

the New Day

new thoughts monday



Learn to love your work mates

ADRIAN MONTI

- They say you can choose your friends but you can't pick your family – and the same goes for work colleagues.

There you are on day one, shoved into an office, factory or shop and expected to muck in with these people you have never met before. But you can be the miserable one who never makes anyone else a cuppa and scratches your name on your stapler, or you can try to actually like these people, who you probably see more of than your partner and kids.

Here's how to get them on side:

Accentuate their positives

We constantly come across people we don't hit it off with, which is something we have no control over. But we can control how we react to them. "Acknowledge to yourself that they aren't

going to be your best friends and make an effort to focus on their best qualities," says Susanna Halonen (happyologist.co.uk), author of *Screw Finding Your Passion*. "This will make working with them easier as you realise they have a clear role to play and you understand how they're contributing to the team or organisational goals."

Think before you speak

Put a lid on some of your inner feelings when you're at work. "Don't shoot people down even if you disagree", says Dr Elle Boag, a social psychology lecturer at Birmingham City University. "Instead, couch your response more gently with something like 'I take your ideas on board but...'"

Politeness costs nothing

Say "thank you" – and say it often. "Do it when someone brings you a cup of tea, helps you out or shares a new idea", says Susanna. "Even

though it might be in their job responsibilities, saying thank you improves the positive bond between you. It creates a culture of appreciation in the workplace."

Ignore initial impressions

Even if you can't stand your colleagues at first, this can change over time. "Once you work with someone for a long period you see their flaws. This can change what you first thought of them – often for the better", says Dr Elle. You might find them more likeable when you see they're human.

Be social

Take lunch breaks together and talk about non-work related things. "Getting away from your desk to eat properly will mean you come back re-energised and recharged", says Susanna. "Do this with your colleagues and you'll get to know each other better. The better you know each other, the more effectively you'll work together."

Originally appeared in the print on New Day newspaper on March 14th, 2016.