What to do When Someone You Work With Drives You Crazy?

I'm reminded of my book on this subject -- *Stop Pissing Me Off! What To Do When the People You Work With Drive You Crazy* -- when I heard the news about Justice Antonin Scalia's sudden death and the comments from his "best buddy" Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg.

While ideological opposites, they forged an unlikely friendship when they were judges on the D.C. Circuit that continued after they were appointed to the U.S. Supreme Court.

Famously, they visited India in 1994 and rode an elephant together. Scalia joked that Ginsburg's "feminist friends" gave her a hard time because she rode behind him, but Ginsburg - ever ready with a quip - responded that the driver explained that it was a "matter of a distribution of weight."

No matter how much you disagree with someone on what your organization should be doing, or how caustic you think his or her approach is to discussions, finding a common bond and developing a relationship will serve you in the long run. Scalia and Ginsburg, for example, in addition to their elephant riding, appeared as extras for the Washington National Opera, bonding over their shared love of the genre. To quote Ginsburg: "Fight for the things that you care about but do it in a way that will lead others to join you."

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Even when disagreeing about the big issues of the day, their relationship allowed Ginsburg to have a "heads up" on Scalia's opinions so that she could be more prepared to respond.

Ginsburg's technique for dealing with difficult people? “Sometimes people say unkind or thoughtless things and when they do, it is best to be a little hard of hearing - to tune out and not snap back in anger or impatience”.

Although Scalia could be caustic on the bench and in opinions, he also tried to move on from disagreements, advising: "If you cannot disagree with your colleagues on the law without taking it personally, you ought to get another day job."

Good advice from our top jurists that can help us deal with people who piss us off and drive us crazy.

Did You Know?

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