

Why Chronic Complaining in the Workplace is Toxic

Do you know a chronic complainer? Are you a chronic complainer? Everyone encounters frustration at work and experiences the need to vent. But understand that venting is very different than complaining.

Venting is a healthy activity in which one consciously shares negative feelings with the intention to let them go. It is a temporary state. It is done privately with a trusted person, in order to ensure that others are not exposed to these negative feelings. Your team, department, clients, patients, families, customers, and any other group that you interact with on a professional basis, are safeguarded from your negative feelings.

Conversely, complainers do not have a clear goal. For them, complaining has become a habit and a state of mind that they continually project onto others. Chronic complaining can be destructive. It can make a department or organization a stressful place to work, and tarnishes the reputation of the complainer and potentially the organization.

How does constant complaining damage your reputation at work? If you're constantly complaining, the truth is that you are devoting more time to complaining than your job responsibilities. You're more invested in complaining than problem solving. People notice it and want to avoid it because it's stressful and unproductive.

If you are constantly complaining about other employees, you should know that your coworkers may not trust you. It is reasonable for them to conclude that you probably talk negatively about them too.

If you are viewed as a complainer, your colleagues and supervisor will not give your feedback or concerns the same level of consideration as the more positive and productive members of your team. Unfortunately, you are likely to be viewed as once again complaining, rather than viewing a problem from another perspective.

If you are a constant complainer, you are more likely to react negatively when faced with change. You may then be viewed as someone that is rigid or resistant to change. The inability to adapt to change is a deficiency that can be detrimental to your advancement at work.

One of the common motivations for complaining, is that it enables the complainer to avoid looking at their own behavior. A chronic complainer rarely accepts responsibility for their mistakes or unsatisfactory job performance. This reflects very poorly on the complainer.

Chronic complainers are avoided by their coworkers because they are causing their colleagues unnecessary distress during work time and during breaks. Coworkers are also concerned about being associated with the complainer's negativity.

How can you stop complaining? **Take the 24 Hour Challenge.** Don't complain about anything for 24 hours. When you want to complain, say something positive or empowering instead. Break the habit!

Keep a gratitude journal. Shift your focus to what you appreciate in your personal life and at work.

Practice empathy. Focus on understanding the feelings and perspective of the people you work with and serve. It will greatly improve your demeanor and relationships at work.

Have a plan. If you're unhappy with a situation, personally or professionally, make a plan to change it. Take control and find a solution!

Make an appointment with Concern to speak with a counselor and work toward improving your mindset.

"Instead of complaining that the rose bush is full of thorns, be happy that the thorn bush has roses". -- Proverb