13.6: Chapter Wrap-Up

At the beginning of this chapter, we discussed how a good chunk of our lives is spent at work, so engaging in a range of interpersonal relationships in the workplace is unavoidable. We started the chapter by defining the term “professionalism” and what it means to be a professional in today's workplace. We then scratched the surface of the communication and leadership research that examines leadership and followership. We discussed one of the most common relationships we have in the workplace, the coworker relationship. Coworker relationships were followed by an examination of romantic entanglements in the workplace, along with their pros and cons. We end this chapter looking at problematic interpersonal relationships in the workplace.

End of Chapter

Key Terms

- Career Strategizing
- Collegial peers
- Cost Escalation
- Depersonalization
- Deviant Workplace Behavior
- Directive Support
- Ease of Opportunity
- Emotional Vampires
- Ethics
- Excuse-Making
Morren Michaels had been working with Raja Rahal for several years, and the two were pretty friendly with each other. They sent out to eat after work and often strategized on how to make their office better. The two weren’t exactly best friends in the workplace, but they were friends.

Out of nowhere, Morren was promoted by the CEO of the company and asked to take over the realms of her division. At first, things were smooth sailing. Morren had no problems, and the division was more profitable under her leadership than it had been under the previous manager. However, Morren quickly realized she was going to have problems with her old friend Raja. Almost immediately, Raja pointed out that Morren was “not one of us” anymore to the rest of the division since Morren was now in management. At first, it was a snide remark, but things quickly started escalating.

Anytime Raja didn’t get her way, she would email everyone up the corporate ladder with her complaints against Morren (e.g., the head of HR, the CEO, the chief operating officer). In Morren’s mind, all she was doing was expecting the same level of work from Raja as she did from anyone else in her division. One day in a meeting, Morren asked Raja to take on a new project. Surprisingly, Raja said yes and thought it was a good fit for her. Morren asked Raja to give the group an update on the project at the next meeting.

Throughout the next month, Morren checked in with Raja to see how the project was going. Raja scheduled a couple of meetings with Morren to talk about the project, but had to cancel because she was sick or her kid was sick. Morren even
suggested meeting at a coffee shop near Raja’s house to make things easier, but Raja had to bail out because she’d forgotten she’d scheduled another appointment.

Ultimately, the day of the next meeting came. When Morren got to the place on the agenda where Raja was supposed to report in, Raja looked at the entire group and said, “I never agreed to do that.” Morren sat stunned as the rest of the division sat there uncomfortably. Finally, Morren pulled herself together and informed Raja that she had indeed agreed to take on the project. And that the meeting minutes from the previous meeting along with the tape recording of the last meeting kept by the secretary, showed her agreeing.

After the meeting, Morren went back into her office and closed the door. She was a bit dumbfounded by what transpired. After the meeting, many of her coworkers came up to her to see if she was okay. They all said variations of the same thing, “We heard her agree to take on the project last month.” Thankfully, Morren had the secretary record their meetings to make taking notes easier. She then put the audio recordings on an internal server so all members of the department could relisten to them if necessary.

Morren sat her desk, opened her email, and quickly noticed an email from Raja. Morren could only imagine what the email would say. As she read the email, she was concerned at how twisted the facts of what had transpired had become. Raja accused Morren of embarrassing her during the meeting by falsely accusing her of not having done her job. Of course, the email was copied to everyone within the division and the higher corporate hierarchy.

1. Why do you think Morren and Raja’s relationship changed when Morren took on a position of leadership?
2. What type of problematic follower do you think Raja is?
3. If you were Morren, what would your next step be? Why?

End of Chapter Quiz

1. In an attempt to make herself look good in the organization, Agotha tends to hoard information. If something important comes across her desk, she tends to keep it instead of giving it to the people who could use the information. What type of unethical organizational communication is Agotha engaging in, according to W. Charles Redding?
   a. Coercive
   b. Sextructive
   c. Seceptive
   d. Intrusive
   e. Aecretive

2. Which of the following is NOT a way to take personal responsibility in the workplace?
   a. Acknowledging that you are responsible for your choices in the workplace.
   b. Acknowledging that you are responsible for how you feel at work.
   c. Accepting that you can control your stress and feelings of burnout.
   d. Deciding to take control of your attitudes, thoughts, and behaviors.
   e. Deciding to let your supervisor determine the best path for your self-improvement.

3. During a meeting, Barba says, “I will not be joining the rest of the group this weekend at the trade show due to a pre-arranged meeting I have had on my schedule for a few months.” The use of the words “will not” and “I have” instead of their contraction forms are examples of what type of language use?
   a. Common
   b. Formal
4. At work, Stella has an inherent need to be seen as her supervisor’s peer and not as an underling. Stella does support her supervisor, but she has no problem confronting her supervisor when Stella thinks her supervisor is making a bad decision. According to Ira Chaleff, what type of follower is Stella?
   a. Avoider
   b. Implementer
   c. Individualist
   d. Partner
   e. Resource

5. Susan always looks at her coworker Polly as a kind of problem. Polly came from a very religious upbringing and didn’t seem to fit in with the rest of the people who work at GenCorp. For example, when Susan and her coworkers go out to eat, Polly doesn’t join them because her male colleagues will be there. Polly also doesn’t have any sense of pop culture at all. At a meeting recently, someone mentioned Lady Gaga, and Polly asked if she was a member of British royalty. Although everyone had a good laugh and Polly played along, Susan could tell that Polly was completely unaware of why her question was funny. According to Janie Harden Fritz, Polly is an example of what kind of “problematic coworker” for Susan?
   a. The adolescent
   b. The mild annoyance
   c. The independent other
   d. The soap opera star
   e. The pushy playgirl

References


2 Ibid.; pg. 114.


15 Ibid.


19 Ibid.; p. 254.


21 Ibid.; pg. 33.


33 Ibid.; pg. 45


36 Ibid; pg. 47

38 Ibid.; pg. 121


41 Ibid.


45 Ibid.

46 Ibid.


58 Ibid.


61 Ibid.


63 Ibid.; pg. 180


69 Ibid.; pg. 31.


75 Ibid.; pg. 40.

End of Chapter Quiz Answer Key

1. E
2. E
3. B
4. D
5. C