

Excerpts from “The Ten Commandments of Working in a Hostile Environment” by T.D. Jakes

1. Know that you are anointed for the job or position you now hold!
2. Do not expect to be appreciated
3. Embrace opportunities for change
4. Do the job well while remembering the vision
5. Do not let the environment get inside you!
6. Increase your capacity to work with difficult personalities
7. Where you are is not where you are going!
8. Achieve optimal results with minimal confusion
9. Do not pledge allegiance to cliques and groups!
10. Always keep your song near you

Dear Heavenly father, I thank you for the way You have made me and for the many gifts and talents that You have placed inside me. Despite the hostility and discomfort I often face in my workplace, I thank you for placing me there and I trust that I am the best person for this job. I ask that my focus would be on accomplishing the goals that You have set forth for me to perform during my time in this position. Give me wisdom and discernment to glimpse Your design even in the midst of a hostile environment. Help me to learn what You would teach me here and give me patience as you prepare my next job for me. Please quiet the complaints and disappointments of my heart with Your perfect peace and allow me to trust You with my job. Dress me in garments of praise and righteousness of Christ that will bring You glory where I work. Allow me to know my true identity and to work for your favour, to please You and not the men and women with whom I work. In Your Son's Name, Amen

It is indeed ironic that out of our desire for stability, security, and predictability we set ourselves up for instability, uncertainty, and surprises. Perhaps if we adjusted our expectations to be more realistic, we would not be so traumatized when change comes. And rest assured - it will come. We should expect change in our workplace and know that only God can serve as our secure anchor, our unshakable, immovable rock.

The only way we can extend ourselves to reach the next level is to move beyond our comfort zone and utilize more of our talents and capabilities.

He introduces some change into our lives to spur us into action. The least we can do in turbulent times of change is to give Him the opportunity to use us, even when what we face seems formidable or impossible to us.

Time and time again, we must remember that when God anoints us for a position, then nothing can ultimately stand in our way. Our perceptions of ourselves, if not based on faith in what we cannot presently see, will cause us to limit ourselves and undermine the blessing and success that God has planned for us. We are short-circuiting our own destiny, pulling the plug before the on switch has been flipped; all because we do not think we are adequately equipped for the job.

Do not put on airs of superiority, especially if you now oversee employees who were once your peers.

“In quiet and confidence shall be your strength. Thoughts are the final frontiers of privacy. If we always speak our mind, we are violating our own privacy. When it is appropriate, speak up and speak right. But most of the time, we need to keep a guard on our lips.”

Responding requires first quietness and then reflecting. Reacting suggests that some action takes place following a comment or an incident.

Negative attitudes, harmful behaviour, and insidious gossip can contaminate the believer and cause him/her to lose his/her witness, along with his/her peace, hope and joy.

Man shall not live by bread alone; but man lives by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the Lord.

Make an effort to remain beyond reproach in your dealings with co-workers.

Consumerism is an epidemic in our society that we must attempt to resist.

Seeds of avarice give root to resentment and soon ugly fruits of bitterness bloom inside you. Before being faced with temptations, you must use gratitude as an antidote for the poisons of greed, covetousness, and bitterness.

We can so easily take so much for granted and lose sight of what we have to the point where our present gifts seem invisible to us because we are always looking ahead.

Remember that when pride takes ride you are bound to slide!

If you feel unrecognized and unrewarded for your efforts, you must once again remember Who you are doing it for. You must trust that He will bless you according to His abundance in His time. When others ignore you, diss you, unfairly criticize your job performance, or backstab your character, you must not succumb to believing any of these lies from the enemy. Their words are simply devil's fiery darts trying to scorch through your defences. Pray for protection of your father and remember your true identity.

I am the person for this job, devil, and you are not going to run me out of here. I am going to run you out of here! Be strong in the Lord and flourish.

Working in a diversified place requires wisdom. An employee must develop a professional attitude, one in which personal opinions of any individual do not come into play. Those who you shun because you don't like them may just be the conduit to your good fortune. By avoiding them, you may unwittingly block a blessing that God has stored up for you. Your tendency to alienate certain people in the workplace can actually handicap you in life, resources, and finances. Nobody can escape working with difficult people, but God wants His people to work in the midst of negativity, not be "sucked into" it. God won't give you something you are not ready to handle, but He does want to expose you to greater things and greater ways of managing life.

Place value on people and respect them even if your personal feelings are conflicting! This requires focus.

Work to live, don't live to work! You must learn to let go of grudges and to set aside past histories with some of your co-workers.

The conflicts must be resolved! If it is not attempted to, it will metastasize like cancer, spreading its debris and manifesting as obnoxious attitudes and discontentment. Effective conflict resolution is a key ability of someone with good character. Good character is more than great morals. Can you forgive the one you confronted or who confronted you so that you do not pollute the environment with hostility? If you cannot, your gifting, education, or skill may have taken you to a level in life and given you an opportunity, but your character will ultimately destroy everything you have worked so hard to accomplish.

Avoid the traps of self-righteousness and act with humility and grace when you encounter those people whose differences make you uncomfortable. Learn from them as much as possible. Allow them to dispel your preconceptions and stereotypes. Learn to see them as individuals and not as a collection of demographic differences.

The kind of compromise that is required when dealing with difficult personalities refers to each person letting go of something they would like in order to accomplish what is needed. You should not become doormat and let others walk on you and have their way, but you should realize when you are being stubborn or inflexible.

I am hopefully broadening your understanding that managing different people is a part of increasing your borders and setting yourself up for increase. Winning the verbal battle and showing everyone how vicious you can be is not nearly as important as persevering respect and accomplishing goals.

One of the greatest challenges you will face is to avoid the temptation to lose heart and become discouraged while you proceed toward your goal.

As you begin to exercise talents that were dormant, or as you step up into a new role, you may be unsure of your abilities. But you need to have confidence – in yourself and in your Lord who put you in your current position. You will need to rely on prayer more than ever and on the support and encouragement of family and friends outside your workplace. Try not to express your doubts and fears in the workplace if possible. Let your fears keep you humble and dependent on the Lord, but not paralyzed. Sometimes we have to keep quiet and grow silently, biting our lips and enduring some pains, knowing that this too shall pass.

We must form a large goal and take small steps.

If material possessions are your only benchmark for success, then you will likely be disappointed and flounder to find meaning in your work.

We must resist the temptation to linger in quicksand of past mistakes, either our own or other people. God redeems the evil inflicted upon us by others as well as the poor decisions that we ourselves make. God delights in transforming our weakness into His strength. God is always there for you, encouraging, reminding, and challenging you to be all that you can be.

Behind every successful person in workplace is a team of talented individuals supplementing, complementing, and implementing on his or her behalf.

Don't allow group think to cause you to be hurtful or disrespectful.

You must remember that you are not at work to make friends and have good time. If that happens as a by-product of performing your job, then that is a gift. However, we should not expect it or work to cultivate it.

Maturity comes from accepting challenges responsibly and learning from mature people. If you have associations at your workplace with people who exhibit good work habits and have sharper skills than you, take note to see if it is someone whose position and professionalism allow you to glean from their expertise. They recognize your talent and potential and want you to grow and succeed. Keep your focus on growth and development instead of developing relationships not intended for your improvement. Rely on family and friends for your support and let the workplace remain your training ground. Always maintain a pleasant, but professional posture toward others in the work environment.

The workplace is one place that the devil will somersault through, just jumping from one person to another, seeing who's most available. ***God's enablement is within you; grace awaits you for your situation.***