

# NATIONAL POST

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## How you behave can get you fired

Personality faults No. 1 cause for dismissal

Ray Williams

**Being fired** comes as a shock to most people. Whether the reason given is downsizing, re-engineering, acquisition or merger, most who are fired believe it is personal. They just happened to be at the wrong place at the wrong time. More often, it has to do with personality.

Here are the most common reasons why people are fired and the pitfalls you should avoid:

◆ **Attitude:** You made it obvious you really didn't want to be there, through your facial expressions, words and actions. Behavior is the expression of intent, commitment and reliability, and your behavior showed that work was just a passing interest in your life.

◆ **Effort:** You came in to work five minutes before starting time and you were out the door at 5 p.m. every day. If you were asked to work early or late, you weren't happy about it and let people know. Yes, life balance is important, but so is showing you can suck it up and put in a little extra time and energy when it's needed. Making a big deal out of how your boss won't get any more than 35 to 40 hours out of you is career suicide.

◆ **Relationships:** You didn't like the boss and it showed. You need to make your choice early in your work career. Either you can work with this person or you can't. If you can't, leave. Your relationship is the No. 1 factor influencing job performance and job satisfaction, according to a recent Gallup study.

◆ **Paying your dues.** You weren't willing to put in the time to "earn your stripes." Have you heard there is no free lunch? You have got to do the time, put out effort and earn your way up the ladder. Those who expect something for just showing up or keep making demands will alienate the boss and co-workers.

◆ **Whining:** You consistently complain without offering solutions. No one likes a whiner. If you have legitimate complaints, offer alternative solutions. If you can't shut up and do your job.

◆ **Selfishness:** You are the poster child for "what's in it for me." Yes, it's important to stick up for yourself, but not to the exclusion of serving those around you. You will make more headway in your career by helping others.

◆ **Demanding:** You were high maintenance. You took more of everyone's time and energy than you contributed. You constantly needed help and attention from the boss and co-workers. Independence for you is "I'm not sure how I should do..."

◆ **Self-centeredness:** You told others and maybe even your boss you were looking for another job. Absolutely do not share your intentions with co-workers, unless you're willing for it to get back to your boss. If you're looking for another job, keep it to yourself. And if you've been offered another job, don't make the mistake of using that as leverage, expecting your boss to counter offer. Even if you boss does, he/she will never trust you again.

◆ **Gossiper.** You gossiped about your boss and/or co-workers. This is one of the most destructive habits going and we have all been guilty at one time or another. If you engage in gossip on a regular basis, people will earn not to trust you with any confidences.

◆ **Obstructionist:** People could not get work done through you, so they learned how to get around you. Your co-workers decided you are more of a barrier than a conduit. Stop being a know-it-all, and needing to be right, and figure out ways to help other people be successful in their work.

If these behaviors even give you a twinge of "OK, maybe I'm a bit like that," then it's time you took a good hard look in the mirror and made a decision to change. And changing is hard work, and difficult to do along. For some people, a professional coach can help set them on a more successful career path.

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