

WORKPLACE WISDOM NEWSLETTER

Have You Ever Tried Being a Peacemaker?

Ruffled feathers, bruised feelings, and misunderstandings are common in the workplace.

But, stop and think about how fast we go these days. It's no wonder we have "relationship accidents" on the high-speed freeway we're all traveling.

I have a calendar and PDA that are full; my social life remains active; my loved ones fill up a good portion of my time; I give time to my community, religious and favorite charitable organizations -- and then there's a remaining few minutes of personal time for ME.

If this sounds like you, then YOU and I are in the mainstream of individuals in America today.

**At this pace, we WILL have relationship accidents.
When you see one occur, will you please stop and lend a hand?**

Many of us say, "No, stay out of it! It's not any of my business."

Yet, it's important to remember this fact about conflict:

**The ONE THING a person in conflict knows is: "I'M RIGHT!"
He or she is polarized. That's what keeps them conflicting.**

It happens to all of us at sometime!

With a little skill and a lot of empathy, I believe it is the best thing to try to be a peacemaker when you can.

Here are several ways to politely engage in "peacemaking".

- * Know your goal: "To find a positive outcome for two people."
- * Plan to listen much; talk little.
- * Suggest a neutral meeting place and conduct a relaxed meeting.
- * Before the meeting develop some "open-ended" questions for the conflicting individuals.
- * Encourage commitment between the two parties.

What are some examples of open-ended questions to ask each person?

- * What would you like to see occur?
- * What adjustments do you want the other to make?
- * What change(s) would you have to make to accommodate their request?
- * Who is willing to step out first and make changes?
- * What will each of you expect once the other makes changes?
- * Will you shake hands and commit to restoring the relationship?

I see irritating behavior in the workplace.
I see plays for positional power that leave bruised feelings.
I'm surrounded by rudeness on our freeways.
I hear unbelievable statements made by self-absorbed people.

Can a peacemaker make a difference?

Our courts hope that professional litigators will help individuals argue their points out of court. An agreed-upon-solution would prevent the parties from having to file a costly lawsuit and clog up our already overwhelmed court dockets!

***I know you're not a professional litigator.
And I know you're not a professional peacemaker!***

But...sometimes by just TRYING, others see that you care. You care about both individuals; you care about the heavy cloud of dismal morale they're causing, and you care that the world is a better place because you tried to make a positive difference.

WHAT IF I FAIL? So what? You tried. You showed you cared.

WHAT IF I'M DRAWN INTO THEIR STRUGGLE? Don't be. Just help them sort out their differences.

If you fail 15 times and yet succeed 1 time, YOU HAVE SUCCEEDED.

**Be a peacemaker!
It's a courageous thing to do!**