:

❶ Combine water and oatmeal in a small saucepan.

❷ Add apples and cranberries and cook, stirring occasionally, over medium heat, for 7 minutes.

❸ Spoon into a serving dish, sprinkle with the brown sugar. Serve warm.

**Serving size:** about 1 cup.

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 PO Box 322, Waupaca, WI 54981  
 Phone: 715-258-2448  
 Fax: 715-258-9048  
 Website: [www.impact-publications.com](http://www.impact-publications.com)  
 Email: [info@impacttrainingcenter.net](mailto:info@impacttrainingcenter.net)

**Publisher:** Scott Kolpien  
**Managing Editor:** Mike Jacquart

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## Questions and Answers

### Dealing with MESSY Colleagues

**Q:** *I seldom go to the break room anymore because it's so disgusting. Dishes are never done, and the fridge is full of outdated food. Any suggestions?*

**A:** I have several. First, I'm assuming you've confronted the guilty parties and nothing was done? Try again, this time by offering a solution. One thing I've seen work is forming a "committee" of sorts of several people, you decide how many, who take turns doing dishes, sweeping or vacuuming, or any other break room chores that need to be done. By rotating the work, it doesn't fall to a single person each time. Second, hold people responsible for dealing with food in the fridge. Set a deadline of say, one week, and if the person hasn't brought it home by then, it gets dumped out. PERIOD. ■

## ... Annoying Co-Workers

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### 3. What you can do if this situation becomes extreme:

Your best approach will be to diplomatically let your colleague know that some of his or her actions are annoying you. Believe it or not, the person who is displaying this annoying behavior simply may not be aware of what they're doing! Once he or she hears your complaint, the offending habits may simply stop.

### Summary

After trying to address the issues directly with the annoying co-worker, if that doesn't work, take your comments to management, who may refer it to the EAP. At that point, it's really the responsibility of the department supervisor or the senior manager to address these kinds of problems.

If your complaints continue to "fall on deaf ears" and nothing changes, try to get transferred to another department or function. And if THAT doesn't work, it's probably time to look for a new job at a different company! ■



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