

The purpose of this session is three-fold:

- 1) Provide a new perspective on difficult people.
- 2) Offer specific strategies for external management. Before you even apply a strategy think: So what? Who cares? What difference does it make? You might decide NOT to engage with them at all.
- 3) Suggest a mindset for the internal management of difficult people. In short how do you care for yourself when you do everything you can think of and the person still remains difficult?

IDEA # 1: Think of the martial art of Aikido. You move with the energy- not against it. *NOT FIGHT, NOT FLIGHT, BUT FLOW.*

External Management: To take action strategies to allow you to get back to business.

Internal Management: To respond in such a fashion that you maintain a sense of personal calm and inner integrity.

IDEA #2: Difficult people are different from people in a difficult situation.

Difficult people are chronically difficult. It is the way they walk through life. Step back and think about how you normally respond to them. If you are not getting the result you want, then your choice is to do something different. You must become the change you wish to see.

The FRONTAL AGGRESSIVES

The Cannonball Steamroller:

Description: Tyrants. Hotheads. Bullies. Think warfare- overt warfare. Arrogant. Demeaning. Demanding. Railroad other people. Value aggressiveness and devalue people who do not have it.

Strategies:

- 1) Hold your ground. Physically and emotionally.
- 2) Maintain eye contact and stand up if this is a face-to-face confrontation. --Assuming this is an emotionally stable individual.
- 3) Interrupt (if a verbal conflict) with YOUR POINT OF VIEW of the situation. Make your statement all on one breath AFTER you have already taken a couple of deep breaths to calm down and have AIR for talking.
- 4) Take a break if need be. Get them to sit, if standing. If on a phone, tell them you will call them back.
- 5) Think of Shirley Temple. You might be one of the only people who can deal with them.

The PASSIVE AGGRESSIVES

Sarcastic Sam and Sneaky Susie:

Description: Known for firing well-aimed verbal (or written) missiles designed to undercut you. Often done under the guise of humor. Rather than risk face-to-face honest conversation, they hide behind social convention AND the fact that few people call them on it. They also love the power of saying things when there are other people around to hear it.

Strategies:

- (1) Surface the attack if you decide it is worth the effort
- (2) Ask a question NON-DEFENSIVELY
- (3) Deal with the issue
- (4) If in front of other people, ask the entire group the question—again, non defensively
- (5) If the group does not agree with the passive aggressive person, reply “there seems to be a difference of opinion” and move on. *DONT TAKE THE BAIT!*

The Sympathetic Statement:

This statement neither agrees nor disagrees. It simply shows that the listener has given serious consideration or thought to what was expressed in order to decide just how to respond.

- 1) "I'm glad you mentioned that point."
- 2) "I appreciate you bringing this to my attention."
- 3) "Thanks for letting me know about this."
- 4) "I understand now what would have caused such a reaction."
- 5) "That's an interesting viewpoint."

Defusing Angry People-- on and off telephone

Remember: People want to be heard, understood, and served. Take anger professionally not personally.

STEPS:

- (1) Accommodate
"Please tell me more..."
"And then what happened..."
"Yes..."
- (2) Connect & Accept
"I see what you mean..."
"I can sense your frustration..."
"I'd feel the same way if that happened to me..."
"I'd feel the same way if that's how I understood the situation..."
- (3) Address
"Let me see if I understand what you're saying..."
"Could I ask you a few questions to make sure I have the facts right..."
"Let me show you where I'm having trouble following you..."
"It sounds (feels, looks) as if you're concerned about..."
- (4) ACT
"What I propose to do it..."
"What I'll do is..."

USE THE SCRIPTING METHOD: (DESC method from *Asserting Yourself*, Bower & Bower)

- 1) DESCRIBE exactly what the situation is or was
- 2) EXPLAIN how you feel about it or how it affects you (the team, etc.)
- 3) SPECIFY what you want the other person to do
- 4) State the CONSEQUENCES

WATCH FOR THESE WORDS

Not this:

I'll try
You'll have to
Your problem
It's our policy

But this:

I will
Would you please
The situation
The reason is... For you I can

A powerful agent is the right word... The difference between the right word and the wrong word is the difference between lightening and lightning bug." ~Mark Twain

AND WHEN YOU MUST SAY "NO"

Broken record-- calm repetition

Don't blame others

WHEN THERE'S FOUL-MOUTHED FRIEDA OR FRED...

"Excuse me? Have I done something to personally offend you?"

AND WHEN THEY ARE RIGHT-

Negative Assertion: You are correct. It appears we did not get back to you as indicated and you have every right to be upset."

BASIC STEPS FOR EXTERNAL MANAGEMENT

1. Analyze the behavior of everyone

- 1) Is it a pattern for them? For you?
- 2) What do you actually need from this person?
- 3) How and when does this person best receive communication?

2. Develop rapport...

- 1) Visual element
- 2) Vocal element
- 3) Verbal element

BASIC STEPS FOR INTERNAL MANAGEMENT

(The Thriving Skill)

- 1) Mentally and maybe physically detach
- 2) Take responsibility for your reactions
- 3) Watch out for stinking thinking. Did you climb the ladder?
- 4) Remember dandelions, Abe Lincoln and oysters
- 5) Consider Pogo

Some of the common distortions in thinking (from Dr. David Burns, based on the work of Beck and Ellis):

- 1) *All or nothing*- Perfection at its peak. Life is black and white.
- 2) *Jumping to conclusions*- Making up your mind without sufficient evidence. Projecting the worst
- 3) *Over generalization* - Taking one negative event and expanding it to include everyone and everything.
- 4) *Should statements*- Playing the child with self-imposed guilt.
- 5) *Negating the positive*- Taking a positive event and saying "well, that was a miracle."
- 6) *Catastrophizing or minimizing*- Exaggerating the importance of an event or downgrading the worth of your efforts.

RECOMMENDED READING LIST:

Anger, Travis, Carol, Simon & Schuster, 1991
Asserting Yourself, Bower & Bower, Addison Wesley, 1984
Brutal Bosses and Their Prey, Harvey Hornstein, Riverhead Boosk, 1996.
Criticism in Your Life, Bright, Dr. Deborah, Master Media, New York,, 1988
Coping with Difficult People, Bramson, Robert, New York, NY: Balantine, 1981
Coping with Difficult Bosses, Bramson, Robert , New York, NY: Simon & Schuster 1992
Crucial Conversations: Tools for Talking When the Stakes are High, Patterson, Kerry et.all, McGraw Hill, 2002
Dinosaur Brains: Dealing with all Those Impossible People at Work; Bernstein, Albert, Vancouver, WA. John Wiley & Sons
Emotional Intelligence, Daniel Goleman, Bantam Books, 1996
Getting Them to Give a Damn, Eric Chester, Dearborn 2005
Getting PAST No, William Ury, 1993
Fierce Conversations, Achieving Success at Work & in Life, One Conversation at a Time Scott, Susan, Viking Press 2002
Strategies for Women at Work, La Roche, Janice, New York, NY AVON, 1987
Talk Ain't Cheap- It's Priceless, Eileen McDargh, Walk the Talk Publishers 2009
The Magic of Conflict, Thomas Crum, New York, NY Simon & Schuster, 1987
The Gentle Art of Verbal Self-Defense, Elgin, Suzette New York, NY 1987
Verbal Judo, George Thompson and Jerry Jenkins, William Morrow, 1998
What to Say to Get What You Want, Sam Deep and Lyle Sussman, Addison Wesley, 1993
What to Say When You Don't Know What to Say, Sam Deep and Lyle Sussman, Prentice Hall, 1991
Why Don't You Want What I Want?, Maurer, Rick, Bard Press 2002
Working with Difficult People, Solomon, Muriel, Prentice Hall, 1992
Have A Nice Conflict (Kindle Edition), Tim Scudder, Michael Patterson, and Kent Mitchell, 2011