

“Get it in Writing:” A Short
Navigating Verbal Broken Promises within the Workplace

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Promises are a common aspect of interpersonal communication in both the workplace and day to day life. While they can take many forms, such as verbal, nonverbal, and contractual, honoring a promise is considered to be at the core of ethics. However, promises are not always kept. In fact, Oakley and colleagues (2000) observed that even in the face of legal consequences for breaking promises, individuals still forego them regardless of gender, religious beliefs, and supervisory experience. The evidence that most forms of promises are broken commonly in workplace settings suggests that widespread information regarding how to navigate these promises is crucial. To illustrate this and provide strategies for avoiding having promises broken this way, this animated short was created as part of a class project. The short highlights three scenarios that a representative character finds herself in at their place of work, amid an anticipated rent increase. The first scenario describes a situation where the character overhears their boss confirm a companywide raise, the second describes a situation where the character is told verbally that she will be receiving a raise, and the third describes a situation where the character establishes a formal contract with her employer regarding the raise. The outcomes to each scenario are explored in detail, and supplementary data is included to support the hypothetical results. The video concludes by emphasizing the importance of establishing formal contracts in lieu of verbal agreements when negotiating pay raises at their place of work.

Video Duration: 4 minutes

Pre-recorded