



Do you come across as arrogant? 5 workplace behaviors to curb

By [Joel Garfinkle](#) Jul 18, 2018

Many of us have had to battle the specter of arrogance at one time or another. No one is perfect, and the particularly intelligent must be especially careful about slipping into egotistical behavior. If you worry about being perceived as arrogant at work, read on to check your tendencies and learn about the alternative habits you should be perfecting.

Even the most humble have to be wary of any action that can seem arrogant — it's the wrong way to get noticed, especially when you're working to climb the corporate ladder.

Arrogant habit: Acting entitled

Think about your everyday behavior and decide whether you would find it acceptable if it were coming from someone who worked for you, instead of someone at your level. Do you hog the conversation, interrupt people or expect the whole meeting to be rehashed for you because you arrived late? If you use your title as an excuse to demand others accommodate your habits and schedule, you could be driving people away with your sense of entitlement.

Instead: Be the team captain. Rather than use your title to lord over others and demand special treatment, use your role to guide the group to be better, do more and achieve superior results as a team. Genuinely [engage in communication](#) with the group and listen to their thoughts. Team captains aren't always the best players — they're the players who are best at motivating everyone to work together. Use your role to empower and unite.

Arrogant habit: Belittling others

Dressing down someone in an open forum not only embarrasses and demotivates the person in questions, it makes others fear displeasing you. Since all humans eventually make mistakes, people will find opportunities elsewhere rather than stick around and risk being the next person you humiliate in public. Managers should also be careful when engaging in teasing or ribbing — what's acceptable between co-workers may seem hurtful from a superior.

The higher you rise in your organization, the more lightly you must tread with humor that might seem to be at someone's expense.

Instead: Build up, don't tear down. The adage "praise in public, correct in private" should always hold true. Even when you have [critical feedback to deliver](#), be sure to do it constructively, respectfully and away from other ears. Don't hesitate to inject some humor into day-to-day life — just be sure it's light-hearted and positive instead of cutting. If you must poke fun at someone, poke fun at yourself, but keep self-

deprecation to a minimum so people don't feel uncomfortable or obligated to come to your defense.

Arrogant habit: Being hierarchical

Be wary of appearing to value only the work and the opinions of those higher up. If you seek advice strictly from colleagues and superiors, you risk not only missing out on a great idea but also alienating those who work below you. If you regularly pull rank and demonstrate that you think title matters more than good input, the team will see no point in going the extra mile to bring you exceptional work.

Everyone wants to feel their work has value and meaning; if you only recognize those around and above you, the team will feel unappreciated and move on to better pastures.

Instead: Be inclusive. Forget titles and rank, and concentrate on cultivating good ideas and great work. Make meetings more like a roundtable workshop, and less like a one-way information briefing. Instead of telling the team how things are going to be, make an effort to [create a level playing field](#). Take the time to explain company vision, philosophy and direction, but make more room for different ways of getting there and be prepared to compromise. You'll be rewarded with a loyal group eager to bring you great ideas and work hard to execute them.

Arrogant habit: Being inconsiderate

Do you pay attention when someone is talking at work, no matter the subject or the speaker? Do you arrive on time to meetings? Do you fully engage in the conversation? Do you meet commitments you made to your team?

Being inconsiderate is more about demonstrating, rather than verbalizing, that you think you are better or more important than others. Reading your phone during a presentation, interjecting when someone is talking, blowing off meetings without notice: These all say, "I think my time and opinions are more valuable than yours."

Instead: Be gracious. Focus on the task or the conversation at hand, no matter what the topic. Give your full attention to each person and their presentation. Treat them with equal respect and consideration for their time and input. Be someone who notices and praises the efforts of others, no matter their level. Not only will you learn more and improve your own understanding of the organization's strengths and challenges, you'll draw the best talent to you with the best ideas because they know you're listening and appreciative.

Arrogant habit: Being condescending

The very smart have to be especially careful of becoming someone who talks down to others. This could be glossing over the details instead of taking the effort to explain properly, or describing things in overly simplistic terms for an audience. Even when you're the most brilliant person in the room, being patronizing is an ugly habit; not only will you alienate the person you've talked down to, but you'll also put a bad taste in the mouths of anyone who witness it.

Instead: Be patient. Remember that often, people are perfectly capable of grasping an idea or a situation, but they haven't been immersed in the issue like you have been. They lack the background or context, or are processing in their own way. Give space for people to think and evaluate what you are saying and [use your communication skills](#) to

fully and properly explain. Your patience and good humor in properly conveying information will be noted and remembered by those around you.

Even the most genial people have to guard against appearing arrogant. Work these alternate habits into your daily life and it will become easier and easier to ensure you are presenting an open, inclusive and respectful persona. Note the times you slip into arrogant behavior, such as times of extreme busyness or stress, and be especially mindful when those conditions occur. People will be drawn to your egalitarian ways and help you get ahead.

Joel Garfinkle is an [executive coach](#) and recognized as one of the top 50 coaches in the U.S., having worked with many of the world's leading companies, including Oracle, Google, Amazon, Deloitte, The Ritz-Carlton, Gap and Starbucks. Recently, he worked with an executive who had received a lot of feedback about being arrogant. Garfinkle designed this checklist to help the executive turn his habits around and become a more inclusive leader. Garfinkle has written seven books, including "[Executive Presence](#)" and "[Getting Ahead](#)." More than 10,000 people receive his [Fulfillment@Work](#) newsletter. When you [subscribe](#), you'll receive his e-book "41 Proven Strategies to Get Promoted No."