



THE WORK WITHIN THE WORK

1. The “work” within the work is teamwork. The ability to collaborate, compromise, and work well with others is one of the most sought-after skills employers are looking for when hiring employees.
2. Teamwork doesn’t happen without the presence of good teammates. Teamwork might make the dream work, but it’s the teammates who make the team work. The mindset of the employee matters.
3. During interviews, you increase your chances of getting hired if you can convince the interviewer that you know what it means to be a “good teammate” and that you are willing and able to be one.
4. The “hard” skills you learn in the classroom or through your training can get you hired, but keeping your job requires you to master “soft” skills like trustworthiness, dependability, trainability, and teamwork—no matter what career choice you make.
5. Being a good teammate is a revered identity, attainable to all. You don’t have to be fast, tall, strong, rich, or good looking to be a good teammate. You just need to be A.L.I.V.E. (Active, Loyal, Invested, Viral, and Empathetic.) Anyone can choose to be good teammate.
6. ACTIVE is taking action. When they encounter problems, good teammates don’t blame, shame, or complain. They act.
7. “Good teammate moves” are selfless acts that move the team in the right direction. The more good teammate moves (e.g., holding the door open for people who have their hands full, helping customers clean up spilled drinks, staying late to help a co-worker who is struggling, etc.) you make, the better teammate you are. The better teammate you are, the more valuable you are as an employee.
8. Silence equates to approval. Being a good teammate means having the courage to speak up. When it comes to confrontation, think about McDonald’s chicken McNuggets and Sweet ‘n Sour dipping sauce. 1. Give them the “sweet.” (Example: *You’re a hard worker, you’re reliable, you’re always dressed nice, etc.*) 2. Then, give them the “sour.” (Example: *But you’ve got to stop gossiping about other employees, But you’ve got to stop clocking out late, But you’ve got to start closing out right...because it’s messing up the morning shift.*) 3. Then, give them the “sauce.” (Example: *How are we supposed to open on time if that keeps happening? How are we supposed to be successful if you keep doing that?*) Affirmation—Confrontation—Open-ended question.
9. LOYALTY is an allegiance to something greater than self. Good teammates will get your back regardless of whether you’ve got theirs because that is what’s best for the team. Their commitment is to their team (employer).
10. INVESTED is the depth of your commitment. Good teammates aren’t just interested, they’re invested. They view their teams’ and teammates’ problems as theirs. Good teammates don’t say things like “not my job” or “not my responsibility.”

11. VIRAL means to spread like a virus. When good teammates enter rooms, others are influenced by their positive attitudes, energy, enthusiasm, and smile. This is the product of the psychological phenomenon “emotional contagion,” where the brain’s mirror neurons instinctively copy the moods, facial expressions, and body language of those around you.

12. EMPATHETIC is imagining what it feels like to be your teammate. It’s practicing empathy by placing yourself in your teammates’ situations. It’s also being aware of your habits and how your words and actions impact the other members of your team. Good teammates never criticize before they empathize. They make an effort to ask *Why?* before they pass judgement.

13. When dealing with a difficult customer (You will inevitably have to deal with difficult people no matter what career you pursue!), remember F.U.R. 1. Engage FIRST. (Example: *Hello! Welcome! Come on in!*) Then, smile and offer a benign compliment. (Example: *I like those earrings! Nice boots! What a good-looking family!*) Then, ask how you can help them. Let them speak and don’t interrupt them even if what they are saying is ridiculous, absurd, or wrong. Simply nod your head as they speak and mimic their facial expressions. 2. When they are done speaking, convey UNDERSTANDING. State your empathy. (Example: *You’re angry. You’re frustrated. I can see why you’re upset.*) 3. Then, provide a quick RECAP of their complaint. (Example: *Let me make sure I got this right, you got a Diet Coke instead of a regular Coke, your fries are soggy, and you got BBQ sauce instead of Sweet ‘n Sour sauce. Is that correct?*) If they continue to complain, simply repeat steps 2 and 3 until you have de-escalated the situation or resolved the issue.

14. Employees who are unable to handle difficult customers often lose their jobs. Relatedly, employees who demonstrate they can handle difficult customers often get promoted.

15. Becoming the type of teammate who can relentlessly encourage others to shift their focus from “me” to “we,” from “interested” to “invested,” and from “existing” to “excelling” will make you an asset to your team, position you for promotions, and set you up for a life filled with purpose and happiness.

