**Do You Know How Your Workplace Relationships Are Affecting You?**

You spend a majority of your waking hours at work – which means you spend a majority of your waking hours with your co-workers. It should come as no surprise, then, that all those hours together could have an impact your health.

The relationships you have at work can either improve or harm your health. Having positive relationships with your colleagues can put you in a good mood and make the workday more enjoyable. However, feeling lonely at work or having negative relationships with your co-workers can lead to an unpleasant work experience.

If you’re unsure of how your work relationships could be affecting your physical and emotional health, here are a few things to consider:

**Stress**

It’s no secret that your co-workers can cause you [stress](http://info.totalwellnesshealth.com/blog/12-habits-of-employees-who-handle-stress-like-a-boss). Whether they’re easy or difficult to work with, the things they do in the office can increase your stress levels. Most of the time it’s not intentional. They’re simply [doing their jobs.](http://info.totalwellnesshealth.com/blog/reduce-the-stress-you-cause-in-the-workplace) But you reap what they sow in the form of increased stress.

Too much [stress in the workplace](http://info.totalwellnesshealth.com/blog/bid/339246/simple-tricks-to-cope-with-work-related-stress-0) can have some negative health consequences. The stress that you endure from negative work relationships can lead to high blood pressure, trouble sleeping, chronic aches and pains, and destructive coping habits. This stress can eventually lead to workplace burnout as well.

On the other hand, if you focus on developing positive relationships in the workplace, your coworkers can also serve as stress relievers. Perhaps they act as a listening ear when work gets frustrating. Or maybe they are the perfectly timed afternoon coffee chat to give you the little break you need.

When it comes to your coworkers, you’re all on the same boat. You’re working in the same atmosphere for a common goal. Yes, there will be stress. But you can also work on those relationships to help relieve that stress.

**Peer Pressure**

In a traditional sense, peer pressure has a negative connotation – which can definitely be true in the workplace. Your co-workers could pressure you to hit up happy hour instead of the gym after work, go out to lunch instead of eating the [lunch you packed](http://info.totalwellnesshealth.com/blog/tips-to-pack-a-healthy-lunch-for-work), or vent and complain rather than solving problems. Those are all unhealthy habits to form, and they can be magnified by people you spend time with.

In some situations, peer pressure can be a positive thing. If you surround yourself with healthy colleagues, you’ll start to feel the motivation to adopt healthier habits yourself. For example, if your office neighbor is headed out for a walk at lunch, you might feel tempted to join them.

Surrounding yourself with people who make choices you want to make is an excellent first step towards developing healthy habits. Use your work relationships as positive peer pressure – and try to focus less on the work relationships that are dragging you down.

**Productivity**

We’ve all been there. There’s always that one co-worker who can be a lot of fun, but also super distracting. You can spend hours laughing with them, all while getting no work done. This can cause your productivity and overall work performance to take a huge hit.

Seek out work relationships that help motivate you to be [more productive](http://info.totalwellnesshealth.com/blog/sneaky-ways-to-feel-more-productive-at-work). Find a team you can work with or trusted coworkers to delegate to. On individual projects, bounce your ideas off your work friends. Create relationships at work that empower you to not only get work done, but to do your work well.

**Happiness**

[Happiness](http://info.totalwellnesshealth.com/blog/create-a-happy-work-environment-to-celebrate-international-day-of-happiness) is an overlooked aspect of your health, and relationships play an obvious role in your day-to-day happiness. The people you spend time with have the power to make you miserable in a lot of different capacities. In unhealthy work relationships, you can get caught in a battle of comparison or in an unhealthy level of competition – leading to a negative work environment.

However, when you focus on building good relationships with your colleagues, the exact opposite will happen. Your co-workers have the power to cheer you up and boost your happiness in the office. If you surround yourself with co-workers who you genuinely enjoy – people who make you laugh and support you – you’re on the road to happiness.

It might sound cheesy, but those people definitely exist in your workplace. Seek them out, get to know them, and watch those happy relationships improve your health and wellbeing.

**Improving Your Work Relationships**

Forming positive work relationships can be easier said than done. If you’re struggling to build better relationships in your workplace, try out some of these tips:

* *Be a positive presence in the office.* No one wants to spend time with a [Negative Nancy](http://info.totalwellnesshealth.com/blog/how-to-realize-when-youre-being-negative-and-what-to-do-about-it). Maintaining a [positive attitude](http://info.totalwellnesshealth.com/blog/7-daily-habits-that-will-turn-you-into-an-optimist) will make you seem more approachable and attract the right type of work relationships.
* *Avoid gossip.* Sometimes we feel the need to gossip in the office to fit in or get people to like us. However, using gossip as a way to bond with colleagues is creating a negative image of yourself and can lead to unhealthy work relationships.
* *Participate.* We know, office parties and after-hours activities can sound cheesy and awkward – especially if you don’t have an office buddy to go with. But attending and participating in team outings is one of the best ways to get to know your colleagues on a more personal level.
* *Show respect.* Simply showing your colleagues respect will go a long way in the workplace. Listen to a co-worker who has a new idea, clean up after yourself when you use shared office spaces, and hold off on any behaviors that your office neighbor may find annoying or offensive.
* *Be kind.* We know it’s not groundbreaking – be something as simple as being kind to your colleagues can make a huge difference and help you form quality relationships. Share a smile, [express gratitude](http://info.totalwellnesshealth.com/blog/cultivating-gratitude-in-the-workplace-free-must-have-guide), and help out a co-worker in need.

Work relationships can be tough. Obviously, it’s not as simple as just recognizing the relationships you want to develop with your coworkers. The first step? Be that healthy influence for others. Empower your coworkers to live positive, healthy lifestyles so they can take on that same role for you.

*Editor’s note: This blog post was* [*originally published*](http://info.totalwellnesshealth.com/blog/how-your-work-relationships-impact-your-health) *in September 2016 and has been updated for freshness, accuracy, and comprehensiveness.*