

Work Jerks by Louise Carnachan

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Some of my favorite books were published a while ago, but interpersonal skills don't go out of date.

For Communication Skills:

Patterson, Kerry, Joseph Grenny, Ron McMillan, and Al Switzler. *Crucial Conversations: Tools for Talking When Stakes Are High*. 2nd ed. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill, 2011.

The language used in this book provides easy-to-understand concepts, examples, and help for how to productively engage in difficult conversations and give critical feedback. There are other books by the authors, but I like this one in particular.

For Self-Awareness:

Goleman, Daniel. *Working with Emotional Intelligence*. New York, NY: Bantam Books, 2006.

Goleman, Daniel, Richard Boyatzis, and Annie McKee. *Primal Leadership: Unleashing the Power of Emotional Intelligence*. Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press, 2013.

There are a lot of books out on emotional intelligence (EI or EQ), but Goleman was one of the first to explore this topic. *Working with Emotional Intelligence* is for everyone,

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although occasionally there's a slant toward assuming one has management authority. *Primal Leadership* is about leading with emotional intelligence (which anyone can use regardless of their position!). There are wonderful descriptions in the appendix that provide definitions of emotional intelligence categories and what comprises each.

For Conflict Management:

Fisher, Roger, William Ury, and Bruce Patton. *Getting to Yes: Negotiating Agreement without Giving In*. 3rd ed. New York, NY: Penguin Publishing Group, 2011.

This book initiated my love for the Harvard Negotiation Project. The first book was published in 1990, but the authors have continued to revise (with Patton stepping in after Fisher passed away). It is the blueprint for win-win negotiation and has been used in international conflict situations as well as daily life. The authors provide excellent examples in the revised editions about how to stay true to one's principles, even in the face of those who behave poorly. There's virtually nothing from this group that I wouldn't recommend. See *Difficult Conversations* below.

Stone, Douglas, Sheila Heen, and Bruce Patton. *Difficult Conversations: How to Discuss What Matters Most*. New York, NY: Penguin Books, 2010.

This book is filled with examples and practical ways to handle confrontation. Their approach may really resonate for those who appreciate more analytical strategies.

For Workplace Culture:

Coyle, Daniel. *The Culture Code: The Secrets of Highly Successful Groups*. New York, NY: Bantam Books, 2018.

I love this book! It's about what constitutes a good culture and the practices that will get you there. Coyle draws his

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examples from a variety of industries (including the improvisational theater company Upright Citizens Brigade, which warms my improv heart). He hits all the notes that I think are important in a functional culture, as well as showing us the contrast of toxic ones. I especially like his chapter “Building Safety.”

For Generations at Work:

“Generations” is an interesting concept because the distinctions between groups of people by age are driven by marketers who target specific audiences. You’ll find agreed upon start/end dates for generations, but also variation. The current generations in the workforce are traditionalists (most of whom have already retired), baby boomers (many of whom have retired), Gen X, millennials, and Gen Z.

My counsel is to do a YouTube search for current videos, then watch a number of them. The descriptions of the various generations differ to some degree, depending on the age of the person who is providing the information. They often focus on comfort with technology and differences in communication methods (extremely helpful). What we do know about generational differences is that each “cohort” (a group of similar age, spanning approximately fifteen to twenty years) is different due to when they grew up, the child-rearing practices of the time, and significant events that occurred during their youth. From this information, a profile is derived regarding common values, perspective, and life and work styles. Of course, where someone grows up impacts this as well.

Although generalizations about a generation may be useful, remember that any one person may be quite different from the stereotype. It’s always a good practice to treat people as individuals regardless of what you believe you know about the person’s generation.

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To Find Counseling Resources:

Start by looking for what your employer provides. If your company is large enough, you may have a free employee assistance program (EAP). These services are often outsourced, which means your anonymity is assured because the counselors aren't employees of your company. Typically, a certain number of free counseling sessions are provided, and they can refer you to other resources as well.

Look at what your insurance covers and examine your benefits. Depending on your plan, they may list counselors in your area that accept your insurance.

Check out community resources. Most large (and even smaller) communities have free or sliding scale counseling options. You may need to use search terms like “counseling,” “mental health,” or “therapy” to find what you're looking for. There are even online services.

How to Conduct Behavior-Based

Employment Interviews:

More Than a Gut Feeling by Richard Deems may have been the first on this topic. To find more recent material, search for “behavior-based employment interviews” or “competency-based interviews.” You can find videos on behavioral interviewing, but many of them are about how to answer the questions, not how to write them. Make sure you scan thoroughly to find what you want.

Who to Contact If You Have Concerns about Harassment, Bias, or Discrimination:

It's probably best to start with your human resources department or union (unless they're the problem, or you don't trust them). To find an Equal Employment Opportunity Commission office in your area, look at their website, www.eeoc.gov/field-office.

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If you have a legal department that responds to employee complaints, speak with them. Talk with the Ombuds Office if you have one (most universities and colleges do, as well as some other organizations).

Employment lawyers also answer questions about workplace discrimination. Make sure you understand how they charge for their advice and services.