



Young Employees - Ask for Help!

Edited by Personal Safety Nets® from Carolyn Kepcher's article in the NY Daily News, September 2, 2011.

Here's a story line with an ending that's all too familiar to seasoned workers. A new employee, fresh out of college, begins work at an entry-level job while finishing her master's degree in her chosen field. Her new job is a step on the way up the ladder, and she's willing to work hard for the brief time she plans to be there. The problem in this particular workplace reveals itself soon enough: the evil supervisor.

As it becomes more difficult every day to work for a boss who is known for temperamental outbursts, snide comments and other misdeeds, the new employee decides it's time to take action and go over the boss' head. As more experienced workers shake their heads and try to dissuade from taking this course of action, off she marches to the senior manager's office. She emerges 30 minutes later, feeling satisfied that her complaints were heard.

By the time she returns to her work area, her supervisor had already been informed of the meeting and everything that was said. Her work situation goes from bad to worse, and soon even the other employees began to avoid her. A job that this up-and-comer thought would be an easy way to pay the bills while attending grad school has turned into a negative view of the working world.

What to do? First, she has every right to feel hurt and miserable. But she makes the mistakes that many workers of every age make over and over again in their careers. She isn't interested in listening to advice and she doesn't make use of the people and their skills and experience.

She later recalls that others gently tried to talk her out of her plan of action. Why did she choose to ignore their advice? Some experts say that it's all about control. Even when we know that the advice-giver has a point, we don't want to act upon their counsel because we feel like we're being told what to do. Other experts say people want to believe what they want to believe - which is why they dismiss any advice that disagrees with what they already "know." Still other experts feel that our lack of being part of a "community" of workers leaves us ill-prepared to gather information and opinions. All are possibly at work in this tale.

Do you want to know our PSN advice? Here it is . . . do a better job of welcoming the wise counsel of others: ASK.

Research shows YOU act upon advice at a much higher rate when you ask for it, as opposed to when it is unsolicited. You could benefit from asking more often, and from varied sources. Don't assume that you always know what is best for our "unique" situation. Don't be afraid of looking weak. Don't give in to bashfulness. Have courage and ASK!

The new employee/graduate student is an excellent example - she didn't want to listen to people. When it comes to a particular workplace, everyone who has been there a while is an expert and part of your "work family."

In other words, ask for advice – use the knowledge of the team that surrounds you – build a safety network! Sometimes it's about putting aside what you know, just for a moment, to ask for a different perspective. Workplace scenarios that seem challenging and difficult have probably played out many times before. Even the advice and experience of others that does not offer a solution can be valuable - at least you'll know what won't work.

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