

STAYING SANE IN A TOXIC WORKPLACE

It's impossible to be effective and at peace in a toxic workplace. Even if you work from home, the negativity of a toxic workplace can transcend physical walls. The drama, dysfunction, and poor communication can eventually affect everything from your personal life and health to your self-esteem. Quitting immediately isn't always an option, so here are a few tips to improve the situation while you devise an exit strategy.

DON'T . . .	DO . . .
LET NEGATIVITY WIN Avoid complaining to your partner or friends. Ruminating about your terrible job keeps you in a pessimistic mindset and prevents you from seeing solutions.	USE WORK AS A TESTING GROUND Develop skills and competencies for future opportunities. Utilize free videos or online training if you can't learn what you need to on the job.
PARTICIPATE IN DRAMA Move your desk away from destructive jerks. Get sympathetic colleagues on your side who can tip you off as to what meetings they're in. Limit time with people who gossip.	FIND SUPPORT Build a circle of confidants within the office or externally through a professional association or peer community. You need trustworthy people in your corner who can provide a sanity check.
SKIMP ON BOUNDARIES Take your full lunch break. Don't answer emails after hours or work on the weekend. Use your PTO.	CREATE A POSITIVE WORKSPACE Surround yourself with images, quotes, and colors that relax you or bring you happiness.
FAIL TO ADVOCATE FOR YOURSELF Think creatively about shifting toxic elements of your job, for example, by delegating, changing supervisors, or switching teams. Find another internal ally who will go to bat for you if your boss isn't supportive.	PREPARE YOUR EXIT Focus your energy on your next steps and finding something better. Get your resume in order, reach out to recruiters, and reconnect with your network. Have three to six months of savings in the bank.

DON'T . . .**HESITATE TO DOCUMENT**

Keep track of inappropriate or abusive behavior so you can report it if need be.

LOSE YOUR SENSE OF SELF

Seek a sense of mastery, momentum, and enjoyment from another outlet, such as a side hustle or hobby.

DO . . .**MANAGE YOUR OWN SELF-TALK**

Remind yourself that this situation is temporary and reframe how you perceive it. It's not a crisis; it's a challenge. Your boss isn't intolerable; they're just emotionally immature.

REMEMBER YOUR JOB DOESN'T DEFINE YOU

Revisit your values and what you stand for outside of your job title.

Strategy: Bring Your Whole Self to Work

Without the right conditions, it's going to be difficult, if not impossible, to live out your core values and to achieve your goals. While some people can bloom wherever they're planted, the best option for Sensitive Strivers is to act with intentionality and agency to find a genuine personality-job fit. In the Exercise at the end of this chapter, you'll get a chance to assess your current role, but before you can decide whether or not it's a true match, you need to define and prioritize what's important to you using The Sensitive Striver's Hierarchy of Professional Needs.

Viewing current and potential roles through the lens of what you need to survive versus what you need to thrive is an opportunity for you and the organizations you work for to go beyond the bare minimum, so that you'll be more effective, satisfied, and impactful at any stage of your career.