Constant complainer big pain in the butt

Refuse to participate in pointless conversations with your coworker.

By Kathryn McPhee

Q: I am stuck in a very small office with an older colleague who never stops complaining. “Larry” goes on and on about his heavy workload, but when you offer assistance, he criticizes your ideas. I have no idea how our boss doesn’t like him. However, if I try to help him figure out why, he immediately rejects my suggestions. Whenever I’m out of the office, Larry complaints about the number of people who are involved in the project. He never seems to know who they were. I would like to tell him that Larry just shot up that butt, but that doesn’t seem wise. Do you have any advice?

A: Being trapped in a confined space with a chronic complainer would be maddening, yet you understand your fringe, but while you still have to work with Larry, the best way to handle that is to modify his behavior. In attempting to be helpful, you have inadvertently become a place in Larry’s egging game. Whenever you listen to complaints, propose solutions to problems, or offer to help with tasks, you are actually rewarding the behavior that is driving you crazy. So it’s time to stop participating in these pointless conversations.

When Larry launches into a round of complaints, politely remind him that you are here to talk, not to listen. Then immediately turnaround and focus on your work. Should Larry persist, simply repeat: “I’m sorry, but I really can’t talk now” with your eyes open.

If possible, enhance this separation by arranging your work space so that your back is to Larry’s rear. And if you need to engage with Larry, approach him from above, not by plugging in them. Complaints complaints about want an audience, so if you continue to be unresponsive, Larry will eventually find a more willing listener.

Q: Each year, our company buys a season ticket package for our hometown NFL team. Those seats are excellent and extremely costly. Since we are a very small business, every ticket we buy seems like a big pain in the butt. In some cases, we sacrifice employees, some long-term employees won’t be able to attend games at all. They feel that season ticket holders should not be allowed to participate in the drawing. What’s your opinion on this?

A: Each ticket is supposed to be an equal opportunity to be fair, then everyone should have an equal shot at winning. Despite having their own ticket, your new employees may still want to be part of the event because they were going to an event with their own ticket, your new employees may still want to be part of the event because they were going to an event with their own ticket. They may not be as familiar with the team, their own ticket, your new employees may still want to be part of the event because they were going to an event with their own ticket. They may not be as familiar with the team, so they may want to have an equal opportunity to attend games.

In the long run, you will definitely have an improved percentage of women and a larger percentage of games. So perhaps you should consider replacing the NFL experience with more inclusive games. Many things that work well in a very small company are not effective in a larger enterprise.