

NIP NEGATIVITY IN THE BUD

You can't avoid frustrations and disappointments at the office, but you can prevent them from taking a toll on your career by monitoring and limiting your tendency to engage in negative communication. Barbara Pachter, a business communications trainer and author in Cherry Hill, New Jersey, offers the following suggestions for cultivating habits that will enhance your reputation as a positive professional:

Avoid downbeat topics. Stop rehashing how you lost a promotion or how a colleague missed an important deadline.

Stop complaining. No one wants to listen to the same drumbeat of negative comments over and over again. Try to resolve issues you have with other people.

Be respectful when you disagree. Be mindful of words or phrases that can be perceived negatively.

Post reminders to stay upbeat. For example, Pachter notes, "One man with pes-

simistic qualities put up a small sign by his desk with the initials KIP (keep it positive)."

Limit your corrections of others. Instead of appearing helpful, you may be perceived as someone who only wants to find fault with others.

Word things positively. Monitor your conversations, and put a positive spin on your comments whenever possible.

Avoid using *but*. This word often negates whatever statement precedes it. Substitute the word *and* instead, as in "You did a nice job and it would be even better if..."

Keep your nonverbal communication upbeat. As you go about your day, maintain a pleasant expression; avoid frowns and glares when things don't go your way.

If being positive doesn't come naturally to you, don't despair, advises Pachter. "It's okay to fake until you feel it. Simply start acting like a [positive person]. Eventually you'll become more positive."