

# ‘Gloom and doom’ co-worker badmouths everything: How do I make her stop?

**Question:** “Due to downsizing and others leaving the company, an immature co-worker was promoted to a low-level managerial position. Despite her new position, she badmouths the company and has a real "gloom and doom" attitude. I am tired of all her bashing and negativity. I've asked her to stop and also reminded her that she shouldn't do that in front of her employees now that she's in a position of authority. But it's like talking to a brick wall. We're friends, but she's really driving a wedge between us. Does anyone have a trick to make her stop? I can't take it too much longer before I snap.” — *Maisy*

## Comments

I would tell her that her behavior will cause bad employee moral and she WILL lose her employees respect if she even has any because people want to come to work in a positive environment and do actually want to like where they work and the people around them. She is really bring all that down and with a downsize she should be working to improve moral. I know you are friends but is it more important to keep this to yourself? The company would probably love to be enlightened about this situation, but she may lose her job. To keep your friendship ask her manager to be discrete about where the information came from, because if she is blabbing to many it really could have come from anyone. Good luck, here that type of person is walked right out the front door.

**Posted by: | June 13, 2008 at 01:18 PM**

I would talk to her supervisor. That is not managerial behavior!

**Posted by: Liza | June 13, 2008 at 01:33 PM**

We have established a "Nondisparagement Policy" and required every employee to read the policy. At a staff meeting, everyone had an opportunity to discuss the policy and have any questions answered. Then each person signed a copy of the policy and were given a copy for their records. The policy states that this "bashing" of the organization or of the administration is grounds for termination. It has worked for us.

**Posted by: Dr. Laura Smith McKenna | June 13, 2008 at 01:35 PM**

In our policy handbook there is a section about "bashing" the Agency and/or people within the agency, this would be grounds for termination. I know your are friends but you need to let her know that this attitude could cause her to be fired if it gets out. Maybe you can suggest some courses on how to be a manager and inspire

her employees not down the moral any lower than what it is.

**Posted by: | June 13, 2008 at 01:44 PM**

You've already warned her: sometimes one needs to let things play themselves out. Don't report her to anyone, for she may lose her job and we don't know what type of situation the lady is in, but sit back and see that behavior like that does not go unnoticed. Boss's sometimes let you hang yourself. If she is a good friend, then pull her to the side again, maybe during lunch and tell her people are talking about her attitude and you just wanted to let her know, because you wouldn't want her to lose her job. If she still doesn't understand then just sit back. YOU CAN TAKE A HORSE TO WATER BUT.....

**Posted by: AEW | June 13, 2008 at 01:45 PM**

Give her a thick rubber band and ask that for each negative comment she snap the band. When she voices negativity in your presence you can just say SNAP. If she has a welt on her wrist at the end of the day, she may take the hint.

**Posted by: Judy Nelson | June 13, 2008 at 02:05 PM**

I meant to say, ask her to wear the rubber band on her wrist. The comment should make more sense now.

**Posted by: Judy Nelson | June 13, 2008 at 02:07 PM**

I heard something a long while ago that has stuck with me: Never bring a problem to your manager, bring a solution. I see the same idea here, if the person sees only the negative and has no solutions, then she's part of the problem. Not only is she bringing down those around her, she is obviously not happy herself so you helping her address it is doing her a personal favor. There is most likely a root cause, rather than just telling her to stop, as her friend help her to find the root cause of her negativity.

For those companies with "no bashing" policies, I wonder how that effects employees feeling comfortable being able to speak about what is wrong and be able to assist in coming up with potential solutions.

**Posted by: M | June 13, 2008 at 05:00 PM**

As to "M" you made some good points but because some companies have a "policy" about how something is addressed or said does not mean someone cannot come up with solutions if there is a problem what it does mean is if someone has a problem don't go around saying how terrible the company is and how terrible that particular problem is, how terrible that person is. I think its more of the old adage if you can't say something nice don't say anything at all.

**Posted by: | June 13, 2008 at 05:10 PM**

I have seen toxic employees lasting long enough to damage everything around them at their workplace.

Managers sometimes take too long to deal with them, and when they do it, they already lost some good employees that left because they couldn't stand the place any longer. Problematic or "toxic" employees should be removed the first time they affect someone, as to allow it damages the morale and environment of the entire workplace. No one has the right to badmouth others or the workplace and still be able to remain there. It is about Respect and Ethics.

**Posted by: Laura | June 17, 2008 at 05:40 PM**

I'm concerned about the couple of comments I've seen that say companies have adopted policies making negative discussion grounds for termination. I would advise those of you who have that in your employee handbooks to run that by an employment law attorney as soon as possible. Policies limiting discussion of workplace conditions have been found to violate the National Labor Relations Act even in nonunion environments. I know this is an admin forum, but this is something you should be taking up with your HR department if you have one. If you do not, please be sure your policies are enforceable by having an attorney look them over. You could find yourself in an expensive legal situation if you fire someone for complaining about work conditions. Proceed with caution!

**Posted by: an HR Director | June 20, 2008 at 02:21 PM**

I would address it with her, however be careful some employee speech is protected by section 7 of the NLRA regardless if you are union or not. Otherwise employee attitude can be deemed as a performance issue.

**Posted by: SF | June 20, 2008 at 03:36 PM**

Ooops! Ditto HR Director!

**Posted by: SF | June 20, 2008 at 03:38 PM**

I would be very careful about instituting a "no bashing" policy if you don't have one, because of legal and free speech issues. As for the negativity issue, I like AEW's solution. Talk to her privately, then let it go. The negativity may be the result of issues outside of work. The key for you: don't let her negativity bring you down, too.

**Posted by: Anon | June 23, 2008 at 12:26 PM**