



Dealing with Challenging People



Today we'll discuss....

- how you know when you've encountered someone "challenging"
- the importance of self assessment
- why communication is key
- best practices
- challenging personalities
- the use of assertiveness
- staying sane and self-care



What makes someone challenging?

Your thoughts?

Are they....

- Mean
- Stressed
- Contrary
- Defensive
- Chatty
- Confused
- Sneaky
- Unreliable
- Critical
- Competitive
- Spot-lighters
- Unpredictable
- People who have to have the last word
- Demanding
- Argumentative



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Remember.....

You are not going to be able to change the challenging person but you can change how you respond to his/her challenging behavior.



Nature of the Relationship

It matters.

Internal customer

- coworker – your team
- coworker – another team/department

External customer

- vendors
- clients
- brokers
- contractors & subcontractors



Self Assessment is Key

- Start by looking at yourself
- What is your role in the interaction?
- Talk to a colleague or positive support person for insight
- Do you want or must you improve your relationship with the challenging person?
- Remember – to move a relationship forward you must be willing to take action



The Importance of Communication

The key to coping with challenging or difficult people is communication.

The “Sender’s” Filters

- Expectations
- History
- Non-verbal Style
- Verbal Style
- Relationship
- Confidence

The “Receivers” Filters

- Expectations
- History
- Perception of Non-verbal
- Perception of Verbal Style
- Relationship
- Attention/Distracton



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Best Practices

- You have the remote – respond rather than react
- You can control your emotions and words
- Use “I” throughout conversations
“I feel this is an issue...”
- It is not about “winning” it is moving the relationship forward

“No one can make you feel inferior without your consent.”

—Eleanor Roosevelt





Use the Remote

- Keep the volume low
- Tune in to the right channel
- Focus attention on the program in front of you
- Relax
- Rewind and replay

Challenging personalities you might encounter

- Complainers
- Negativists
- Super-agreeable
- Know-it-alls
- Sneaks
- Demanders



Complainers

Negative, helpless, blamers

- Listen, address quickly and zero in on specifics
- Thank them for bringing the matter to your attention and how important their feedback is
- Shrink the issue if you can
- Let them know what steps you are taking to address their concern
- Provide updates and follow up
- If ownership of the issue is with them – craft a diplomatic response



Negativists

Pessimistic, close-minded, inflexible, distrustful

- Be alert to the potential in yourself and others for being dragged down
- Make optimistic but realistic statements about past successes in solving similar problems
- Do not offer a solution-alternative until the problem has been thoroughly discussed
- Don't try to argue negativists out of their pessimism
- Turn the tables "I see....have you given any thought to how this might be solved?"
- Anticipate their objections, offer facts



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Super-Agreeables

Friendly, out-going, sincere, always say "yes", lack follow up

- Slow down interaction, reassure
- Help them clarify their objections
- Create a safe environment for sharing their true feelings
- Help them prioritize tasks
- Surface the problem & join with them in problem solving
- Insure their commitment



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Know-It-Alls

Arrogant, pompous, condescending, imposing, self-centered.

- Let them speak first
- Know your facts
- Let them save face
- Place concerns in context
- Present your ideas in the least threatening way: Ask questions to project the idea into the future. "So what happens if..."



Demanders

Direct, want it now, don't really care why you aren't able to deliver.

- Remain calm
- Do not give in to the behavior as this may increase it
- Don't take the attacks personally
- I understand your sense of urgency here...unfortunately...



Assertiveness

Assertiveness is neither passive nor aggressive. It is a direct and appropriate statement that is respectful of others' feelings and opinions.

- Remember how others perceive you.
- Acknowledge what you can and cannot control.
- Focus on "what's in the way of getting the job done."
- Always speak respectfully and try to understand the other person's position.
- Start out gently assertive, but progressively increase firmness if required.

Learn to say "no" in a nice way.

- "Here's what we can do..."
- "There are a number of things we can do to help you..."
- "We can do X, even though we can't do Y or Z."
- "Our customers found that they preferred X to Y because (benefits), and so we no longer do Y."



Remember...

- Control your actions and reactions
- Discretion is a friend
- Conflicts are part of life
- Be specific
- Assume nothing

Anthem 

Staying Sane

- Ask "What is going on?"
- Find one thing to agree on
- Acknowledge the other persons feelings
- Listen, Listen, Listen
- Confirm understanding with questions
- Challenge your own point of view





Self-Care During Difficult Times

- Start your day with a good run, walk, exercise
- Eat a healthy breakfast
- Take a deep breath before you walk into work
- Reframe what you do love about your job
- Make a 10 list each morning
- Get a good night sleep (7-8 hours)
- Use alternative methods – tea, aromatherapy, journaling, etc.
- Surround yourself with positive people

Anthem 



- Face-to-face counseling sessions
- Legal/Financial consultations
- Child/Eldercare consultation & referrals
- Daily life resources
- ID theft recovery
- Free credit monitoring
- myStrength – Health Club for Your Mind
- Let's Talk Depression – A Multi Resource Tool Kit
- Comprehensive website
 - Resources
 - Self assessments
 - Health/wellness library
 - Legal forms

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