

# Making Them Match

By David B. Burns

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We've all had the experience of hiring or working with people who seemed wonderful at first, and later turned out to be unpleasant to work with. They "interviewed well," but after you really got to know them, you discovered the behavior didn't match the veneer.

It's not that they don't know the job or perform well. In fact, they may be the company expert in the technical aspects of the job. The problem is with habitual behaviors and attitudes that trigger your "dislike button." They seem to be experts at finding your last raw nerve and rubbing it the wrong way. Since we all know how tough it is to work day after day with these folks, it's important to take stock of ourselves to ensure we are not the one who trigger those around us.

Here are five of the most common workplace behavior and attitude triggers to become aware of and eliminate from your repertoire.

**Ingratitude** – We all like to be recognized for the contributions we make. Some appreciate public thanks, and others like a private pat on the back, but failing to be thankful to those who help us achieve our goals is both disrespectful and demotivating to those around us. Even worse is taking credit for yourself from what others have done. Stealing credit is theft, and a sure way to make enemies at work.

**Blaming** – When you make a mistake, be professional and do the right thing by taking responsibility for it. Don't try to throw it on someone (or something) else. A childhood rule sums up nicely the fix for this behavior: "mess-up, fess-up, fix-it."

**Lateness** - Being on time shows you respect the other person's time. Being late shows you think your time is more valuable. Rushing into meetings late and out of breath also portrays you as someone who is disorganized, undisciplined, and frenzied. Do you like to work with people like that? No? Then don't be one yourself.

**Sarcasm** – Sarcasm is poison. When we stick someone with a sarcastic remark, we think we are being clever and nailing them to the wall. We remember how clever we were. They remember how mean you were. Outside they may even smile and say, "Oh, it's OK," while inside they are mentally plotting your place on the jerk index.

**Gossip** – Gossip is poison. Even though everyone agrees that gossip is wrong, most everyone engages in it. In the workplace, gossip creates many negative

effects including distraction from job duties, harm to employee relationships, and a general lack of trust among all personnel. If you are known as the company gossip, you won't be trusted. No one can be sure what you are saying about them when they aren't present. You have the power to stop gossip in its tracks. Use a line I learned from Steven Covey: "I'm not comfortable talking about \_\_\_\_\_ without her being present."

If you use these five triggers you will, at best, get compliance from your team. When you eliminate these triggers from your behavior, you will create a more helpful and productive atmosphere, because the inside you and the outside you will match. You will be seen as an ally, as someone who can be trusted. As a result, where you formally got mere compliance you will now find commitment. And that is a truly powerful behavior for success.

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