



# *Loving your job... and your co-worker*

Brittany loves her job as administrative assistant to Mark at the Quality Accounting Firm. She also thinks that an added bonus is that she and Mark are “in-like” and have been dating for the last 3 months. A good job, great love life...what else could you ask for?

Romance is a wonderful thing. We've all seen romantic movies and read books full of characters who “risk it all” for love. You may even sigh on occasion and agree that “love can conquer all”. However, sometimes love can be risky and it's important to understand that the reality of Love in the Workplace is that you may be putting your career at risk if your romance blossoms at work.



It may not surprise you that recent surveys indicate that 59% of employees have had a romantic relationship with a co-worker and that one-third of all romantic involvements started in the workplace. However, we all know that the majority of these relationships don't last. This can be a major problem for both the former lovers and their employer.

Paula deLong, MA, CEAP, manager of the *FirstCALL* Employee Assistance Program has some tips for you on matters of the heart at work.

- First...does your employer have a policy that will affect your decision to take the plunge and accept a date or propose a date with a co-worker?
- What happens if the romance ends? If you and the ex-love of your life work in the same department or even worse, if one of you has supervisory responsibilities over the other, will your work life become unbearable?
- How will your office romance affect your other co-workers? Will they enjoy the happiness you display or will they be suspicious that one or both of you are reaping some other benefits such as a relaxation of job performance expectations or an unfair advantage when promotions or bonuses are handed out?
- If your romance does lead to marriage...will one of you have to leave your job because your employer doesn't allow domestic partners to work in the same division?

These are just a few of the hard questions that come up when we look at how co-worker romance can affect the operation of an organization. Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs) can help both the employer and the affected employees deal with these kinds of issues. Professional counseling can help clarify options and assist employees to make responsible decisions regarding personal choices that will affect their work life. EAPs can also help employers determine what policies they need to put in place to protect the operation of their company as well as their employees.



“Look before you leap” is an adage that certainly applies to romance at work. Love is grand but be careful where you look for it.

FOR ADDITIONAL ARTICLES ON RELATIONSHIPS AND THEIR IMPACT ON YOUR LIFE, VISIT OUR WEBSITE  
[WWW.FIRSTCALLEAP.ORG](http://WWW.FIRSTCALLEAP.ORG)