


5 Tips for Keeping Peace in a Stress-filled Office

Are little battles constantly erupting in your workplace?

The phones are blaring, the computers are temporarily in a state of frozen animation, the fax machine is humming, the boss is asking for status on that hot project, and three people you work with are having a heated argument about whose turn it is to clean the coffee pot.

Welcome to today's office, where stress is always building and tempers are sometimes flaring up. Listed below, are 5 potential situations that can boil over into a full-blown problem, disrupting the delicate peace that every productive office needs:

1. **Playing the blame game.** It's simple to point to someone else when things go wrong. For instance, the report was late because she didn't type it up on time. Or, the file got lost because he forgot to put it back in the drawer. Avoid the trap of blaming others and instead concentrate on how to remedy the situation. And, if something is your fault, take the high road and own up to it. In the end, you'll be better respected.
2. **Complaining constantly.** Continual dissatisfaction with anything and everything can make people who work in an office very unpopular with their colleagues. Eventually, too much negativity will probably prompt someone to challenge the complainer, which will likely evolve into a war of words.
3. **Talking too loudly on the telephone or to co-workers.** People who share an office, particularly those who work in cubicles, can be disrupted and moved to anger by boisterous co-workers who repeatedly disrupt the concentration of people around them. Remind yourself and encourage your office mates to be aware of their speaking volume.
4. **Peering over someone's shoulder.** Somehow this bugs people, and rightfully so, because it can be intimidating and downright annoying. Think about it, how many times has someone marched into your office and lurked behind you uninvited, looking at your computer screen to see what you're working on?
5. **Discussing politics.** It could be the next presidential election, or an impassioned opinion about a controversial bill in Congress, or it might even be office politics. Either way, political talk in the office

will more times than not result in two or more people becoming hot under the collar. Save political dialogue for your dinner.