

## Are you Afraid of Your Nanny or Housekeeper?

Often I am asked to lecture before a mom's group on the subject of hiring and training household help. This is always very informative not only to the attendees but also to me. Invariably, I walk away learning so much about how people conduct themselves as employers, and I am never surprised to discover how so many are actually walking on eggshells around their domestic help. The usual comment is, "but I don't want to upset my nanny or housekeeper because if I do, she may never come back to work for me." Interestingly, with the deluge of people who work as nannies and housekeepers, one would think that the supply is plentiful enough to cause less concern over one terminating. However, in spite of this well-known fact, most employers don't want to make waves to their nannies and housekeepers, especially once the children get attached. So how do we actually prevent this kind of situation where the employer is not in charge and calling the shots? The first thing that one should keep in mind when hiring a nanny or housekeeper is their level of flexibility, attitude and ability to accept constructive criticism. All of us who have ever worked for anyone know that when a boss makes it clear that a mistake has occurred, the natural response is to rectify this and do our best to never have it happen again. This would be the logical way of preserving our job. It should be no different when we are the employers of a domestic. Correcting your nanny or housekeeper can be done in a constructive manner so that the domestic knows that you are simply trying to help get the job done right. There is really no need to be over-sensitive when you are being corrected. Learning is a gift - and if the teacher does a good job at it, then you walk away with better skills and training. It isn't always just what you say that makes a person uncomfortable, it is 'how' you say it. Sit down with your nanny or housekeeper, take your list of all the things that are not working out so well in your home, and go over the list carefully. There is no need to blurt out some nasty comments about your inability to understand why these things aren't being completed. Just stay calm and have the presence of mind to speak clearly and quietly about the problems while offering suggestions on how they can get solved. This type of review session can happen every three months or as needed. You will want to have a few of these sessions closer together during the first year of employment just to be sure that your new employee is adjusting properly to what is expected on the job. The only result that can occur when you do not address the nanny or housekeeper is a very frustrating situation for, you, the employer. Eventually, you will simply reach a point of no return and terminate the nanny or housekeeper over something very insignificant because of all the disappointment over the problems that you have kept pent up inside you. Address each situation as it occurs and nip it in the bud so that the nanny or housekeeper learns along the way. If an attitude ensues, then sit down again and explain that there is no need to feel uncomfortable about doing things differently. It is a learning process, and it takes time to adjust to a new home and a new employer. The ultimate goal should be that the employee/employer relationship is maintained with equal respect, non-confrontational and in a professional manner.

## About the Author

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