

Unwritten Code of Conduct

Companies often have unwritten codes of conduct. In a company, these are often defined by the corporate culture. The more authoritarian the culture, the more the unwritten code of conduct encourages people to keep their mouths shut, not to rock the boat and not to lose their jobs. Here is an example of an unwritten code of conduct:

- 1) Don't confront anyone.
- 2) If you do confront, rip the other person to shreds.
- 3) Don't discuss single issues: Wait and collect them like green stamps, and cash them in when you have a full book.
- 4) Make sure you tell others rather than the person involved.
- 5) Break times, lunch or after work are good times to talk about others behind their backs.
- 6) Anger and rage are fine ways of expressing yourself.
- 7) Keep quiet and internalize your frustrations.
- 8) Be competitive with others and win; let them lose.
- 9) Be suspicious and mistrusting. Just because you're not paranoid doesn't mean everyone isn't out to get you.
- 10) Don't share ideas. Nothing ever changes anyway, and you might lose your job.

For some, this code of conduct looks familiar. If you polled parents or managers, many would say that dealing with conflict takes up a lot of time and that it's a task they really don't enjoy. The problem is that they don't have a proactive, mutually agreed upon method to handle conflict. If there isn't a method in writing, then the unwritten codes of conduct takes over.