

## Giving and gaining respect at work

Many people spend as much time with their co-workers as with their friends and families. This makes building a positive work atmosphere an important goal. The key to a positive work environment is mutual respect between employees. The following tips will help you earn your co-workers' respect and encourage it in others.

### Respect Rules

Maintaining a positive and respectful atmosphere at work can be a challenge when faced with negative factors such as a bad commute or stress. Invest in your own attitude and actions so you can gain and give respect in the workplace. Try to:

- **Choose a positive outlook.** Like one bad apple, one bad attitude can spoil the rest. Be contagious in your enthusiasm. Make the decision to enjoy work and find others to share your positive approach.
- **Avoid the gossip mill.** Gossip and negativity create a hostile and unhealthy workplace that can be toxic to the morale of your team and hurtful to individuals. Respect your co-workers by refusing to take part in negative discussions and you will earn their respect in return.
- **Show care and compassion.** Co-workers with negative attitudes may have problems or issues that you are unaware of. Don't be too quick to judge. Focus on showing your concern and empathy rather than resentment and you might just be surprised by the response you get.
- **Keep cool in conflict.** When facing disagreements, remember your goal should be progress, not winning.
- **Brush it off.** When you are faced with a grumpy boss, a rude client or a frozen computer screen, brush it off and move forward. Don't let small setbacks ruin your day or even an hour of your time.
- **Toot your team's horn.** When a project goes well, share your results with others. Get excited about what you've accomplished together and give credit where credit is due.
- **Manage your stress.** Take a break, take a deep breath or go for a walk. Taking breaks increases productivity and decreases stress. If you need to, find someone to cover you so you're able to take a few minutes for a break.

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- **Have a calm commute.** Make your commute a positive time. If you're taking public transport, read, write or listen to music you enjoy. If it's an option, leave a little early so you can take the scenic route. A calm commute creates a calmer outlook, setting the right tone for the rest of your day.

### **For Managers or Leaders**

Issues with managers or leaders are one of the main reasons why many people end up searching for a new job. While both employees and employers have a responsibility to contribute to a healthy workplace, you can set a good example by:

- Giving positive feedback to employees
- Being a good listener
- Demonstrating respect for your employees
- Focusing on accomplishments, not hours
- Being consistent
- Taking the time to get to know your staff

Taking these simple steps can make a world of difference to your team and the environment you share. Employees respect, seek to emulate and want to work alongside a supportive employer because they create a healthy and positive workplace.

### **Threats to Respect**

One of the greatest threats to a positive working environment and to employees' emotional health is workplace bullying and harassment. Workplace bullying often goes undetected and unreported due to feelings of fear or shame. Be on the watch for signs that bullying may be occurring and be sure to report it. Bullying includes:

- Verbal abuse
- Excluding and isolating employees
- Intentionally changing work rotations to inconvenience particular employees
- Intentionally withholding information vital to effective work performance

Harassment is more overt, but no less difficult to endure. It can also include:

- Threats or inappropriate comments
- Destruction or theft of property
- Sexual innuendo or lewd behavior
- Physical assaults

Serious threats to a healthy and respectful workplace, such as bullying and harassment, may not be a part of your workplace, but there is always room for improvement. The best place to start is with yourself. Evaluate the role you play in contributing to the office environment and try to implement the steps above. Small changes can vastly improve your own attitude at work, and earn the respect and gratitude of colleagues.

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## Do mid-life crises exist?

We tend to make fun of the term, “mid-life crisis.” However, decades of research show that most of us experience an emotional dip in midlife and that this is a normal part of the maturing process.

### Looking back

Our 40s and 50s are a time when we become acutely aware of the passage of time. We question our past choices, dwell on failures and disappointments and ponder major life changes. We also experience physiological changes like hormonal drops (in both men and women) or other life events such as the death of a parent, divorce or children leaving home.

The good news is that this emotional dip doesn't last and we usually come out the other end feeling better about ourselves and the future. But for many people it can be a painful – and costly – time.

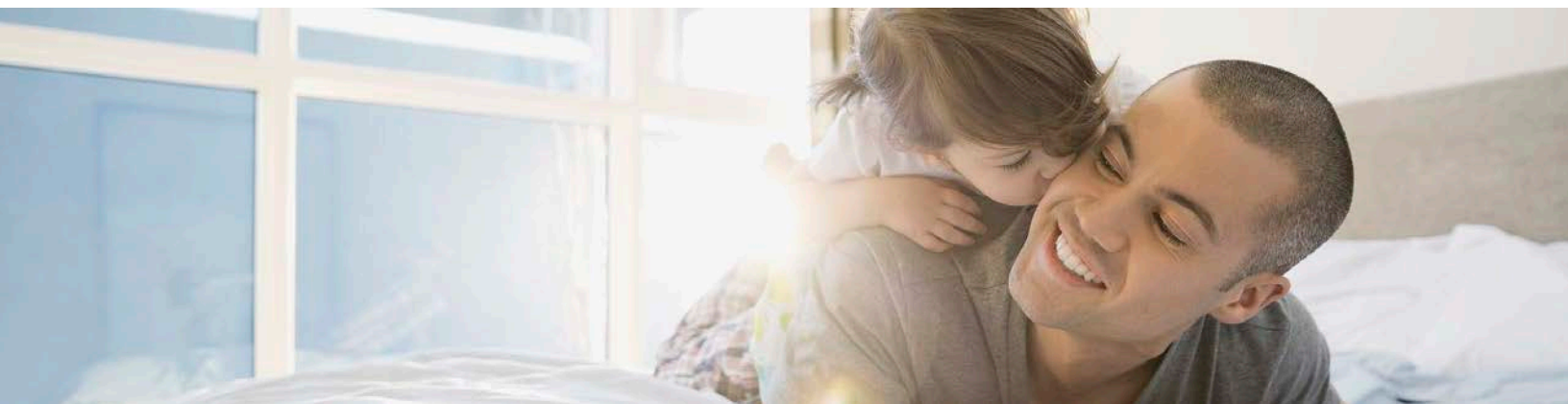
### Looking forward

Here are some ideas to help navigate more easily through midlife:

- **Focus on your achievements, not regrets.** You never became company CEO or wrote a bestselling novel, but you have raised great children, have wonderful friends and had some pretty interesting experiences.
- **Communicate your needs.** Keeping feelings of frustration, anger and sadness bottled up only causes more stress and may lead to impulsive acts or behaviors. Let your partner and friends know what you're experiencing and let them help you work through any problems. People who care about you will offer perspective and sound advice.
- **Focus on health.** In midlife we tend to become more sedentary, our metabolisms slow and our muscle mass begins to decline, so a healthy diet, regular exercise and plenty of sleep become even more important to our physical and emotional health.
- **Make time for fun.** Have regular date nights with your partner, go out with friends, play sports and take vacations. Continue to explore, evolve and be excited by life.
- **Give back.** Volunteering is probably one of the best ways to give your life meaning and build a legacy.

Midlife can be a really great time. We're old enough to have acquired wisdom and perspective and young enough to get out and enjoy life. If you or someone you love is depressed or exhibiting concerning behaviors, contact us for support and resources or your family physician.

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