

Your workplace—Navigating the curves and styles

By [Crabby](#)

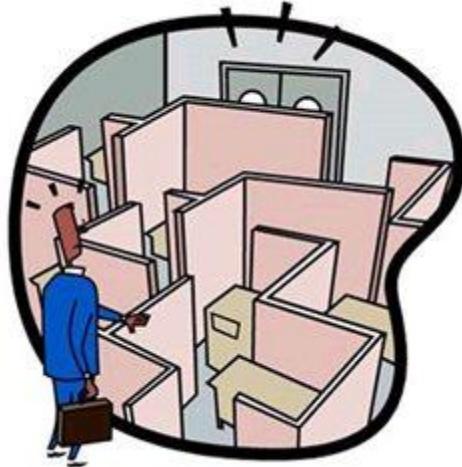
on March 21

Let's talk about the workplace and its influence over your work style, your worklife, your *outside of work* (space) life, and even your psyche.

I'm riffing on this today (literally, just riffin') because earlier this week I had a really interesting and illuminating conversation with a fellow named Tom in Seattle who is an "executive coach" and who is going to write a guest post for me in mid-April. (Since he'll be introducing himself and telling us what he does and why it relates to this blog at all, I don't want to give you his info quite yet; I'll let him do that in his post in the manner in which he wants.)

If you're a regular reader, you know that I've written a quite few posts and [columns](#) about workplace life, and what it means to work in an environment where there are others around you who also have agendas:

- [Act like your mom is watching](#) and [Workplace decorum](#) (etiquette in the workplace)
- [E-mail etiquette](#)
- [Secure printing](#) (no mad dashes to the copy room)
- [Managing stress at work](#)
- [Crabby's recipe for balancing your work and your life](#)
- ...and of course romance in the office ([Part I](#) and [Part II](#))



And several years ago, when I had just started writing the *Crabby* column (and loving the idea of being free with my language and topics), I wrote a column called [Collaborate with difficult people the Crabby way](#). Now that I'm older, wiser, a mother, and yes, had that conversation with Tom earlier this week, I'm wondering about the value of that column, particularly the bits about how to avoid certain people and even certain *types* of people. Sure, I used the column it to talk about some of the collaboration software that Office offers (SharePoint, OneNote, LiveMeeting, Office Communicator—now called Lync), but still, it harped on avoidance, and now that I know better, in-person avoidance while working on a project is NOT collaboration. Of course not everyone is going to be happy all the time; that's not the point. (And I do have to give myself some credit for that column: I did wrap it up by saying that working it out with prickly coworkers and managers in person is better than avoidance.)

But after my conversation with Tom (that obviously stuck with me, maybe because we talked about some personal, familial issues, too), I've been thinking about how coworkers and even their managers and upper managers treat each other, in email, in instant messages, in meetings, and in person—in the hall at an ad

hoc conversation, in the kitchen, in the dining room, even on the soccer field. (That last one: At Microsoft anyway; yeah, yeah, I know what you're thinking but there are reasons why this company works.)

I really believe that the workplace is changing, and now that we're in a time and place of trying to climb out of this recession and the damage it's done to our nation's workers, it'd behoove us to consider how we want to work, with whom, and what sort of opportunities come from this new way of looking at things.

(And yes, I know all too well, that this post may seem irrelevant for a great many of you who are out of work; you're hoping and trying to take what you can get in order to feed your families and keep a roof over your heads. I'm talking about the future because I'm an optimistic person and believe things CAN and WILL change. In the meantime, check out our [Career Center](#) which might help you get started; too little, too late for me?)

And finally, I do realize I'm being obtuse in this post; it's a hazard of the job in ways that would take many long posts to explain why. Look for [Tom's](#) guest post—sorry, couldn't resist to link to *something*, Tom—sometime in mid-April. I think you'll understand more of what I'm saying here after reading what he has to say.)

(By the way, a little secret between me and you: I write the Monday posts on Friday afternoon OR if I don't, they get done Sunday night. Who wants to write a blog post on a Sunday night or before 6 a.m. *Pacific Time*—when the post is published—on a Monday morning? Not I, said the lazy crab.)

To end: A quote from that aforementioned column I wrote about working with difficult people:

"The gem cannot be polished without friction, nor man perfected without trials." — Chinese proverb

— *Crabby*