

Case Study 6

Destructive Attitudes

After completing this chapter, you will:

- Define and identify destructive attitudes.
- Recognize the negative effect of destructive attitudes on the job.
- Identify a destructive attitude in either you or a friend that had a negative effect on the job or in a class.



As she was clearing away the dishes, Karen Webster collected the tip left by table 3. "Huh!" she thought. "I knew they were going to leave a small tip." Karen could not understand these idle rich women with nothing better to do than sit around hours over brunch, talking about where they went for vacation and the new jewelry their husbands bought them. "They should try working for a living, standing on their feet all day and waiting on people who looked down on them," she thought.

Karen went into the kitchen muttering to herself. José asked her what the problem was, but she gave him a look that clearly said, "Don't bother me." José shook his head. Karen had not forgiven him for the mistake he made last week, when he mixed up her order with Susan's. He had overheard her telling Susan: "That José doesn't even try to improve his English. I can't stand these people who come here and think they're too good to learn our language." It still upset him to think about it. He was glad Susan had defended him, telling Karen it was an easy mistake to make.

The lunchtime crowd was slow. Lately, business had been dropping off because of that new restaurant downtown. As Karen waited on her tables, she could hear Susan's laughter from across the room. "Honestly," she thought, "you'd think she was having a good time instead of working."

Karen just wanted to get people in and out as soon as possible. That was the sign of an efficient waitress, she believed, not whether or not your customers liked you. Oh, sure, it was worth giving a little extra personal service to the businessmen. They had the money to tip well.

Why did Susan bother wasting her time making polite conversation with those welfare bums? They were not going to leave a big tip. And those people from the senior citizens' complex—if they were too broke to tip, they should just stay home. Most of them were half-blind or deaf, and you had to keep repeating the menu to them. "Good thing they don't sit on my side of the room anymore," Karen decided.

At the end of her shift that day, Norman, the restaurant manager, called her into his office. As soon as the door closed, Karen began a litany of complaints. "When Susan lets customers linger over their coffee, I end up with more people at my station. It's not fair. And José is too dense to learn English. And..."

"That's enough, Karen." Norman stopped her in mid-sentence. "It's obvious that you are just not cut out to be in the service business. As you know, business is off. I have to let one waitress go. I'm afraid it's you."

"What are you talking about?" Karen was stunned. "I'm the most efficient waitress you have! I never make mistakes—at least not ones that are my fault—and I get people in and out quickly. Susan is not as efficient as I am."

Norman nodded. "That's true, Karen. You are efficient. But your attitude upsets my customers. You let your personal feelings affect your service. And your prejudices are getting in the way of your performance on the job. I'm afraid my decision is final."

List negative attitudes communicated by Karen.
Explain what she could have done positively to respond to what upset or annoyed her.