



## Building Better Working Relationships in 2019 – It's our Future.

We all know we have faced many challenges since October – from computer glitches to operational, scheduling and staffing issues we've run the gamut. As we enter this New Year, we're faced with yet another challenge. That is, are we willing to become the change we wish to see? Now is the perfect time to join together, build upon our solidarity as a union and make the commitment to build better working relationships with each other. Why? Not only because we are stronger together as a result of this association but because our future success depends on it.

Our focus – How do we accomplish this objective safely and professionally? The first step is to realize and recognize what we, as Flight Attendants, have the ability to ensure this is accomplished. We own it. We do have control over our own behavior, our own actions and how we react to others. Humans are naturally social creatures – we crave friendship and positive interactions, just as we do food and water. So it makes sense that the better our relationships are at work, the happier and more productive we're going to be.

Good working relationships give us several other benefits. Our work is more enjoyable when we have good relationships with those around us. Good relationships give us freedom from spending our time and energy overcoming the problems associated with negative relationships. Most importantly, successful working relationships are **essential** to crew resource management and to our jobs as safety professionals where we will rely on each other in a time of crisis.

Conversely, we also need to acknowledge those items over which we don't have control. We do not have control over company policies, procedures, or standards, scheduled services determined by management or the behavior and reactions of others. That doesn't mean we're powerless in our ability to influence alternative outcomes. It simply means that sometimes, for some period of time, we must accept what is *while we work to make it better*.

### **So what are the characteristics that make up good, healthy working relationships?**

**Trust**– This is the foundation of every good relationship. When you trust co-workers, you form a powerful bond that helps you to work and communicate more effectively. If you trust the people you work with, you can be open and honest in your thoughts and actions, and you don't have to waste time and energy "watching your back."

**Mutual Respect**– When you respect the people who you work with, you value their input and ideas, and they value yours. Working together, you can develop solutions based on your collective insight, wisdom and creativity.

**Mindfulness**– This means taking responsibility for your words and actions. Those who are mindful are careful and attend to what they say, and they don't let their own negative emotions impact the people around them. They are conscious communicators.

**Welcoming Diversity**– People with good relationships not only accept diverse people and opinions, but they welcome them. For instance, when your flying partners offer different opinions from yours, you take the time to consider what they have to say, and factor their insights into your decision-making.

**Open Communication**– We communicate all day, whether we're sending emails, IMs, or meeting face to face. The better and more effectively you communicate with those around you, the richer your relationships will be. All good relationships depend on open, honest communication.

### **So, what can you do to build better relationships at work?**

#### **Develop Your People Skills**

Good relationships start with good people skills including how well you collaborate, communicate and deal with conflict.

#### **Identify Your Relationship Needs**

Look at your own relationship needs. Do you know what you need from others? And do you know what they need from you? Understanding these needs can be instrumental in building better relationships.

#### **Focus on Your Emotional Intelligence (EI)**

Spend time developing your emotional intelligence (EI). Among other things, this is your ability to recognize your own emotions, and clearly understand what they're telling you. High EI also helps you to understand the emotions and needs of others.

#### **Schedule Time to Build Relationships**

Devote a portion of your flying day toward relationship building, even if it's just in minute increments. Small and even routine interactions help build the foundation of good relationships.

#### **Appreciate Others**

Show your appreciation whenever someone helps you. Everyone wants to feel that their work is appreciated. So, genuinely compliment the people around you when they do something well. This will open the door to great work relationships.

#### **Be Positive**

Focus on being positive which is both attractive and contagious. It will help strengthen your relationships with your flying partners. No one wants to be around someone who's negative all the time.

#### **Avoid Gossiping**

Don't gossip. Gossip is a major relationship killer at work. If you're experiencing conflict with someone, talk to them directly about the problem. Gossiping about the situation with others will only exacerbate the situation, and will cause mistrust and animosity between you.

#### **Stretch Yourself**

Occasionally, you'll have to work with someone you don't like or someone with whom you simply cannot relate. But, for the sake of your comfort and everyone's safety, it's essential that you maintain a professional relationship. When this happens, make an effort to get to know the person. It's likely that the person knows full well that the two of you aren't on the best terms, so make the first move to improve the relationship by engaging in positive exchanges. Instead of putting energy into your differences, focus on finding things that you have in common.

The presence of disrespectful behaviors erodes professional communication and collaboration which is essential to our jobs as safety professionals. Always try to remember – not all relationships will be great; but you can make sure that they are, at least, workable!

Contact AFA Employee Assistance at 800 424 2406 if you have additional questions.\