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CONNIE REYES  
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## Nature calls— even at work

Once in third grade, my teacher had us write in our journals about things that make us feel uncomfortable. My entry? "Going to the restroom in public." True story.

Flash forward to me all grown up, and my phobia has resurfaced in the workplace. To be clear, going No. 1 is no big deal, but I tend to get stage fright when I find myself in a potentially stinky situation.

I've since made some progress in conquering my phobia, but there's just something about having to go that throws all rationale out the window and makes my mind wander. What if my boss walks in? What if a new client opens the door at just the wrong time? I've watched enough reruns of "Seinfeld" to know that awkward situations like this rarely end well.

Clearing out the colon at work is the most nerve-racking action that is NEVER talked about. Everyone does it, yet it's almost always an awkward situation. You're there, in the office, after a big lunch, and you have the urge to go but are stopped by the crippling fear that it might be revealed to your co-workers that you have, in fact, had a bowel movement. Gasp!

If we sat down and thought about it, do we honestly think our coworkers are talking about our business? If so, how would that email start out?

*"Hey Shirley, you know that Connie girl? Well get this—she just POOPED! IN THE BATHROOM! Can you believe it?! Let's talk all about it at lunch."*

If that really happened, who's the weird one—the person using the facilities, or the person spying on the person using the facilities? I choose No. 2 (pun intended).

In a perfect world, work restrooms would be outfitted with automatic air fresheners and speakers. Perhaps a nice playlist of nature sounds to cover any unexpected noises. And a separate waiting room for people in line, because certain events do not need an audience.

Of course, there's always that other breed of office worker: the brave souls who adhere to the philosophy of "if ya gotta go, ya gotta go." They march into the stall without a care in the world. Those courageous people are well on their way to becoming the leaders of tomorrow. Perhaps human resources departments should start scanning resumes for the phrase "fearless in the bathroom."

What it all boils down to is confidence. Having the guts to say to yourself that even though it's a tad unpleasant, it is perfectly normal to have to go to the bathroom in an eight-hour day. So the next time I feel the urge to go, I will not run down to another floor where no one knows who I am. Instead, I will march confidently into that stall and know that I am no less important than the CEO who went right before me. I encourage you to do the same.

Just don't forget to flush.

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A Chicago Tribune publication



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A SIB OF THE TRIB

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