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As you navigate through life and your career, you have zero chance of not having a single enemy. Someone, somewhere, will not like you and attempt to disrupt, deceive, or destroy you. No matter how you conduct yourself, you will attract some enemies or perhaps be declared as someone else’s enemy. Don’t sweat it--it happens to everyone no matter how nice they try to be. The key is your awareness, along with a plan to deal with or navigate your enemies.

Enemies normally surface because of a values clash--when values you have chosen to be a nonnegotiable part of your life are in conflict with someone else’s values. Or sometimes an enemy is formed over some petty opinion or perception, whether real or false. But don’t always assume someone who disagrees with you, or who doesn’t like you, is your enemy. An enemy is someone who is actively opposed against or hostile to you--someone who wants to harm or weaken you. Those who disagree with you don’t necessarily want to harm you --and someone who doesn’t like you may be harmless--their pettiness may be no threat to you at all. Your evaluation of each situation is necessary to prevent unnecessary turmoil. And always keep your radar running to detect what is or isn’t happening and who is behind it.

You can’t avoid enemies, especially if you’re a hard-charging go-getter who gets the job done faster or better than others, or if you’re a driving force that propels your company or organization over its competitors. Someone inevitably wants your job, your status, your good fortune, your cooperation, your favor, your customers or clients, or even your spouse.

There is no need to become anxious about any of this unless your enemy is

someone completely irrational and/or threatens you with serious bodily harm. In those instances, seek protection from proper authorities. In most instances, though, you should be able to mingle with your enemy. Sun Tzu is credited with saying: “Keep your friends close and your enemies closer.” It’s natural to want to completely defeat your enemy, but realize that course of action isn’t always necessary because there may be times and occasions when you need to use their expertise or resources. There is an old adage that goes: If you can’t remove enemy forces from your camp, then be sure they are sitting at your breakfast table, unless, of course, if they want to assassinate you. You want to keep them under your watchful eye, not just for your own survival but also for the gathering of important information.

When your enemies are among you in close proximity, you have the opportunity to get to know them--how they think and how they react. This will keep you a step ahead of them, making them less effective in their potential attempts of an uprising against you. Your goal should be to disarm them before they decide to strike.

In the course of all this, do not mistake an enemy for an ally. Automatically going along with someone who acts like they have your best interests in mind may lead to unexpected attacks, unanticipated obstacles, or accidents. So make sure you can truly differentiate your enemies from your allies whether they are 100 miles away or sitting next to you in a board meeting.

In business and in life, these are examples of the kinds of enemies you should have on your radar:

- Backstabbers--those who betray a confidence or those who constantly discredit others.
- People with short tempers--they are

often catalysts for anger and discord at any moment.

- Those who lose control by drinking too much, especially at a business function or social gathering.

- Rebels against authority--they are on a collision course with failure.

- Criminals...period.

- People who rarely do what they say they are going to do. (These people may seem harmless, but you’ll end up belly down at the bottom of Niagara Falls if you count on them for an important task.)

Identifying these kinds of people during your daily interactions is an important step in being prepared in advance of dealing with their enemy tactics.

So periodically ask yourself: “Who are my enemies?” It’s a question that deserves much thought and it’s a question to which you should always have an answer. In any business or organization, the key to successfully dealing with your enemies is being able to identify who they are and to understand why they have chosen to be your enemy. If they are your enemy because they are jealous or threatened by your success, there is nothing you can do about it. If they are your enemy because of something you’ve done to them in the past, address the situation and allow them the choice of leaving your camp. If you have done everything you can to allow enemies to choose to be allies and they still choose to be enemies, move forward with a plan.

So choose your friends carefully and keep a watchful eye out for enemies. Be sure you know who your real friends and enemies are, where they are, and why they are your friend or enemy. Lack of awareness or bad choices can be devastating to your life and your career.

~ The End ~