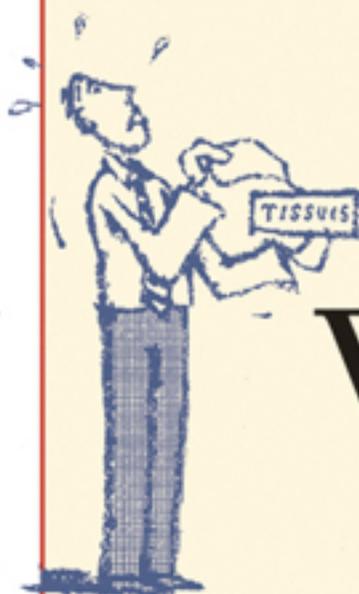
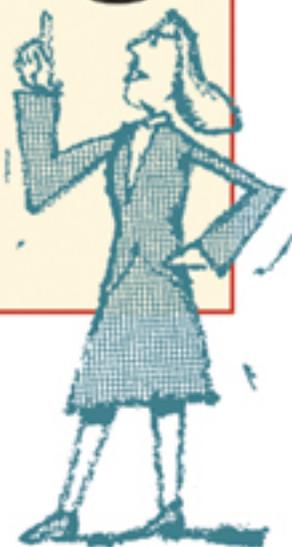


Dealing with Whiners,
Back-Stabbers, Know-It-Alls,
and Other Difficult People



a Survival
Guide *for*
Working
with
Humans



GINI GRAHAM SCOTT, PH.D.

A Survival Guide *for* Working *with* Humans

*Dealing with Whiners, Back-Stabbers,
Know-It-Alls, and Other Difficult People*

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AMACOM

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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Scott, Gini Graham.

A survival guide for working with humans : dealing with whiners, back-stabbers, know-it-alls, and other difficult people / Gini Graham

Scott.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 0-8144-7205-2

1. Conflict management. 2. Interpersonal relations. 3. Interpersonal conflict. I. Title.

HD42.S358 2004

650.1'3—dc22

2003020908

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Printed in the United States of America.

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Printing number

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

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Acknowledgments

I want to extend my thanks to the many people who contributed to this book, especially to:

My editor at AMACOM, Jacquie Flynn, who helped guide the process of turning what began as newspaper columns in a dozen papers into a book. She offered many insights and was always cheerful and fun to work with.

My copyeditor, Barbara Chernow, who made the review process a breeze.

The agent I worked with on this book, Mike Valentino, at Cambridge Literary, who handled the follow-up and contract details, after I sent out an initial query through publishersandagents.net.

And to the many people, who must remain unnamed, who described their own workplace problems and conflicts and asked for advice.

Gini Graham Scott

Introduction

Today, with a sputtering economy, collapsing and merging companies, corporate scandals, high-tech upheavals, and growing global competition, life in the workplace is more difficult than ever. Trusting in business relationships has become more uncertain, too.

It helps to have guidelines on how to maneuver through today's unpredictable work environment, much like learning to swim through a narrow chasm in a swirling river.

That's what *A Survival Guide for Working with Humans* is all about. It started with a series of mostly weekly columns in the San Francisco Bay Area on the perils of the workplace and what to do about them. Eventually my editor had to drop the columns to run more advertising and specialty features, but as reader response grew I decided to expand on the idea for these columns and turn them into a book. In a sense, I decided to take my own advice: to find a way to turn a problem into an opportunity and look for ways to put a positive spin on whatever happens. Indeed the columns themselves were inspired after a long-term relationship with a difficult client went south, and my solution to the problem ended up as the topic of one of the first columns.

Then, as I heard from readers, I saw how my own approach helped others. It's based on using a method I developed through consulting, doing workshops and seminars, and writing books on a wide range of

topics—from becoming more creative to making choices, solving problems, dealing with change, and resolving conflicts and ethical dilemmas. This approach reflects a mix of using problem solving and conflict resolution techniques, along with employing methods such as visualization, mental gymnastics, and intuitive reasoning to decide the best approach. It also features an emphasis on using common sense and playing fair—but at the same time accepts the need to be aggressive and even devious when confronting a stacked deck. Other basic principles include seeking clear communications, promoting increased productivity along with improved morale and relationships, and contributing to the common good while helping yourself. In short, this approach is a combination pragmatic/ethical, intuitive/rational, follow-the-rules but know-when-to-make-or-break-them method that makes work and business, as well as personal relationships, more successful.

What's important in using these methods is to recognize that no one size fits all, and different principles, strategies, and tactics will work best for you at different times. But as you think about how other people have applied these techniques and principles, you'll start thinking how you might use them yourself in different situations, with different people, and for different purposes.

So consider these chapters as a series of recipes for coming up with a better way of dealing with your everyday experiences at work and in business relationships. It's the first in a series of books of recipes for success, which cover questions on everything from how to remake yourself in a more diversified workplace to how to deal with backstabbing, gossip, poor communication, and even when to bring in the lawyers or go to court.

In keeping with this recipe approach, each chapter includes:



An introductory paragraph highlighting the problem.



A short story or a couple of stories about one or more people who faced this problem (with their identities and companies concealed, of course).



A quiz with a list of possible responses so you can think about what you might do; you can even use this as a game to discuss this issue with others and compare your responses.



A discussion about what people did to resolve their problems successfully or what they might do.



A series of three or more take-aways to highlight what to learn from the chapter.

I hope you find that the short, snappy, conversational style of this survival guide makes it fun and quick to read, even if some of the problems are ones you haven't encountered.

So now, dig in. Feel free to explore and try out these different recipes in any order as you learn and think about how to increase your workplace survivor-ability quotient—your SAQ for short. Plus, if you have your own questions—feel free to visit my Web site and ask for answers to your own questions—at www.workingwithhumans.com.