No whining! 5 ways to overcome negativity at work

Tired of an incessantly negative co-worker? Post a “No Whining” sign for others to see when they enter your work space.

"Negativity is one of those 'most annoying' behaviors," says Dr. Marie McIntyre, author of Secrets to Winning at Office Politics.

"It's right up there with slacker co-workers and the use of foul language. These people are simply not fun to work with. They sap everyone's energy and kill productivity."

A no-whining rule fights against complaining, blaming, avoiding responsibility—or anything that gets in the way of problem-solving.

If co-workers' bad attitudes create tension, protect yourself from those office toxins.

**Take a break** when tensions begin to boil over. If conversations drift into nasty gossip, excuse yourself. Strip away the day's stress before you arrive home by hitting the gym or browsing in a bookstore.

**Look at why** morale is low, and attack the core problem. Bombard a bad attitude by lobbing kindness in return. If turf wars turned the organization into a battleground, reach out to the other side.

**Don't allow rumors** of impending layoffs to sap your productivity. Punch back at the feeling of powerlessness by renewing your commitment to the job you have today. Model the attitude you'd like to see in others.

**Don't be a Pollyanna.** Realistically, you can't banish all negative thoughts from your workplace. But there is a difference between "good" negativity (that helps find solutions) and "bad" negativity (griping about everything). Negativity can become self-fulfilling—increasing the chances of failure in a company steeped in negativity. Find the positives and, as much as possible, focus on and build on those.

**Follow the Three P’s.**

- **Is it personal?** When the boss grumbles, it's probably not about you.
- **Is it permanent?** Just remember the old expression, "This too shall pass."
- **Does it matter in the big picture?** In the midst of office conflict, ask yourself, "Will anyone even remember this a few years from now?"