

# How to handle catty coworkers

**Question:** “Every day, I have to work with a group of rude and catty women. They call me a tattletale, even though I’m not. When I’m around, they make whispered remarks to each other. I tried to fit in by chatting and having lunch with them, but that didn’t work. Now I’ve adopted the attitude of “speak only when spoken to.” I limit my comments to “good morning” or “how is the weather?” Then I listen to my iPod all day. Although I like my work, I dread going to the office. The tension is taking a toll on me emotionally. Our manager is no help at all, and I can’t move to another position. What should I do?” — *Hate My Coworkers*

**Answer:** Unfortunately, you’ve gotten involved with a bunch of childish adults who enjoy playing silly games at work. And they seem to have sucked you into playing along with them. By refusing to speak, you are actually perpetuating this destructive game. Because these women want to upset you, your obvious distress will just encourage them to continue.

When confronted with a juvenile game, the wisest response is no response. This requires firm control of both your emotions and your behavior. No matter what happens, you must continue to act like a mature, professional adult. In dealing with your adversaries, always be pleasant and helpful. Smile when you talk to them. To maintain your sanity, seek out friendly folks from other departments to share your breaks and lunch.

Most importantly, don’t let these spiteful women control your feelings. They can only ruin your day if you give them the power to do so. Once you stop reacting to their taunts, eventually they will find a more rewarding target to torment.