



Dealing with Difficult People

*Workplace Skills for Moving
from Conflict to Cooperation*

Presented by:

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Top Ten “Most Unwanted”

1. **THE TANK:** Confrontational, pointed and angry, aggressive and pushy to get his own way.
2. **THE SNIPER:** Offers rude comments, biting sarcasm or a well-timed roll of the eyes to undermine others.
3. **THE GRENADE:** Has a tendency to blow up into unfocused ranting about things that have nothing to do with the present circumstances.
4. **THE KNOW-IT-ALL:** Has a low tolerance for correction and contradiction; blames others with great certainty when something goes wrong.
5. **THE THINK-THEY-KNOW-IT-ALL:** Knows a little about a lot, tends to exaggerate expertise, pushy for attention and appreciation.
6. **THE YES PERSON:** Reacts to the latest demands on their time by forgetting prior commitments and over commit until they become resentful.
7. **THE MAYBE PERSON:** Procrastinates hoping a better choice will come along; often comes to the point when it is too little, too late, and decisions make themselves.
8. **THE NOTHING PERSON:** Retreats into silence, giving no verbal feedback, no nonverbal feedback, and no input or decisions.
9. **THE NO PERSON:** Negative, tends to stifle others with perfectionism.
10. **THE WHINER:** Also a perfectionist, the whiner feels helpless and overwhelmed by an unfair world and so complains, frequently.

-Adapted from Dealing With People You Can't Stand by Dr. Rick Brinkman and Dr Rick Kirschner

Essential Communication Skills

Blending – Non-verbal mirroring which sends the message: “I am with you”. You can mirror aspects of body posture, facial expression, or degree of animation, or the volume or speed of another person’s speech, in order to minimize the differences between you, therefore signaling rapport.

Backtracking – Repeating some of the actual words that another person is using sends a clear signal that you are listening and that you consider what they are saying to be important. This is not paraphrasing or in any way translating their words into your ideas. Backtracking is particularly important over the phone as you will not have the benefit of blending.

Identify highly valued criteria – Acknowledging values is especially important when differing points of view are being discussed and generates more flexibility and cooperation.

Clarification – Use open-ended questions and genuine curiosity to find out more about the problem. “When did it happen?” “Where did it happen?” “How did it happen?” “Who are you talking about?” By asking clarifying questions you will garner higher quality information than what is being offered, you’ll move the discussion from emotion to thinking about specifics and discover what criteria the upset person is trying to satisfy.

Summarize what you’ve heard – To make certain that both you and the other person have the experience that you really do understand, summarize back to them what you’ve heard.

When you summarize, two things happen:

- 1) If you’ve missed something, they can fill in the details, and
- 2) You’ve demonstrated yet again that you are making a serious effort to fully understand.

Confirm – Rather than assuming anything, be certain that the other person is satisfied that the problem has been fully voiced by asking, “Do you feel understood? Is there anything else?”

Remember positive intent – Assume that behavior, even problem behavior issues from a positive intent. Ask yourself what else could this mean? What positive purpose is this behavior or communication an attempt to accomplish?

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Summary of Strategies

TYPE	BEHAVIOR	FOCUS	INTENT
TANK	Aggressive	Task	Get It Done

STRATEGY: For Commanding Respect

1. Hold your ground
2. Interrupt the Attack
3. Quickly BACKTRACK their main point
4. Make your bottom line point
5. Redirect to a peaceful solution

TYPE	BEHAVIOR	FOCUS	INTENT
KNOW-IT-ALL	Aggressive	Task	Get It Done

STRATEGY: To Foster Openness to New Ideas

1. Be prepared and know your stuff
2. BACKTRACK respectfully
3. BLEND with doubts and desires
4. Present you views indirectly
5. Turn them into mentors

TYPE	BEHAVIOR	FOCUS	INTENT
THINK-THEY-KNOW-IT-ALL	Aggressive	People	Get Appreciation

STRATEGY: Minimize the Disruption of Their Attention-Seeking

1. Give them a little attention
2. CLARIFY for specifics
3. Tell it like it is
4. Let them save face
5. Break the cycle

TYPE	BEHAVIOR	FOCUS	INTENT
WHINER	Passive	Task	Get It Right

STRATEGY: To Form a Problem-Solving Alliance

1. LISTEN for the main points
2. Interrupt and get specific
3. Shift the focus to solutions
4. Show them the future
5. Draw the line

Elements of Communication

RAPPORT = an open channel of communication through which it is quite likely that the message sent will be the message received.
Both the sender and the listener can increase the rapport between them.

To improve your listening:

- Suspend judgment as you make a genuine effort to appreciate the ideas being expressed.
- Delay formulating your response until you've had a chance to understand all of what the sender is saying.
- Listen actively, verify your understanding of the message and/or ask questions to clarify.
- Validate the sender's logic, feelings, or point of view, even when you disagree with their statement.

To improve your ability as a sender:

- Express your ideas clearly. Be specific in your language.
- Use non-verbal mirroring to engage your listener.
- Be alert to the response of your listener. It's your responsibility to make sure/verify your message was received.

Hints for Professional Communication:

- Be respectful.
- Don't disagree. Avoid *"You're wrong."*
- Accept the other person's reality.
- Say *"I can understand your feelings regarding..."*
- Avoid win-lose arguments.
- Don't interrupt.
- Make it easy for the other person to change his or her position.

Resources

Dealing With People You Can't Stand: How To Bring Out The Best In People At Their Worst

Dr. Rick Brinkman and Dr. Rick Kirschner,
www.thericks.com

Toxic Coworkers: How to Deal with Dysfunctional People on the Job

Alan A. Cavaiola, Ph.D. and Neil J. Lavender, Ph.D.

The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People

Stephen R. Covey
www.franklincovey.com

Toxic People: 10 Ways of Dealing With People Who Make Your Life Miserable

Lillian Glass

Influencing With Integrity: Management Skills for Communication and Negotiation

Genie Z. Laborde

7 Steps to Emotional Intelligence

Patrick E. Merlevede, Denis Bridoux and Rudy Vandamme

1-800-367-7474

LifeMatters' central intake line, available to employees live 24 hours a day, every day of the year. Managers and supervisors can call this number to speak with a Consultation Specialist.

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Educational materials, and links to many other Internet resources are available through the LifeMatters' Web site.