



**RESISTANT  
STUBBORN  
NEGATIVE &  
UNMOTIVATED  
EMPLOYEES**

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# Resistant, Stubborn, Negative & Unmotivated Employees

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We all get stressed out - or at least frustrated - with our jobs at times. It might stem from a frantic commute, mounting assignments, or a coworker causing conflict. Whatever the challenge may be, there is a proper way to handle our issues in order to create [a positive work environment](#). Any workplace with more than one employee will have different personalities. That's right - even an office of just two people will have differing dynamics, and those two employees have to cooperate with one another just as they would in a building of 20, 200 or 2,000. The difference is that working with a difficult employee might be a little easier when you work in a larger office, compared to being just one of a few people.

**As tough as it may sound, there are ways to deal with difficult employees and the conflicts they bring.** With a large number of personalities, you cannot deal with everyone using the same method. You will have to be versatile and patient. [Lifehack](#) offers a few steps on how to handle unique personalities at work. Those steps include *accepting* conflict or differences by being kind and patient, and *finding the source* without jumping to conclusions.

Keep in mind that you cannot use the same approach with everyone. Each person reacts differently, regardless of the size of your staff. Case in point, you cannot be delicate with a blunt person or vice versa. Keep this in mind when delegating tasks to individuals or small teams. If a person is very analytical, there may be little creativity. On the other hand, when dealing with a sensitive person, he or she may also overanalyze to the point where making confident decisions paralyzes him or her with fear.

[Master Class Management](#) talks about a few different personality types, and explains how to handle them in the workplace.

[Considerate](#) employees are often polite, optimistic and meticulous. However, this may come at the risk of being indecisive come crunch time. [Curmudgeons](#) are the complete opposite, while [Brainiacs](#) tend to be aggressive and manipulative. The article contains an in-depth description of those and a few other personalities to watch out for in the office.

So, you have an idea of the different types of employees, and how to deal with them individually. What about in a team environment? What happens

when you put a Curmudgeon in the same room as the Sensitive one? What about a Brainiac vs. an Over-Confident type? *Forbes* magazine's [Victor Lipman](#) (no relation to our own Mr. Lipman) offers a few tips of his own, stating the manager should "Be thoughtful about assignments" and "100% clear about articulating pain points", as well as "Know when to say when". Lipman also suggests having human resources on your side, especially if things escalate quickly, and notes that the HR department is more than just the overbearing archetype commonly found in Hollywood.



## As the manager, you also have to set an example for your crew.

Be objective and never take sides. Also, be sure not to form a decision based on an existing opinion. Erika Andersen, also of Forbes, offered her advice for managers. Andersen's list includes listening to even the most difficult employees, regardless of any preconceived notions. Other tips include being consistent, outlining specific goals or consequences and not turning people against one another, especially if it is an offensive employee.

Finally, our own Mr. Larry Lipman offers his advice on how to handle negativity from complainers or whiners. He suggests that when someone plays the blame game, that's their internal problem, not yours. In other words, a person may be projecting prior issues onto you and others. *In short, some people are happy being miserable.*

Again, it is your job to listen and be patient. Paraphrase the person's complaint to him or her and find out what is really causing the problem. Mr. Lipman suggests treating complaints as a "pop quiz" of sorts. If the complainant does not frustrate you, then you "pass". However, if you "fail", you may have some learning and maturing to do. Kill conflicts with kindness; smiling is probably not something the complainer expects.

Finally, as a manager or even a team member, you want to keep everyone motivated. *Remember that you cannot change others' behavior, just your own.* Be accountable for your own actions, and remain professional with your reactions. Do not jump to conclusions or act impulsively. Take time to write down your thoughts and think about the best course of action. When working with difficult or unique employees, staying focused and not letting distractions throw you off is important. Focus on the big picture.

While you may have a good relationship with your boss or workers, keep the relationships at work professional. Do not treat him or her like your therapist or best friend. Finally, work hard every day to better yourself. Even if you are at the top, you are never too old or advanced to learn. Try to pick up on new skills and trends. Do not be afraid to spread what you have learned to your crew. You never know how it could change the office dynamic.

Keeping a positive office environment is important, as is maintaining morale. In addition, motivating others and leading by example is also important. Below are *seven tips* on how to do so:

1. **If you talk the talk, then walk the walk.**

Be consistent in your approach with your employees. **Keep your commitments.** If you say you are going to do something, stick to your promise, and even consider having your staff holding you to this.

2. **Acknowledge their good work.**

If you only take time to recognize your employees when they make a mistake, you should reconsider your approach. Your workers want to feel appreciated every now and then, and only highlighting faults will make them feel inadequate. A pat on the back every now and then is always good. Catch them doing things right!



### 3. Make time for all employees.

Another way to make employees feel appreciated and show you care is by making time for them. Keep open office hours, and interact regularly. Maybe even take your crew out for lunch from time to time (your treat).

### 4. Recognize their potential and encourage it.

We all have lulls, where productivity may decline a bit. If it is the first time or a rare occurrence, use encouragement instead of chastising. Your helpful words could help someone get back on track.

### 5. Delegate.

Some employees rely on managers to stand by their side the entire time. Others relish independence, and would rather you take a hands-off approach, though they may say so. When you assign your next project, start by stepping back for a bit and trusting your team. Monitor progress from a distance and check in to see how everything is going, but remain in the background.

### 6. Praise in public, and correct in private.

In addition to never recognizing their good work, another way to make employees feel badly is by publicly humiliating them. There is nothing wrong with praising them in front of their peers, but to chastise them is not only embarrassing, it is also unprofessional. Pull him or her aside to discuss the issue one-on-one.

### 7. Listen without judgment.

Never enter a conflict with a preconceived notion. Even if the situation involves a known troublemaker, hear both sides of the story and remain objective. You never know when the troublemaker could be innocent.

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*So, there you have it, expert advice designed to help you put out the fires in your office. While it may take some work, dealing with a tough, difficult or even notoriously problematic employee does not have to feel like pulling teeth. By remembering the above tips, you are well on your way to easing tension around the office. If all else fails, walk to a different location to vent your frustrations. Count to 10. Take some aspirin. AND.....be grateful that you are NOT that person!*

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