

Five Things You Should Never Say at Work!

There are certain statements that are considered toxic in the workplace, according to Barbara Krantz Taylor, principal consultant at The Bailey Group in Minneapolis. Even if made with total sincerity, each statement invites hostility and mistrust:

“It’s not my fault!” This may be totally true but it’s far better to provide an honest explanation of *why* it’s not your fault. In other words, provide proof of your innocence rather than simply hiding behind a defensive statement. Example – “I can see why you would assume that I failed to comply with lockout/tag out procedures last Monday; however, on Monday I was at a training session off premises.”

“It’s all my fault!” This sounds like an honest confession but Taylor warns that “Being the martyr and taking everything on yourself can set you up for future blame and plant the impression that you are incompetent.” Accept responsibility only if that responsibility is truly yours. And when this statement is uttered in a pouty or snarky manner, you complicate the situation.

“Don’t repeat this, but...” Workplace politics can be extremely destructive. Be cautious about what you say and prudent about what you disclose. Watching your words is an important part of workday life. Think twice before you say something and try to imagine how your words sound to others.

“It’s not fair.” Whether true or not, this is one of the most unhelpful things you can say at work. No matter how you say it, it will come across as whining. If a situation is truly unfair, offer

concrete, fact based examples of the perceived inequity.

“That’s not my job!” Granted, job descriptions or work agreements may make something truly not your job. But particularly in the current economy, a willingness to go above and beyond is helpful to both your employer and to your image as a valued contributor.



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