

# Here's How to Find Your Work Wife

Whether you realize it or not, we all need one.

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When I found out I was going to get to be the anchor of an investigative series at my first broadcast job, I immediately ran to tell my bestie at work. She was thrilled for me and took me out for drinks that night to celebrate. Now, decades later, she is still there cheering me on at every big break I get. We all need a community like this at work. Our success is dependent on having someone who we can count on to support us on the way to reaching our goals and who we want to celebrate with when we get there and commiserate with if we don't. Male or female, this person is often known as a work wife, and you need to find yours.

What I'm about to say isn't popular: Getting ahead at work is a popularity contest. And that's not necessarily a bad thing. Studies have shown time and again that people with more allies at the office perform better at work, and people with a larger contact list get ahead faster, gaining bigger and more regular promotions than their lone she-wolf counterparts. One Gallup poll found that people who had a work bestie were 43 percent more likely to receive recognition and praise for their work in a given week. And a LinkedIn study found that 46 percent of workers worldwide believe that work friends are important to their overall happiness. There can be salary benefits as well, because discussing personal matters like how much you make with work confidantes provides valuable insights into your

company or industry's compensation, so you can ask for what you deserve. Now here are tips to find your work wife.

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## **Be a Good Friend to Colleagues**

Before you start thinking about who in your office is your work wife, think about if you are this person for someone else. A work wife is validating; they boost your confidence if it starts to slip. She is honest, even if that means calling you out sometimes, and consistently has your back. If you are invalidating, dishonest and inconsistent, why would you expect the people around you to treat you any differently? After all, don't forget you're a member of whatever office team you work on. And if you're the CEO, lead by example.

## **Identify Strong Qualities in Others**

I know that you can't choose most of the work people you have in your life, but you can choose which of them you invest in. It's important to identify a trusted circle of friends and advocates at work that you'll have for the long run, regardless of where it is you actually work. Here are the three things I look for in professional relationships I want to develop: a positive attitude (would you want to foster a relationship with a Debbie Downer? I wouldn't), creativity and a straight shooter. If I invest time in a work relationship, I don't want to waste it on the phony formalities often associated with work decorum. I'm not saying you have to do actual shots with this person, but I like to surround myself with people who don't have their guard totally up and are able to keep it real – at work and elsewhere.

# Know Your Goals

What you look for in your important work relationships is up to you. Maybe you list power or expertise as qualities you want in your work tribe. Maybe you just want to invest in influential executives above you so you can jockey for a promotion behind the scenes. Remember, it's totally fine to value whatever you value, not what you think you should value, as long as it is in alignment with your true truth. If you value power and influence, it's not fine to pretend like you don't.

## **Related: The Benefits of Having Friends in the Office**

At the end of the (work)day, study after study has shown that the best predictor of team success is not smarts or effort, but it's how team members feel about one another. When that feeling is positive, everyone succeeds. So, the ultimate goal for your work relationships is not just to be popular, it's to make positive connections. If you're not making new friends, mentors and professional contacts right up until you're an old lady, then you are seriously missing out.

Excerpted from *Becoming Super Woman: A Simple 12-Step Plan to Go from Burnout to Balance*.

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