



## PROBLEMS... SOLUTIONS...

We've seen it or been through it.; females in the work place who do everything, but act professional. Here are some of the most common problems plaguing females when an office environment turns into a henpecking battle ground.

### Do you have a co-worker who speaks down to you?

Your best approach is to keep a cool distance from her while maintaining a professional relationship. Do not take her behavior personally. See her as an unpleasant obstacle that you have to deal with, but—one that you do not have to like.

### Are you subject to a female coworker who is more pleasant to her male colleagues than female co-workers?

You are in the grip of a super competitive woman who views every other woman as a rival. Your best bet is to try and diffuse her killer instinct by letting her know that you aren't a threat. You can do this by appreciating her work, noticing her expertise and complimenting her on the way she handles certain business situations.

### Do you have a co-worker who puts you down publicly?

Start by taking steps to purge the emotional toxins that naturally emerge from receiving her verbal jabs. You could engage in rigorous exercise after work, get a massage, or try some other form of self-care. If you need support, seek out the counsel of a trusted workplace confidante—a mentor or possibly seasoned professional.

# Mean Girls At Work:

## How to Stay Professional When Things Get Personal

Women-to-women relationships in the work place are complicated. Jealousy. Backstabbing. Gossip. Malicious Behavior. Sabotage. Entitlement. Unprofessionalism.

### Does your female colleague harshly put down your ideas and company input?

First and foremost, do not take her remarks personally. This is an angry individual who is using you as her current target. You are not the first person to feel her verbal barbs, and you won't be the last. You can take one of two approaches: Disarm her by using humor, or ignore her.

### Is there a woman at the office who argues with everything you say?

Approach your colleague and ask to have a private conversation with her. Let her know that you respect her opinion and you want to work with her, but that she seems to have a problem working with you and you would like to talk about it. If this woman denies there is a problem, say, "Okay. If you decide there's something you want to tell me, I'm available."

### Is there a woman in the office who freezes you out during a conversation—personal or business?

It could be related to your age, your appearance, or your credentials. Whatever the issue is, your frosty coworker isn't responding to you, she is responding to what she thinks you stand for. As upsetting as it is to be unfairly judged, you will not be able to change this woman's mind about you. Understand that anyone who has to freeze another person out probably has a very defensive and insecure point of view.

### Is there a woman who is sabotaging you at work because you are "different?"

Try to clear the air by saying, "It seems that you don't like me, and I want to find a way that we can work together. We don't have to be friends, but we do have to work with each other. Can we agree on that?" See how your colleague responds. One thing you can do is document her behavior. Keep a running list of what she does, and if her cruel and demeaning behavior continues, you may need to go to Human Resources and report your experience.

### Does a "clique" of women at work ignore you?

Make your own lunch dates and your own plans to meet your friends and professional connections for lunch. Over time as you develop relationships with co-workers, they may reach out to you.

### Does a workplace gossip bully you into joining in?

Try this: "Let me think about it," or, "I have little interaction with her, so I don't really know," or, "That's interesting. I'm not sure." Then go back to eating your lunch or focus on performing whatever task you were engaged in before the insiders tried to enroll you.

### Do women whisper about you when you walk by?

Let it go. You don't really know what they said. If they were gossiping about you, it does not matter. Women who put other women down are doing it to feel better about themselves. Take the high road, proceed as if the incident never happened. ●



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