Handling Difficult Situations!
(or how to improve working relations)

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To Do:

- What do we mean by the term 'difficult situations'?
- How do we currently handle difficult situations?
- What tools and techniques can assist us to more effectively handle difficult situations and improve our working relationships?
‘The most important single ingredient in the formula of success is knowing how to get along with people.’

Theodore Roosevelt
‘We humans are social beings. We come into the world as the result of others' actions. We survive here in dependence on others.

Whether we like it or not, there is hardly a moment of our lives when we do not benefit from others' activities.

For this reason it is hardly surprising that most of our happiness arises in the context of our relationships with others.’

The Dalai Lama
The first rule:
There is no such thing as a difficult person, there are just people we need to learn how to deal with...

The second rule:
Re-read the first rule...
fight, flight or face it?

celebrating the effective management of conflict at work
Seven out of ten employees (70%) see managing conflict as a ‘very’ or ‘critically’ important leadership skill.

The primary causes of workplace conflict are seen as personality clashes and warring egos (49%).

27% of employees have seen conflict lead to personal attacks, and 25% have seen it result in sickness or absence.

One in eight employees (12%) say that disagreements among their senior team are frequent or continual.

Majority of employees (85%) have to deal with conflict to some degree and 29% do so ‘always’ or ‘frequently’.

The average employee spends 2.1 hours a week dealing with conflict. For the UK alone, that translates to 370 million working days lost every year as a result of conflict in the workplace.
Conflict at work:

‘any workplace disagreement that disrupts the flow of work’
Getting to know each other (a little better)
In terms of handling difficult situations, what do I want to **ACHIEVE** or **CHANGE** as a result of this workshop?
Panic Zone

Discomfort Zone

Comfort Zone

(Senge, 2000)
What do we really mean when we use the term ‘handling difficult situations’?
When handling difficult situations, we can’t choose the other person’s response. What we can do is... INFLUENCE their response.
The door to INFLUENCE opens from the inside.
Between what happens to us and our response to it...

.....is our freedom to choose our response
Why bother to choose (and control) your response?
Everyone thinks of changing the world, but no one thinks of changing themselves!
It’s Not About You, It’s About Them
Waste of Energy
Freedom of Speech
Battle of the Ego
Anger Feeds Anger. Negativity Feeds Negativity
Negativity Spreads
Hurting Ourselves
Different Types of ‘Difficult’ People

(Mannering, 2008)

• Aggressive people
• Know-it-alls
• Selfish people
• Negative people
• Passive people & passive-aggressives
• Overly accommodating people
• Insecure people
• High maintenance people
How do you usually handle Difficult People?
How do I usually handle difficult people?
The ABCs of Handling Difficult Situations

Avoiding - when the situation is not addressed and avoided until later or all together.

Accommodating - when one person lets the other get their way.

Bargaining - when the people involved come to an agreed upon solution where sacrifices are made by both or all.

Competing - when one person wants to have their way and not allow for a compromise.

Collaborating - when everyone involved comes to a solution and all needs are addressed.
How can you deal more effectively with Difficult People?
The Emotional Bank Account
Emotional Bank Account

- Understanding the individual
- Attending to the little things
- Keeping commitments
- Clarifying expectations
- Showing personal integrity
- Apologising sincerely when you make a withdrawal
The Emotional Bank Account

**Deposits**
- Seek first to understand.
- Show kindness, courtesy, respect.
- Keep promises.
- Be loyal to the absent.
- Set clear expectations.
- Apologize.
- Give feedback ("I" messages).
- Forgive.

**Withdrawals**
- Assume you understand.
- Show unkindness, discourtesy, disrespect.
- Break promises.
- Be disloyal, badmouth.
- Create unclear expectations.
- Be proud and arrogant.
- Give no feedback or evaluate character ("you" messages).
- Hold grudges.
A Twelve-point Toolbox

These are general techniques for handling difficult situations / people:

1. Don’t take it personally, or get personal
2. Plan for emotion, it is only natural
3. Listen, acknowledge, validate
4. Be calm and assertive
5. Put the onus on yourself
6. Leave them the bus fare home (i.e. leave them their dignity)
7. Make a break – change your body language
8. Take ten – call for a break if things become heated
9. Own your feelings
10. Levelling technique – level out the balance of power
11. Know the “rules” in your workplace
12. Stay positive 😊
TOOLS

Approaches & Techniques

for handling difficult situations / people
The first rule:
There is no such thing as a difficult person, there are just people we need to learn how to deal with...

The second rule:
Re-read the first rule...
CONFLICT RESOLUTION ACTION CHECKLIST

It's Time To Take Action
Walk a Problem Through These Questions

1. WIN-WIN
   What is my real need here?
   What is theirs?
   Do I want it to work for both of us?

2. CREATIVE RESPONSE
   What opportunities can this situation bring?
   Rather than 'how it's supposed to be', use the possibilities in 'what is'?

3. EMPATHY
   What is it like to be in their shoes?
   What are they trying to say?
   How really heard them?
   Do they know I'm listening?

4. APPROPRIATE ASSERTIVENESS
   What do I want to change?
   How will I tell them this without blaming or attacking?
Think ‘WIN-WIN’
The Courage and Consideration Grid

- **Win-Win**
- **Lose-Win**
- **Lose-Lose**
- **Win-Lose**
The ‘Win-Win’ Process:

See the problem from the other point of view, in terms of the needs and concerns of the other party.

Identify the key issues and concerns (not positions) involved.

Determine what results would make a fully acceptable solution.

Identify new options to achieve those results.
Conflict Management Model - Showing How Assertive and Co-operative Behaviours Inter-relate

- Assertive
  - Competition
  - Compromise
  - Collaboration
- Non-Assertive
  - Avoidance
  - Accommodation

Non Co-operative

Co-operative
Using some key NLP principles when handling DIFFICULT SITUATIONS
So what is NLP?

- **Neuro** – your thinking processes, the way you use your senses of sight, hearing, feeling, taste and smell to understand what is happening around you;

- **Linguistic** – your words, the way you use language and how it influences you and those around you;

- **Programming** – your behaviour and the way you organise your ideas and actions, which produces expected and unexpected results.
NLP Key Principles

Know what **outcome** you want to achieve.

Have a **resourceful state** and sufficient sensory acuity (awareness) to know if you are moving towards or away from your outcome.

Have sufficient **flexibility of behaviour** so that you can vary your behaviour until you get your outcome.

**Take action now!**
Key Principles

Outcome → Knowing what you want

Acuity → Notice what you are getting

Flexibility → Keep changing what you are thinking & doing
The map is not the territory

There is no failure, only feedback

We are where we are as a result of the choices we make

Behind every action is a positive intention

The meaning of a communication is the response you get

Some ‘Operating Principles’

If you always do what you’ve always done, you’ll always get what you’ve always got

It’s not what happens to you, but what you do with it that determines your experience
Perceptual Positioning
= ME

How do I see the situation?
How do I see the other person?
How do I feel?
What’s going on in my opinion?

= THE OTHER PERSON

How do I see the situation?
How do I see the other person?
How do I feel?
What’s going on in my opinion?

= OBSERVER

How do I see the situation?
How do I see these 2 people?
What do I think is going on?
What might 1\textsuperscript{st} position do to change things?
None of us is as smart as all of us!

A ‘mentoring’ approach to handling difficult situations
The **POWER** to change!

Helping yourself and others create ‘well-formed outcomes’
Outcome ➔ Knowing what you want

Acuity ➔ Notice what you are getting

Flexibility ➔ Keep changing what you are thinking & doing
POWER Outcomes

Ask:

What would you rather have?

Is this within your own control?

What specifically do you want? With whom? By when?

If you could have that tomorrow, would you take it?
If you get hesitation Ask: “what stops you?”

Can you imagine how it will be when you have achieved your goal? See, hear, feel..
Diagnostic Questions?

• What stops you from… (outcome)…?
  Listen to their reply, and ask yourself… is that a thought, action, belief or emotion?

• What would have to happen for you to be able… (outcome)…?
  Listen for thought, action, belief, emotion.

• Test your hypothesis by asking…
  “If you could have a more useful thought / action / belief / emotion, would that make a difference?”
Recipe for Fielding Challenges

A

Acknowledge

C

Clarify

A

Answer

C

Check
When things go off track!

Summarise

Re-Direct
The 'DESC' technique for creating: Expectations & Boundaries
Describe the situation

Express how you feel

Specify what you want

Consequences which will result

(negative & positive)
Final Thoughts
To Do:

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If we always do what we’ve always done...

...we’ll always get what we’ve always got!
What will I do differently as a result of today’s workshop?
...and finally
The first rule:

There is no such thing as a difficult person, there are just people we need to learn how to deal with...

The second rule:

Re-read the first rule...
Thank You

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www.ctrtraining.co.uk/resources.php