

DEALING WITH GRIPERS AND COMPLAINERS

I bet that somewhere in your life you have gripers, complainers and whiners. These individuals can cause other people to dread going to work in the morning. It's not easy being surrounded by negative people, but in any workplace there are bound to be some. They just seem to go with the territory. But a worker who complains constantly even over trivial details annoys others and affects everyone's productivity. It is part of your responsibility to help deal with these people.

Whether you are a manager or co-worker, here are some techniques that you can use to deal with the gripers, whiners and complainers in your life.

1. Listen to the complaints. Use active listening techniques like eye contact and nodding to make the person feel that you are really listening. Constant complainers usually continue because they feel no one is listening. And remember in every complaint lies the seed of improvement.
2. Ask questions. Ask the complainers what suggestions they have for improvement. Often complainers don't have solutions to problems and when you ask them for one, they will clam up.
3. Overcome the urge to argue with the complainer. Most of the time what the complainer wants is to dump on someone. Use phrases like, "Umm hum," "Is that so?" "So that's the way you feel?" and things that don't agree or disagree.
4. If you are the manager of the complainer, tell the employee what you can and can't do about the complaint. If you are a co-worker, again ask for solutions to the complaint and suggest that they talk to the manager. "Have you told Mrs. Smith about this problem?"
5. Finally, when all else fails, avoid being around the complainer as much as possible. (Unless you are their manager then you must do something about the problem.) When they approach your desk, say, "I'd love to talk to you, Bob, but I'm working on a big deadline right now." The more often you do this, the more often they will find someone else to complain to.