

# The Effective Admin

Advice, tips & news for administrative professionals

## Take Back Your Power at Work

### Thrive at Work by NOT Letting Others Direct Your Emotions

You might give people unnecessary power over you at work through your emotional reactions to what they're saying, yet you don't realize it. When this happens it can impact your workplace productivity negatively. How does this all come about? Well, as an administrative professional you associate and communicate with multiple people daily: Coworkers, managers, executives, clients, potential customers and vendors. And let's not forget everyone who does not fall into a neat category; they include mail carriers, couriers, supply delivery personnel, cafeteria cashiers and cooks, office cleaning staff, admin personnel you interact with on behalf of your boss at other companies, and many more people.

Let's face it: Administrative professionals come in contact with a lot of people daily while doing their various tasks—probably more so than some staff senior to you (because senior staff funnel their requests to these individuals through you). Yet no two people you interact with (whether in-person or by telephone or email) are usually alike in personality, or temperament.

And while their work styles might impact your productivity at times, their personalities and temperaments can do so also. To thrive at work and have more stress-free, satisfying work days, be conscious about retaining and managing your emotional power or energy. That way you'll retain your focus on the job and your work assignments. You won't get emotionally distracted. That'll help increase your workplace productivity, creativity and the quality of your product or service. Here are two ways to NOT give your power away:

**Power Tip 1. Don't always base your emotions on other people's emotions.** For example, do you ever find yourself getting angry when a coworker is angrily telling a story about something that happened to her. You start to empathize and feel what she's feeling. You might even start to dislike the person she is talking about. Be conscious of that. You can empathize without physically and emotionally joining "her battle" at that stage. In most instances, you need to choose YOUR battles, not someone else's.

On the other hand, sometimes if someone is excited in a positive way about something then meeting them in their "moment" might empower you. That positive energy and enthusiasm may create a motivational environment. And you're in it. That can be a good thing when your environment helps you to feel enthused, motivated and empowered.

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## How to Represent Your Manager or Executive at a Meeting

The key to representing your manager at a meeting is preparation. Sometimes you will get very little because you will find out at the last minute that you need to do this. Perhaps your manager is running late or got stuck in another city. No need to panic! Whether you have two weeks notice or two minutes, follow these tips.

**1. Talk with your manager prior to the meeting** (even briefly) regarding the goals for the meeting. What information is important for you either to communicate or receive? Discuss a plan about how you are to report this information when the meeting is over, such as verbally, e-mail or by fax.

**2. Know who will be there.** Mentally prepare something to briefly say to each attendee that lets each one know that you are up-to-speed with who they are and what they are working on. For example, say: "Hello, Bob. I know that my manager [name here] is particularly interested in knowing the status of project X's start date. Are the dates holding or shifting?"

**3. Dress with care.** Dress in the way that makes you feel confident and you will inspire confidence. Your attitude is "of course I belong here." Let it be known where your manager is and that you are happy to be there to make sure things move forward on his part.

**4. Answer honestly and directly.** If you are asked a question that you don't know the answer to then say, "I don't know the answer to that, but I will find out." Indicate when you will get back to them and how; then do it, copying your manager on all communications.

**5. Speak clearly, loud enough and with confidence.** This will put everyone at ease in the room. And that is exactly what you want — to blend naturally into the meeting and represent your manager well.

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By Bonnie Low-Kramen, author of *Be the Ultimate Assistant*, A celebrity assistant's secrets to success; [www.bonnielowkramen.com](http://www.bonnielowkramen.com)

## Your Health at Work: 3 Ways to Prevent Neck and Shoulder Pain

**1.** Keep your monitor top near eye level so that you're not bending your neck forward and down to look at the screen. Buy a monitor riser if needed.

**2.** Don't cradle the phone receiver or cordless handset between your shoulder and neck. Use a headset if you need

your hands free to type simultaneously.

**3.** Place a document holder close to your monitor to type from or refer to documents or notes on it. When you place and view these paper items flat on your desk you bob your head and neck too much. —KP

### Virtual Safety

If you received an email from [frauddep@ftc.gov](mailto:frauddep@ftc.gov) or [service@irs.gov](mailto:service@irs.gov), don't believe it. (You're not getting that windfall of an unexpected tax refund.) U.S. Federal agencies almost never send correspondence to citizens by email. It's still delivered the old fashioned way: By postal mail.

Emails that you receive from those and similar addresses are typically fraudulent. Email sender addresses can be spoofed. These emails are sent by people trying to steal identity and financial information from you or plant viruses and spyware on your computer. The latter usually happens when you click open an attachment in the email.

**What should you do?** Don't click on any link in the email. Don't open any attachment in the email. Don't reply to the email sender. Optional step: Forward the email to [spam@uce.gov](mailto:spam@uce.gov), the FTC's spam database. Then delete the email. Empty your email trash. —KP