



Building Positive Work Relationships

Getting along well with your colleagues and co-workers is an important aspect of workplace success. Creating collegial relationships will make it easier to do your job effectively and may help you get more enjoyment out of your work.

If you are looking for ways to improve your work relationships, try these tips:

- ▶ **Start the day on a positive note.** Greet the other members of your team as you encounter them. A friendly “Good morning” or “How are you today?” communicates that you care about your co-workers as both people and colleagues.
- ▶ **Avoid pity parties and gripe sessions.** Surround yourself with people who enjoy their work. Try to emulate their behavior.

- ▶ **View change as part of the process.** Stay flexible, open to new ideas, and adaptable to change.
- ▶ **Avoid comparing yourself to others.** Keep your focus on making the most of your role, not on what other people are doing.
- ▶ **Pick your battles.** Spending a lot of time with another person may result in the sort of small irritations and resentments that crop up in all interpersonal relationships. While it may be appropriate to address any issues that impact your ability to be productive (such as a tendency to procrastinate), it may be best to accept other traits as personality quirks.

- ▶ **Own your mistakes.** Sometimes a mistake doesn’t just affect you, but a colleague too. If you’ve created a headache for a co-worker, admit it and apologize. Set up a system (such as sending a “heads-up” email) that will prevent a repeat of the incident.
- ▶ **Give credit where it’s due.** Make certain your co-workers know how much you appreciate their efforts and how they help you meet work goals. If a co-worker goes above and beyond, tell your manager.

If you are struggling to establish a good relationship with a co-worker, contact LifeMatters. Help is available 24/7/365.

Inside:

- ▶ Coping with an Elderly Parent’s Changing Needs
- ▶ Holiday Budgeting
- ▶ Avoiding Financial FOMO



Coping with an Elderly Parent's Changing Needs

Aging may lead to changes in a senior's physical and emotional wellbeing. If you are helping an elderly parent or other loved one adjust to these changes, try these tips:

- ▶ If an elderly person is constantly asking you to repeat yourself, misses key information, or doesn't answer when you speak, he or she may be experiencing hearing loss. Steps to address this concern include:

- Have the elder get a professional hearing test and, if needed, a hearing aid.
- When you need to speak to the person, turn down the TV and other noise and ask others to be quiet. Sit down in front of the person and speak in a clear, loud voice.
- Keep in mind that the elder may struggle to filter noise in restaurants or at large gatherings.

- ▶ Cataracts, macular degeneration, glaucoma, and other vision problems become more common with age. Actions you can take to address vision problems include:



- Talk to the elder's doctor about the impaired eyesight and make sure any eyeglass prescriptions are up-to-date.
- For reading, obtain large-print books or set the elder's tablet to a larger font size. Audio-books are a good option too.
- Distribute magnifying and reading glasses throughout the house so that a vision-assist is always handy.
- If the elder's home is insufficiently lit, add higher wattage light bulbs or additional lamps.

- ▶ Strokes, Alzheimer's disease, and dementia may affect an elder's ability to manage simple daily activities. If a senior is struggling with physical or cognitive impairment:

- Talk to the elder's doctor and other caregivers about the best ways to help him or her manage daily activities.
- Use simple, clear language when talking to an elder. Make lists and put reminders in key locations.
- Be patient and compassionate when a senior struggles with memory issues or managing basic life tasks. Remember that this is difficult for your parent or relative too.

- ▶ Elderly people may suffer from depression, anxiety, and other mental health issues. Actions you can take include:

- Talk to the senior's doctor about symptoms, such as lack of interest in favorite activities, low appetite, difficulty sleeping, or sadness.
- Keep in mind that some medications may have an impact on mood or behavior.
- Look for resources to help a senior cope with grief over the loss of a loved one or having to give up favorite activities.
- Encourage the elder to eat healthy, exercise, and get 7-9 hours of sleep a night.

Whether you need helpful resources for elders or are struggling with caregiver stress, LifeMatters can help. Call 24/7/365.

Dollars & Sense: Holiday Budgeting

By the time you read this, the holiday shopping season will already be in full swing. With such an extended season, it may be a struggle to keep your budget on track. These suggestions may help you avoid impulse shopping:

- ▶ **Make a game plan.** If you have a partner, make sure you're on the same page — especially when it comes to shopping for your kids. It's important to be in agreement on just how deep you can dip into the family finances to make holiday wishes come true.
- ▶ **Research.** If you know exactly what you want to buy, why not get the best possible deal? Before you head to your local superstore or mall, perform an online search for the item. This may be especially helpful if you are near the window for holiday sales, as you may find that one retailer has the item on sale at just the right time for you.

- ▶ **Set realistic goals.** While it may be tempting to break the bank to make someone happy, it could create more problems down the line. If you can't pay off your purchases immediately or in a short amount of time, reconsider your shopping list.



- ▶ **Take advantage of free shipping.** Bundling your purchases with online retailers may make it easier to cut shipping costs. In addition, retailers sometimes offer free shipping as part of holiday promotions.
- ▶ **Use rewards.** If you accrue points through your credit cards, check the available rewards. You may be able to receive free or discounted items from major retailers through the program. Opting to use your points for cash back at the end of the holiday season is another option, and will speed up paying off holiday bills.
- ▶ **Give of yourself.** Sometimes the best gifts are low-cost, personalized items. A framed photo, hand-knitted scarf, or custom-built bookcase may be far more meaningful than something purchased online or at a store. Dog-walking, pet-sitting, auto repair, and housecleaning also make great gifts.

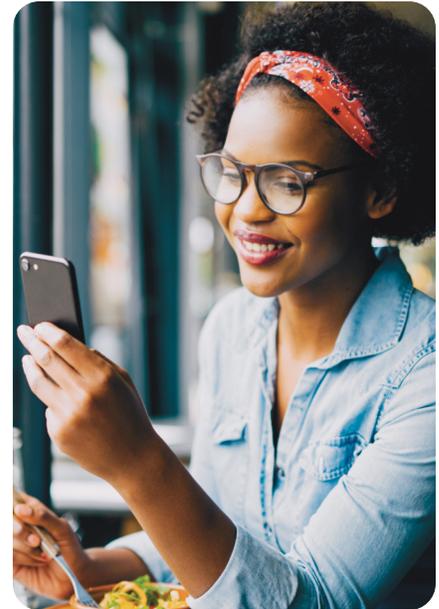
Would you like assistance with planning your holiday budget? LifeMatters can help. Call 24/7/365.

Avoiding Financial FOMO

Social media is great for keeping in touch with family and friends, but it can also increase your fear of missing out (or FOMO, as the kids say these days). If seeing all the new cars, houses, electronic devices, and fabulous vacations on your feed(s) is making you want to spend money you shouldn't, try these solutions:

- ▶ **Avoid trying to keep up with the Joneses.** Social media adds a whole new layer to the sense that you have to “stay even” with the people around you. However, it's not a good idea to compare your financial situation or material possessions to anyone else's. You're better off taking a good look at your own savings, income, and budget and focusing on changes that will help you reach your goals.

- ▶ **Be honest with your friends.** Differences in financial status sometimes crop up in friendships. If one person can afford a lavish vacation and the other can't, it may lead to disappointment. It's important to be honest about what you can afford and set limits for yourself. True friends will understand if you can't commit to that winter getaway in the Caribbean or New Year's Eve bash with the pricey cover charge.
- ▶ **Do a low-cost remodel.** Can't afford a new living room set like your old college roommate? Try freshening up your living space by repainting the walls and finding some vintage pictures at the local thrift store. You'll be surprised at how often small changes can give a room a fresh new feel.
- ▶ **Shop smart.** If you just can't get your friend's latest gadget off your mind, do some online research. A little patience may allow you to get the same item at a lower price.



- ▶ **Reduce your social media diet.** Too much FOMO can lead to stress and frustration. If seeing other people's good fortune is bringing you down, it might be time to step away from social media for a while. Use the time to focus on activities that help you meet your financial goals.

For more ideas on how to keep your focus on what you do have (rather than what you don't), contact LifeMatters. Help is available 24/7/365.

Source: Balance

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