

Five ways to woo a work spouse

*We all need a wingman, especially in stressful environments. “It’s crucial that somebody values you and encourages you,” says Gayle Van Gils, author of *Happier at Work: The Power of Love to Transform the Workplace*. Below, our road map.*

1 Decide who to woo

Is there a colleague you feel drawn to? Think about the one you gravitate to at meetings, or who fake-fights you for the last avocado—right before going halves. Is there someone who seems to share your views, who’s always got your back?

2 Play it cucumber-cool

Don’t rush the observation phase. Get to know your future “spouse” from a polite distance. Does he or she like chocolate? Oh look, photos of their pet turtle at their desk. Think of turtle-related questions. (But don’t buy turtle snacks quite yet.)

3 Do something fun

This is your platonic first date—no pressure! It can be as simple as saving a seat for them at a meeting. Or take a coffee walk. Going forward, time like this can be dedicated to coaching, venting, sharing goals, or even just relaxing with your new BFF. All of that is great for morale.

4 Put a ring on it (quietly)

You can make it official without an all-hands email. After all, the term “work wife” might offend the actual wife, since you might see each other more! So just enjoy “this supportive relationship and close sharing of responsibility” without necessarily flaunting it, says Van Gils.

5 Nurture the connection

“Take interest in their work,” says Van Gils, and help out. Get creative about how to brighten their day—that could mean salted caramels or a silly doodle on a Post-It. Your warm, solid connection is invaluable. “It creates this wonderful synergy.”