

How to Work Effectively with Someone You Find Difficult to Get Along With

Working with someone whose personality clashes with yours can be frustrating, but it doesn't have to lead to conflict. Understanding different working styles and adapting where needed can help create a more productive and respectful workplace



Recognise and Accept Differences: Research shows that 60% of Australians have had challenges working with colleagues with different personalities. While it's natural to feel more comfortable with people who think like you, working with diverse personalities can offer valuable learning experiences. Instead of wishing colleagues were more like you, take a step back and observe their working style. Ask yourself: could their approach be useful in ways you hadn't considered?

Shift Your Perspective: Rather than labeling a co-worker's behaviour as annoying or difficult, try reframing it. For example, if a colleague asks a lot of questions in meetings, consider how their curiosity might lead to better clarity and fewer mistakes later. If your boss is highly extroverted, their need to talk things through could be a way of processing information, not just dominating the conversation.

Find Common Ground: Instead of focusing on differences, seek ways to align your working styles. A simple way to do this is by having an open conversation about preferred working approaches. Ask how they like to handle tasks and share your own preferences. Finding a balance between different styles can lead to stronger collaboration and better outcomes.

Adapt While Maintaining Your Needs: Flexibility is key, but so is ensuring your own working needs are met. If you're introverted and work best with quiet time, find moments in the day to recharge. If you thrive on social interaction but work with quieter colleagues, build connections outside your immediate team while respecting others' need for space.

Keep the Focus on the Goal: When workplace dynamics feel challenging, shift your focus to the task at hand. Just like a sports team where players have different roles but work toward the same victory, workplace success comes from collaboration, not uniformity. By concentrating on shared goals, differences become less of a hurdle and more of an asset.

Appreciate the Value of Different Perspectives: You don't have to be best friends with every colleague, but respecting differences and assuming positive intent can transform workplace relationships. A united, respectful approach can turn what once felt like a challenge into a powerful advantage for both individuals and the organisation.

Source: Independent research conducted by Nature on behalf of SEEK. Interviewing 4800 Australians annually.

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