harmony
the quality of forming a pleasing and consistent whole

Offices are a microcosm of humanity. They are a mix of all types of people, with all types of personalities, quirks, goals and challenges, so for everyone to get along beautifully, it takes effort.

You probably remember a time in your career when a "clash of personalities" corrupted a productive working environment. Since everyone in the office contributes to this, any employee can prevent this from happening and work to create harmony in their office with these six simple practices.

Authentic Appreciation. Say thank you. These two little words may be the most powerful when it comes to creating happiness and harmony. People work hard and take pride in their accomplishments, but can feel overlooked. Taking time to acknowledge even the smallest achievement can make a person feel valued. Say thank you not only for the big job they've completed, say thank you when they open the door, offer to get you coffee, or invite you to lunch. Offer a genuine thank you every day.

Notice the little things. If a co-worker or employee is happy at his or her job, they will go out of their way to add a little extra to their commitment. They might take on an extra assignment or stay late to help out with an uncompleted project. Or they may do subtle things like clean up the kitchen area or edit a company document on which they noticed errors. The more you notice and offer thanks for these little "extras," the more you will build happiness and harmony in the office, and the more motivated your co-workers will become to continue looking for ways to improve the business.

Avoid idle gossip. Gossip tarnishes office harmony. It might seem entertaining at the moment, but underneath, it builds distrust. Resentments build, people begin to wonder if they are the one being gossiped about, and chasms open. Abide by a "no-gossip policy".

Respect. The only language people understand – male or female, young or old – is respect. Learn to respect your employees, subordinates and colleagues, and it will come back to you in multiple folds. To learn to respect people, I'd offer these three suggestions:

*Treat people with **COURTESY**. Use simple but effective words like "Excuse me", "Please", "I'm sorry", "Kindly..."

*Treat people with **CAUTION**. Don't ride others roughly. Don't treat your coworkers as if they don't have a choice, as if you are doing them a favor. Your relationship is mutual. You need them to thrive as much as they need you to survive. Without them there'd be no you.

*Treat people with **CONSCIENCE**. The Golden Rule still holds any day, any time and under any condition: DO FOR OTHERS WHAT YOU WANT THEM DO FOR YOU.

Maintain an open door policy. Regardless of position, establish an open environment for discussion. Be open to suggestions, complaints or discussions without judgment. Because people come from different backgrounds and experiences, everyone has their own way of looking at things. By *listening*, you can understand what others see from their point of view instead of your own. When people feel open to talk, you can nip problems in the bud before they escalate into real obstacles or unearth substantial opportunities you may not have noticed before.

Participate in a team environment. Hold or attend regular meetings with the entire office and empower co-workers to take "ownership" in the business. If they feel their opinions and insights hold value, they will be more likely to use their talents and creativity to help build the business as a whole. Instead of taking orders, they will work together to look for ways to improve.

Offer to help. Jump in and be hands-on yourself. Whenever you are stuck, overworked or faced with a major deadline, you know how you appreciate a helping hand. It may take a little extra effort, but pitch in to help your co-workers over a hump.

In the words of Henry Ford: "Coming together is a beginning. Keeping together is progress. Working together is success."

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