

THE LET'S FIX WORK GUIDE TO GETTING RID OF HR

Time for real talk.

HR is necessary because people can be assholes. You can't stop other people from being assholes, but you can stop yourself.

Do the below, and watch the memos disappear. You'll also probably make more friends.

xo

Laurie Ruettimann

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1. SHUT UP

Your feelings get in the way of your productivity.

It's fine to have feelings. Bad days happen, we've all come to work without getting enough sleep the night before, I know your desk mate is a mouth breather and yes, the new manager is anal retentive. Feel your feels. Then put them aside and do your job without griping. If your feelings get in the way of your productivity, you're the one making everyone else's day worse.

TL;DR If no one's losing a leg, let it go.

Here's a short meditation to help you get over yourself:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=92i5m3tV5XY>

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2. BEHAVE

Your company is paying you.

There are standards in workplaces. Sometimes they're written down in employee handbooks, sometimes they're understood as part of the culture and sometimes they're common sense. But you're an adult. Nobody should have to tell you to behave.

It's not too much to ask to follow the written and unwritten rules of good behavior. Really. If you ever think "should I do it?" probably don't do it. If you never think that – start.

Don't be any of these people:

<http://www.businessinsider.com/horror-stories-about-terrible-coworkers-2016-8#everyone-at-my-service-center-was-racist-6>

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3. DON'T GET TOO COCKY

You're not a genius.

You're not a genius. No one thinks you're a genius and acting like one makes people hate you. You don't have to be the best at something. Do your job well and thoroughly, and let other people do theirs.

You can and should take pride in your skills and accomplishments, and when you're ready, push the boundaries of your skills so they can expand. But don't assume you can show up, take on something totally new and not fuck it up. It will take weeks or months for more qualified people to fix what you ruined.

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4. DO THE BARE MINIMUM

That's all we ask.

If you're not gunning for a promotion, and there's no obligation to be gunning for a promotion, you can show up, fulfill your role and go home with a minimum level of mental effort. That's totally fine, you're not being paid to devote yourself mind, body and soul to your company. But don't do less than you've agreed to do. That just makes everyone else's life worse.

Many of us have the opposite problem and give way too much, and that's no better. Unless you're a surgeon, your life outside of work is way more important than whatever is happening in the office.

Here's the rule: 80% effort is enough. I talk about it in Episode 7 of the Let's Fix Work Podcast.

<https://laurieruettimann.com/letsfixwork-7/>

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5. WHEN YOU GO ABOVE & BEYOND, DON'T ASK FOR A PARADE

It totally wipes out the really great things you just did.

There are two emotions the people around you can feel when you really go above and beyond. Happiness and gratitude that you helped, or dread that they're going to have to hear about it for the next six months.

Quietly making yourself useful beyond the bare minimum will make an impression over time. You don't need to bring it up in every meeting.

Unless you're in a performance review or negotiating for a raise. Then lay it on and get the credit and compensation you deserve for your work. Here's how to negotiate a raise:

<http://salarytutor.com/2014/10/negotiate-raise-promotion-salary-tutor-game-plan/>

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6. TAKE THAT CHIP OFF YOUR SHOULDER

Everything sucks from time to time.

It's easy to assume that our own problems are the worst and most important.

They're usually not.

It takes very little effort to be pleasant and giving the people around you the benefit of the doubt makes everyone's life a lot more pleasant. You can spend so much energy on being irritated that's just wasted.

Are you a misanthrope? We've all been there. Wikihow has a guide just for you:

<https://www.wikihow.com/Be-Nice-to-Someone-You-Hate>

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7. DON'T ASK HR TO SOLVE YOUR PROBLEMS LIKE THEY'RE YOUR PARENTS

We grow up and move away from our parents for a reason.

Before you ask for help with something, try to solve it on your own. Like really. Research it. Try a few things. Experiment. When you do ask for help, you can talk about what you've already tried and not look lazy or useless.

An exception here is when someone breaks the law or harasses you. Go tell HR. And if HR doesn't listen, tell someone else like a colleague or a mentor. Do it right now.

But for ordinary conflicts, follow this process when you run into issues:

- 1) Be curious and figure out what's really wrong.
- 2) Make a list of things to try.
- 3) Either try them or bring the list to the decision-maker.
- 4) Ask the person most likely to be able to help.
- 5) Say thank you.

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8. GET OUT OF THE WAY OF SOMEONE ELSE'S GOOD IDEA

This isn't a democracy and you don't have to agree with every decision.

In workplaces, there are hierarchies. They may be formalized, or they may be ad hoc. Sometimes they are unfair. Regardless, when a decision is made, sometimes you should just go with it. It's fine to offer your opinion if you have relevant information and experience, but if it's not your project, be prepared to hear – and accept – a no. If you're really concerned, register your thoughts on paper. Then stop giving a fuck.

Sarah Knight defines a fuck as a unit of measurement describing your time, energy and money. (Check out her TedX talk: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GwRzjFQa_Og)

Does this decision really warrant a large investment of your fucks? Probably not. Look at cat pictures on the internet instead.

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9. HAVE AN EGO BUT DON'T LET ME SEE IT TOO OFTEN

I don't mind pride. I mind vanity.

Say it after me: “I don’t know.”

Feels good doesn’t it?

No one likes a know-it-all.

Here are more things to practice:

- “Joe Smith had a great idea.”
- “Have you asked Jane Doe? She has experience in this area.”
- “This isn’t really my area of expertise, but I’d love to be part of this project. Do you mind if I brainstorm ideas with the team?”
- “I’m sorry, I interrupted. Please continue.”

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10. DO A PREMORTEM

The past doesn't have to be the past. You can beat failure.

A premortem is when you think about how you fail before you fail, and then you work backward to prevent failure. Going to see your parents for a holiday weekend? Think about all that can go wrong. You'll talk about politics. They'll criticize your life choices. You might drink too much. Now, build a quick plan to make sure that doesn't happen before you go. Then apply this concept at work.

You can learn all about the premortem here:

<http://laurieruettimann.com/?s=premortem>

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Hope you appreciate the 10 ways to avoid getting mixed up with HR.

HR can be a helpful resource if you have colleagues who are breaking the rules, but 76% of work-related conflict can be solved by being brave, courageous, and speaking up in the moment.

You don't need HR for that.

And if you recognize any of these behaviours in yourself, do everyone a favour and cut it out.

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