

**How to Approach Your Boss When Conflict Arises at Work**

When you are in a workplace with a lot of interpersonal relationships, conflict is inevitable because you have individuals from all different backgrounds and beliefs together in one space. While it is tempting to just want to avoid conflict, it is a better strategy to know how to tackle it head on given its inevitability. Lynn Taylor, author of *Tame Your Office Tyrant* states that “… conflict in the workplace is as common as the office water cooler- ‘so knowing how to cope with it with finesse will help catapult your career like no other interpersonal skill”’ (Smith, 2013).

**Workplace Conflicts Related to Work That Commonly Arise:**

* Promotions
* Salary disparity
* Lack of recognition for achievement
* Shared responsibility among a team
* More general issues with personal space and privacy and personality conflicts

**Workplace Conflicts Not Work-Related:**

* The way someone looks
* The way someone speaks
* Political views
* Religious views

**Why Are People So Afraid of Conflict?**

* The word ‘conflict’ implies some kind of fight, battle, or struggle
* When people do not see things the way we do, we often feel threatened or that we have lost the battle
* Conflict can affect our morale and negatively affect how we feel about work
* People often feel that these problems will disappear over time and do not want to come across as being tattlers, complainers, or brown-nosers

**What To Do When a Serious Conflict Arises:**

* Be sure you have solutions ready. If it is something you can resolve yourself, do it instead of turning something into a dramatic situation that does not need to be.
* Solve issues as quickly and effectively as possible as conflicts can negatively affect the entire dynamic of the workplace
* If your boss is causing an issue in your view: be straightforward and let them know what is bothering you, why it is bothering you, and ask if you can work together to resolve the conflict

**How to Approach the Boss When Conflict Arises:**

* Think about solutions before you approach the boss
* Calculate the risks
* Know your timing- you want to make sure your boss is in a good mood before beginning this conversation
* Ask for help
* Take the boss out to lunch- this will allow for a more casual atmosphere to be in place before discussing the issue
* Be prepared
* Be professional
* Make sure there are no loose ends on your part that could hurt you
* If you are responsible for any part of a conflict, admit fault
* Be willing to take advice

Smith, J. (2013, April 25). *How To Approach The Boss When Conflict Arises At Work*. Forbes. https://www.forbes.com/sites/jacquelynsmith/2013/04/25/how-to-approach-the-boss-when-conflict-arises-at-work/?sh=3c3ae4d163bd.

University Speaking Center, (336) 256-1346

For more resources check out our Website http://speakingcenter.uncg.edu