



Romance in the office

By Crabby Office Lady

Think you can take a lesson from the lovebirds at [Dunder Mifflin](#)? Jim and Pam met there, and their love blossomed. So why can't an office romance work for you, too?

[Wednesday](#), we talked about how "what the heart wants, the heart goes after" and how hard it is to have any control over that. Today, let's dig a little deeper, try a little harder: We're going into the advantages and disadvantages of forbidden love in the copy room.

Love in the office: The advantages

Finding love in the workplace can be an exciting and exhilarating experience. Just ask Pam and Jim, or Tracy and Hepburn...

- You'll spend lots of time together.
- You always have someone to eat lunch with.
- He'll understand why you have to work late.
- You'll have someone to confide in when it comes to matters of the office.
- You'll get an idea about what she's like, on and off the job. You'll see how others feel about her, how she handles herself in a crisis, how she treats other people.
- Going out on a limb here and assuming that there will be some...*slumber parties*: You can carpool!

But it's not all hearts and flowers. We're at work here, and separating the personal from the professional isn't always easy.

Love in the office: The disadvantages

There are ways to make an office relationship work, but there are many things working against you...

- You'll spend a lot of time together. (*Hmmm. This first one sounds familiar.*)
- Knowing where your loved one is at all times may be nice in the beginning, but can become quite smothering as things move forward.
- If you keep the romance a secret, will others be flirting with your loved one? Will this bring out the seething green-eyed monster in you?
- If you work in a small office, don't believe for one second that everyone doesn't already know about you two.
- Again, a small office means that if you are fighting, everyone will know it and may be watching your every move. Goldfish bowl, anyone? (Now you know how Brad and Angie feel...for once...)
- Your productivity may suffer due to clandestine meetings and constant instant messaging.

- If you are a subordinate to your loved one, what if your "manager's pet" status comes into play and others start to notice? And if you break up — and if it's not pretty — will your former loved one have the power to fire you or make your life a living hell?
- If you're the boss, again, you have to think about favoritism and how it affects other employees. And with regard to breaking up, issues of sexual harassment may come up. It's not nice to think about, but it happens every day, and it can destroy your career.

Okay, I don't really want to end on that scary note, so here is some real-world advice from someone I work with, who found love and got married to *another* someone I work with: "When you work with your mate and they vent about work, realize that they're not necessarily asking for your help. Sometimes they just want to vent. That said, at times it can be great to get input from someone who knows you in your real world and your work world. So, do give advice when asked, but don't jump into 'solution mode' by default." Spoken like an expert.

To love or not to love?

Well, to love—of course! But be careful when you start to get involved with someone you work with. It is possible to make it work, but before you jump in, check out your company's policies regarding this matter; some businesses have specific guidelines about dating coworkers—particularly if one of the lovers is the boss. Chances are you don't want to lose your job over this. But then again, maybe you do. Money/love? Love/money? Each situation is different (just ask Melinda Gates).



Crabby's Find of the Week: There are some famous office romances that have proven the test of time... (From the Independent of London)