

A Tale of Two Jobs

Merly Locker

My good job was when I was working at Ford Company, making the Ford Ranger trucks. I made good money and had good benefits and vacation time. I even had Election Day off. I got along with everybody. The place was clean and had air. I had a 30-minute lunch and two 20-minute breaks. It was a good job. It was a union job. The workers were nice because they didn't want to risk losing a good job.

My bad job was when I worked at Hartzell Manufacturing. It was not a union job, and the pay and benefits were not as good as Ford Company.

I cried when I went to work, and I cried when I got home from work.

My co-workers treated me so badly. They put bugs in my locker, threw my lunch in the garbage, and made bad comments about me when I walked by. They were mad because I had worked there for only one month, and I was promoted before them. Also, I was not a U.S. citizen at that time, so people were prejudiced against me.

After two months, I was ready to quit, but one person told me to report the problem to upper management. I did what she said. It got worse for me. I cried when I went to work, and I cried when

I got home from work. Finally, upper management investigated the incidents. They suspended six people from the floor and two supervisors. It was a long seven months before it got better. The people who were horrible to me were terminated for good. I thank God and the people who helped me.

I believe I was treated better at Ford because Ford was a more professional organization. The management had made a worker-friendly environment. The workers were better trained and cared more about keeping their jobs. When people are treated better and have a good job, they treat others better.



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Merly Locker, originally from the Philippines, is a GED student at Wisconsin Indianhead Technical College in New Richmond, WI.

For Discussion

The author says, “When people are treated better and have a good job, they treat others better.” What do you think of this comment? Share your own experiences (from work, family, or the community) where this observation proved true or not true.

Have you ever had a union job? If so, what was it like? How did it compare with non-union jobs you have had?

Want to learn more about unions? See the articles and boxes on pp. 48-52.