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## Improving your People Skills

Do you relate to people well? Do you make eye contact with them and give a firm handshake? Do you make occasional small talk when you pass a co-worker in the hallway? Do you attend office parties or just have a piece of cake and then return to your desk? You don't have to become the life of the office party but you should put forth more effort in your people skills in order to increase your work production and overall job performance.

If you lack the people skills needed to succeed in your place of work, then you shouldn't worry because there are various skills you can work on so you are more confident in one-on-one situations.

You should begin with examining your body language and the way you speak to people.

Do you look around the room and not make an eye-to-eye connection with the person you are standing in front with? Do you have bad posture? (E.g. slumped over while standing and sitting low in your chair without your back straight) This might not sound important but think of those individuals who are successful. They stand up straight, look you in the eye and give a firm handshake. Do not stare at a person but ensure you acknowledge them by looking at them in the eye.

Try not to abruptly interrupt while someone else is talking. Never speak over them but wait until they are finished to make your point. Listen to what they are saying very carefully - listen, do not wait to speak. Obviously, they are speaking directly to you so what they are saying is of the utmost importance. Make a mental note when they are speaking on key points you would like clarification on. You must ask questions if you have any concerns regarding the material covered.

When a co-worker or boss has critical feedback of your work, do not overreact by telling them they can shove it up their (you know what). You should accept criticism, not with a hostile attitude, but with a positive attitude. They are trying to help you, take their advice and make the necessary corrections.

You shouldn't avoid conflict because it might make you feel bad either. If you and a fellow co-worker have a problem, it is best to discuss it in an open forum rather than bickering like a couple of school girls. You are an adult, therefore, you will need to act like one and address your problems accordingly.



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If you have several employees who come from very rich and/or ethnic backgrounds it is very important not to make inappropriate comments and jokes. You never know how someone will react to a joke so try to avoid making highly racial and controversial jokes at the office. Yes, you might get a laugh from a few employees but you can seriously offend someone.

You don't have to shy away from taking on new responsibilities because you think they are too hard. Those who are assertive in the work place are the ones who get raises and promotions. You should always have a "can do" attitude and take charge of the situation when appropriate.

If you feel you have done an **excellent job** for your employer, do not hesitate to ask for a reasonable raise. The employer might say no for various reasons (such as the company cannot afford to give you one). There is no harm in asking, but don't demand one by pounding on your boss's desk and ask them for money. The fact that you brought it up may make your employer consider a raise for you in the future instead, so keep that in mind.