



Firing a Family Member as Painlessly as Possible

Jessica Harling

WTFP Episode #256

Firing a family member or friend is never easy—but with the right plan, you can reduce the emotion involved and keep the situation from escalating. Use these tips from Jessica Harling for each phase of the firing process.

Phase 1: Preparing for the Conversation

- **Get the emotion out first, before you even schedule the meeting**—either by journaling or writing a letter. (Important tip: BURN this and make sure nobody ever sees it—this just is an outlet for your emotion).
- **Make sure you have the facts right** (and have them documented—don't just guess. Prepare your numbers to back up what you're saying.)
- **Plan ahead for the transition**—what would happen if this person goes AWOL right after you fire them? How will you carry on—do you have their passwords, their contacts, etc?

Phase 2: The Actual Conversation

- **Have support ready to offer**—Not just for the individual, but also to the other family and friends affected by the decision. Offer severance, a letter of recommendation, a notice of 30 days—whatever works for you that you can provide for support.
- **Follow company policy**—stick to the protocol. (And have this in place documented beforehand)
- **Keep it professional, not personal but also be clear**—it's a delicate balance, but you want to try to maintain the relationship. Avoid personal attacks and stick to the facts.



Firing a Family Member as Painlessly as Possible

Jessica Harling

WTFP Episode #256

Phase 3: The Aftermath

- **Do NOT bad mouth**—Avoid oversharing to other employees or trying to justify your decision. Stick to a brief, emotionless explanation that doesn't put the other person down.
- **Schedule one-on-ones with everyone**—give them a chance to voice concerns and communicate to them whether their position or responsibilities will be affected.
- **Establish transition training**—how will that person's work be distributed? Plan for training either a replacement or training different people if the responsibilities will be split. If possible, ask the person to stick around for the transition period and help with training or creating SOPs.