

## Some of my colleagues are so negative. Sometimes I feel like I am too.

**W**e all have a bad day occasionally: we didn't sleep; we are stressed and snapping at people. Maybe we are having a bad hair day—or, more likely, a bad heart day. These passing “off” days are excusable. We are only human. For curmudgeons, however, every day is an off day, with complaining and grumpiness. They are the folks others avoid. They drain our energy and tire our spirits.

Most schools I know have them both: helpful colleagues and draining curmudgeons. We might first ask, “Which am I? at least most of the time?” One way to find the answer is to ask a fellow faculty or staff member—if we dare! Our own perceptions of our behaviors and attitudes contain blind spots to be sure.

Next, we can ask, “Who are the colleagues I value? Why?” Knowing what we value in a colleague can help us to be better colleagues. Do we value help with lesson plans, or someone who will listen and help us figure out what to do with a student? Maybe we value a sense of humor or a realistically optimistic attitude. What lesson can we learn from valued colleagues? What behavior can we imitate?

**TO DO »** Check with a colleague whether you are seen as a helpful colleague or a curmudgeon. Ask for advice on how to be a better colleague. Pray for—reach out to—the curmudgeons. Who knows what effect your kindness might have?

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**TO PRAY »** *Jesus, you reached out to all people. Gift me with wisdom to deal with all my colleagues—especially those who can be curmudgeons.*