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Columnist

Professional Development

Three sources of job conflict

Sometimes we love our job. Sometimes we hate it. I don't know anyone who loves every part of his or her job. We all have those areas that require us to do things we don't want to do. And some people have serious job conflicts. They can come from one of these three areas.

Me-You Conflict. People who work together have different ways of seeing and doing things and that can cause conflict. For example, those who take risks and make quick decisions get impatient with slower-moving people who like to take their time in making a decision. And the low risk-takers feel pressured. People with different behavioral styles can drive each other crazy. Personality conflicts cause productivity and those involved to suffer.

An understanding of people's behavioral styles and values can go a long way in resolving such issues. Realize that people have a perceived need to act in a certain way to get what they want. We're all generally moving toward pleasure and away from pain. Learn not to take what you see as others' bad behavior personally. Realize it's no reflection on you. You're not responsible for their behavior, only for your own reaction to it. Some things you can let go. Don't let people take advantage of you, and at the same time don't get all bent out of shape if someone says or does something you don't like.

Set strong boundaries and let people know they can't cross the line. If they do, explain why you won't accept their actions.

Respect yourself and others and you'll get more respect from them.

Me-Job Conflict. This happens when the person is not suited to the job. It may require behaviors, skills, or knowledge they don't have.

If a job requires you to have outgoing people skills and you're an introvert, you're going to struggle to adapt. Doing this day after day will cause you stress and that will affect your relationships with your boss and co-workers.

Employers can go a long way in preventing me-job conflicts by assessing the behaviors and attitudes of their applicants and staff. Putting someone in the wrong job does neither the person nor the company any favors.

Me-Me Conflict. This may be the toughest to overcome no matter what our job is. It happens because we have conflicting behavioral styles or values within ourselves.

One example is the person who has both a dominant and cautious behavioral pattern. The dominant side is always saying, "Do it now." The cautious nature is saying, "Take your time and do it right." Just as two people with different behavioral styles can experience conflict, so can the person with behavioral tendencies that work against each other.

Conflicting values can also push and pull us in opposite directions. Someone who is high in both the Individualistic and Social values will struggle between getting power and control for themselves versus helping and serving others.

The best way to resolve these conflicts is to understand where they're coming from and choose the best outcome for each situation. Sometimes it's best to serve ourselves and other times it's best to put our own interests aside to help others.

Someone once pointed out to me that opposites attract; yet it's those differences that cause us trouble down the road. This is true of business and personal relationships between loved ones, co-workers, neighbors, and friends.

The key to resolving our conflicts is understanding and a desire to celebrate the best in all of us.

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