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Whistleblowers play a very important and needed role in society and the industries they are blowing the whistle against. In fact, many whistleblowers have played a very pivotal role in initiating the destruction of a plethora of fraudulent schemes over the years—all because they fought back the fear of shedding light on something wrong and choosing to speak up.

But sometimes, the very act of blowing the whistle may bring retaliation or other negative effects to the whistleblower. Let's face it: In the world of business, blowing the whistle against a coworker you have a genuinely positive relationship with is not the easiest decision to come to—especially when there's the possibility of that coworker facing some form of reprimand.

There's a natural human emotion that drives most people to speak up about wrongdoing. Many are driven by frustration or moral outrage about the wrongs they are witnessing. But if an employee is about to blow the whistle on a coworker who they feel they have a “work friends” relationship with, the feeling of betrayal can be very real, and their concern about what the process involves—and how the process works once they do speak up—could result in them not speaking up at all if they are not confident about it.

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