

Rachel knew that Mary and Joanie had struggled with her promotion to assistant manager more than the other co-workers had. They both refused to come to her about anything work-related for a while after Rachel's promotion. But after Mary was demoted, she in particular struggled to find anything nice to say at all. That was frustrating because they were both supposed to be her friends, and Rachel thought Mary and Joanie should have been happy for her, especially since they shared the same major and they had all started to talk about future career plans in school and at work. However, neither of the women seemed that happy about the new reporting relationship. During the six months of Rachel's tenure as the assistant manager, Mr. Arrigo had relied on her to solve all his personnel problems, so it was surprising, but not totally unexpected, that he chose to demote Mary.

It got even worse for the three friends about a month after Mary's demotion, when Mr. Arrigo left on an extended trip to go home to Mexico. Before leaving, Mr. Arrigo gave Rachel the new title of Restaurant Manager. Now, in addition to her previously stated tasks, she was required to hold staff meetings and was put in charge of inventory, requisitions, and a few other smaller administrative tasks. Clearly, Mr. Arrigo held Rachel in high regard, but all the responsibility he was giving Rachel was really hard for Mary and Joanie to accept. They still seemed to find it hard to look up to her as their boss when they had thought of her for so long as just their friend.

Things really came to a head when Rachel was asked to take charge of inventorying and requisitioning all bar stock. Since this had to be done at closing, Rachel knew that she needed to delegate some of the responsibility, because there was no way she could do it on her own and still find the time to go to school. For control purposes, she and Diego agreed not to ask the bartender for help. So, in an employee meeting, she sought help from one of the servers with taking the inventory. She didn't think having someone else helping her to conduct a nightly inventory would be a problem, but she was wrong. No one wanted to take on this extra task at the end of a long day. While Rachel could understand why both of her friends would be disgruntled with her, it soon dawned on her that her good friends really had no idea about everything she did, nor did they care to pay attention to it.

This was not the first employee-related problem Rachel had encountered and to make matters worse, La Fortuna had no employee handbook or written procedures. As a single-unit family-owned business, very little about the operations or employment practices had been put in writing. Because of the lack of explicit policies, everyone at La Fortuna was an at-will employee. Each employee was free to resign without notice, and La Fortuna was free to release them without warning and legal repercussion.

Now What?

When Rachel was offered the assistant management position back in that spring semester, she was excited to take the promotion: money was tight and she had no student aid, her partial scholarship didn't even begin to cover her school expenses, and the experience and title would help make her resume look awesome because the direct line experience was marketable when it came time to look for a career after graduation. It had all seemed so good. In this current economy, any promotion might help make one more marketable for the next job. And now she was the manager at La Fortuna. Yet, here she was having to take a class with Mary and having to oversee Mary and Joanie at the restaurant. Before Rachel's promotion, the three women's friendship seemed so solid. Now, Joanie always seemed to be mad at her and Mary seemed so distant, and all Rachel wanted to do after work was go out for a drink and just talk, like close college girlfriends need to!