

Try to Turn Every Situation into a Win-Win

You are going to deal with adverse situations at work. It's a fact of life. People will try to pass work off to you that they should be doing themselves, or they will rope you into the wrong side of office politics. The worst way to handle this is to blow up and get angry. This puts you on the defense and it's difficult to think rationally when this happens. It also can lead the way into saying something that you'll regret later.

A better approach is to find ways to make the situation a win-win for everyone involved. This may not always be easy, or even possible, but if you can make it happen, it will diffuse the situation and create more harmony in the work environment.

The first step in looking for ways to make it a win-win is to try and see the situation from the perspective of your adversary. Perhaps he or she is experiencing some problems at home and it's affected his or her judgement at work. You have to try to find out without appearing to pry. This could be as simple as asking if the person has something they want to talk about. Even just showing that you are willing to do this can go a long way to diffuse the situation.

You could proceed to offer to take on some of the person's workload if that is what they are struggling with. Just make it clear that you will only do this for a short period of time, with the understanding that they need to take up the duties after such a time.

If the situation is work related, try to work with the person to find a solution that will help them solve it. This will take some time out of your day but having the person return to a good place is going to make this extra time worth it.

Of course, there are going to be people that no matter how much effort you put in to try and help, are going to be adversarial towards you. If they continue to do so in a manner that is not within their right, you will need to figure out whether you want to escalate the situation with your manager. This should be the last course of action but may be necessary. You will likely find that most people will be receptive when they see that you both come out as winners.