

Behavior problems must be addressed early on

BY ANDRIA LISLE

A milquetoast can be just as debilitating to the workplace environment.

As corporate coach Bill Burtch points out, "They're not making waves, and they're just doing what they need to do to get by. They're not hostile, but that total disengagement affects the bottom line. But usually, someone who's not a very assertive individual just needs to be invited into the process to get engaged."

"Deal with a milquetoast graciously," author Ronald Shapiro says. "You've got control. There's no reason to humiliate them. Achieve your goals, and help them get what they want. My whole theory of doing business, whether negotiating contracts, making sales, or managing people, is what goes around can come around again. You don't want to put them under your thumb, because they may look for retribution at some point."

People are afraid to deal with emotions in the work setting, because they don't know how others will react, Burtch adds.

"Comments tend to stick to performance rather than work behavior, but that's the wrong tactic," he says. "As soon as a behavioral problem presents itself, it has to be addressed. We need to be very specific about what's acceptable in the work environment and what's not."

"Life isn't a transaction — life is relationships," says Shapiro, a statement that his long-time friend Dean Jernigan couldn't agree with more.

"Using *The Power of NICE* on a daily basis makes life so much better," Jernigan says. "Life is way too short to be all about making money."