

CONNIE'S CAREER CORNER

“Your ability to adjust to change is a big deal.”

Tip for the day: If you are bored, you should change something in your life.

Q: Dear Connie: I have a co-worker who is older than me and she does not seem to be able to adjust to change. She becomes highly irritated if she is put in a position to have to make any changes. Is it important to go along with the changes that our supervisor requests?

A: Dear Must I Change: In today's workplace, change happens and it happens frequently. It sounds as though your co-worker has not learned the skill of being flexible and you are wondering should you follow her lead and resist change or learn to be flexible and make changes in the workplace as your supervisor requests of you.

There was a time when you learned a job and the job never changed. You were successful if you went to work and performed the same task using the same process consistently day after day. Your co-worker may have started her career during this time.

Now the marketplace demands that you be flexible. Many companies are looking for employees that can adjust to change. In today's market, companies are constantly looking for ways to be more productive while decreasing cost. This means that at times you may feel that you are being asked to make change on a frequent basis. Companies need people who will go with the flow and not be difficult to work with because they are holding to the “old” way of performing a task.

Changing from a person who likes things to always be the same to a person who can not only accept change but thrive on it can be quite difficult. Since you are just starting out your career, you do not have the “old habit” of being inflexible to break.

Here are some suggestions to help you be a person of change:

- Look first at the reason the change is proposed
- Identify how the request for change will affect your job
- Develop a plan listing steps you will need to take to make the change
- Keep a positive attitude
- Remember that change affects everyone--not just you
- Work as a team to accomplish the change

If your co-worker gets upset and takes it out on you when she is requested to change, it is best to just ignore her comments. Do not let her pull you into her dissatisfaction or she may say you agree with her. If this approach does not work, discuss this with your supervisor.

I would take my cues regarding how to accept change from your supervisor. If your supervisor is requesting that your team makes a change that means she is making changes also. Watch how your supervisor reacts and adapts to change. Try to make the skill of being flexible your own. Pretty soon you will not feel discomfort when you are asked to make changes in your work.