

DTD Episode 70 Show Notes

Defeat the Drama of Supervising Your Friends

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In theory working with friends seems like it would be great. And, at times it does work out well. However, over and over I find my clients struggling with the negative impact of work friendships.

We spend a lot of time at work so it's bound to happen. We become friends with people at work. There are many ways you can end up supervising a friend:

- You worked together, became friends and then you got promoted to their manager
- You hired a friend thinking they would be great in your department or business
- You blur the lines with direct reports and start spending time together outside of work. Friendships blossom and so does the drama.

The problem these friendships often breed drama. Here are some scenarios I've seen:

- The line between friend and boss becomes blurred and you let them get away with too much.
- Or, your employee begins to take advantage of the relationship, expecting preferential treatment and is angry with you for treating them as an employee at work.

- You spend a lot of time at work rehashing the fun you had over the weekend and planning your next escapade. Other employees become frustrated with your lost productivity.
- You do play favorites and plan to continue but are becoming annoyed with the jealous or frustrated displays of the rest of the team.
- You overcompensate and tend to be harsher with your friend/employee, causing tension between the two of you.
- Perhaps the two of get distracted talking, goofing around or playing practical jokes on each other at work.
- You have a fight with your friend outside of work over a personal issue and have to work together the next day.
- The rest of the team has the inaccurate perception that your friend gets preferential treatment despite your best effort.

How do I define drama? If you've been listening to this podcast for a while you know that I define it as anything that shifts focus from where it should be; on providing great service. Friendships will happen at work and you can have friendships without generating drama but you have to have good boundaries and solid ground rules.

1. No preferential treatment
2. No extra harsh treatment
3. No goofing around or re-hashing the weekend's shenanigans
4. Treat all employees with respect
5. Where it may appear that there is preferential treatment be prepared to share a bit more detail.
6. If the relationship causes too much drama and you are not able to work through the cause, one of you must move or go. I'm talking the extreme scenario here. I hope it's not necessary but I've seen it happen. One of you is interested in keeping the professional relationship and friendship separate while the other is not. Drama

ensues. All efforts to minimize the impact fail. The business must win. And if you are the one in the leadership role or are the business owner you don't want to compromise your position. The threat of job loss must be present and real. If you've entered the work/friend zone you have to be willing to go to the mat for your business and hope that the friendship can survive.

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