

# Teach co-workers to work independently

**Question:** “My co-workers constantly ask me to assist them with simple problems. Whenever they encounter any minor difficulty, they dump it on me. This makes it hard to finish my own work. My boss has been no help. When he talked to these people about handling their own problems, they told him that coming to me was faster. He immediately gave in and said we should just work it out amongst ourselves. How can I end these interruptions?” — *Totally Worn Out*

**Answer:** Since your wimpy boss has abdicated his management responsibilities, you need to develop your own plan, then tell him what you intend to do.

For example: “I’m glad to help with difficult issues, but people keep coming to me with simple things. I plan to show them how to solve these problems, and then I expect them to work independently. I would appreciate your support on this.”

Ask your manager to approve the list of problems that you plan to delegate.

Explain the new strategy to your co-workers, then teach them what they need to know. If possible, provide written instructions for future reference.

After that, resist any temptation to succumb to their continued pleas for assistance. Your dependent colleagues will eventually learn to fly solo.

Find suggestions in “How to Give Feedback Without Criticism” at [www.YourOfficeCoach.com](http://www.YourOfficeCoach.com).

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