

WORKPLACE WISDOM NEWSLETTER

Do People Try to Steal Your Joy?

October 5, 2005

Joy is defined as "a feeling of great pleasure or happiness".

So "joy-stealers" would be those who try to take pleasure or happiness from you.

Three recent real-life incidents have led me to write this article. I'd like to share them as if they just happened to you.

* A co-worker books time-away (a vacation) at the same time that you have already placed your vacation on the company calendar. You're confident that it is NOT an innocent mistake; and it looks like it will result in your acquiescing and covering for the team during the holiday season.

What do you do when someone steals your vacation?

* A colleague continues to make belittling remarks about your ability during team meetings. The remarks float "just above" the "politically correct line"...but they have a negative impact, just the same.

What do you do when someone tries to steal your credibility?

* An individual confronts you with gossip that is attributed to you. The untrue remarks, taken out of context, leave you disturbed and crestfallen with your associates.

What do you do when someone tries to steal your intention?

Confronting is never easy.

Yet, sometimes it is called for - and even helpful.

When confronting, the Four Strategies below are common .

In most cases, I would opt for (and recommend) #2 or #4.

- 1. Confront the individual directly.** Be well prepared with facts to defend your position.
- 2. Let it go. Save your energy.** Your thinking says, "It's just not worth the effort."
- 3. Play the game. Go on the offense.** He says bad things to you...you say worse things back to him. Her deeds are ugly...yours are uglier. Tit-for-tat. Be aware that this tactic may never end and can spiral into a real interpersonal war.
- 4. Call the "play" as you see it, using common language.** Ask a direct question that demands a clarifying response from the offending party.

**Wait! What do you mean? Ask a "direct question"!
Well, here are some examples.**

Regarding the stolen vacation: "(Name), when you saw my vacation already booked for this holiday week-end, what were you thinking? *Was your intent to ignore my vacation request...or did you believe that the holiday vacation was not important to my husband and me?*"

Regarding belittling remarks in front of others: "(Name), what you said hurt my feelings and belittled me in front of our associates. *"What were you thinking? What caused you to make those unkind remarks?"*

Regarding someone who has spoken untruths about you: "(Name), after hearing what you've said, I'm very confused and unclear where you stand. *Can you tell me what you were thinking - or what you wanted to accomplish - when you made those remarks behind my back?"*

**In confrontation, positive results can be obtained for both parties
if
careful thought is given to HOW you confront.**

Here are some examples of two positive outcomes.

1. Asking someone to defend his/her unkindness or unprofessional act can truly help the individual see that this behavior IS BEING NOTICED - in a negative way. This proves to be a soft warning for the individual's future behavior.
2. Asking someone to defend his words or deeds causes him/her to be more careful in the future - knowing there is always the possibility he/she will be called upon to give the reason for what he/she said or did. Most of the time, this will be an awkward occasion - and one that most people would like to avoid.

**I do recommend that YOU communicate in a professional mode
- always!**

Your communication should always...

Be thoughtful. Be careful. Be helpful. Be kind.

Give no one reason to say, "You tried to steal my joy!"

**The place you are right now - while you're reading this - could
use some more joy.**

Please, add some.
Contribute good will wherever you find yourself!

You'll find professional associates evolving into admiring friends.