

Dealing with Difficult People

Session Objectives:

- Identify characteristics of difficult people in the workplace
- Focus on practical techniques for addressing negative behaviors
- Discover how to prevent the negativity from influencing personal mindset



INDIVIDUAL: Complete the sentence stems below.

My definition of a difficult person is someone who...

My #1 concern when dealing with a difficult person is...

Seven Red Flags You're Dealing with a Difficult Person

 _____

 _____

 _____

 _____

 _____

 _____

 _____

ALL ABOUT “THEM” – Ten Types of Difficult People

Type	Characteristics	How Do You Manage Them?
1.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Come in “hot” if triggered • Direct and harsh • May need an audience 	
2.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tell what you want to hear • Play sides – say one thing and do another • Negative influence on you 	
3.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Always right • Comes on strong • Subject “expert” • Questions everything 	
4.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sarcastic • Ghosting, procrastinating • Thinks s/he is funny 	
5.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Defeated but not their fault • Chronically complains • Always negative 	
6.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gossips, overshares • No respect for time • Asks lots of questions 	
7.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Last in, first out • Acts incompetent • Does bare minimum • Asks for help A LOT 	
8.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Always have a “story” • One “upper” • Play “victim card” • Overly emotional 	
9.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Star performer • Expect special treatment • Arrogant & think invaluable 	
10.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get hurt easily • Allow feelings to fester • Give the “silent treatment” 	

ALL ABOUT "THEM" – Ten Types of Difficult People

REVEAL SECRET



Type	Strategy To Use
1.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Move to _____ • Address by name • Respond _____ BUT _____
2.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What's the _____ • Don't trust intentions • Refrain from sharing information _____
3.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respect _____ • Ask questions • Maintain _____ • Thank and move on
4.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • _____ with direct questions • Avoid a passive aggressive response • _____ back
5.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask for _____ • Refute negative comments with facts • End the _____; keep your distance
6.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • _____ time to talk • Be direct, assertive & politely excuse yourself • Explain if s/he were _____
7.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have _____ conversation • Do not enable • Set _____ • Do not exclude from projects, tasks, etc.
8.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not _____ the attention • Speak objectively and with logic • _____ feelings – "I see you're upset." • Manage the conversation
9.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not allow _____ • Do not engage – don't take the "bait" • May need to take to _____
10.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate your _____ clearly • Probe to find out issue • Show _____ and move on

What's YOUR Experience?

INDIVIDUAL/PARTNER: Think of a time when you had to deal with ONE of the ten types of difficult people and the outcome was not as you would have expected or wanted. Answer the questions below FIRST, then discuss with a partner.

TYPE OF DIFFICULT PERSON: _____

Describe words, actions and behaviors displayed by both parties (good and bad)

1)

2) *Describe the outcome of the interaction?*

ALL ABOUT "YOU" – How Do YOU React?

Most of us would agree we can't change other people's behavior BUT we can influence it by how we react to the behavior. We should always be telling ourselves...

"What I say and how I react will impact the direction of this interaction."

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INDIVIDUAL: After learning new strategies for interacting with the type of difficult person you listed on **PG. 4** and knowing your response may not have been as effective as you thought, what would you do differently next time you encounter this type of difficult person?

Personal Best Practices (PBP)

REVEAL SECRET



What are they? _____ to use when dealing with difficult people.

What do they do?

✓ Keep you _____

✓ Empower you _____

✓ Allow you _____



INDIVIDUAL: Choose three best practices you will adopt and commit to using during difficult people interactions or write your own below.

1)

2)

3)



SMALL GROUPS: SCENARIO A:

Carlos has a sarcastic answer for everything. He uses it so much you do not even know when he is serious. Today is the day he uses it on you. You had an emergency in your personal life which required you to take a longer lunch than usual. You discussed the situation with your supervisor who gave you permission to do “whatever you had to do” and you arranged for coverage while you were out. You even checked in while you were out and the office was running “status quo” in your absence. As you are returning to your desk Carlos says, “It must be nice to come and go as you please. I wish I could take 2-hour lunches.”

How would you apply your PERSONAL BEST PRACTICES to this scenario? (What do you say/do?)

PBP #1

PBP #2

PBP #3

SCENARIO B:

Your job requires you to work with difficult people on a regular basis. You’ve learned not to take things personally, however, it is one of those days and one external customer is riding your nerves and has even said, “Are you all incompetent over there?” and “You know I pay your salary through my taxes?”

How would you apply your PERSONAL BEST PRACTICES to this scenario? (What do you say/do?)

PBP #1

PBP #2

PBP #3

SCENARIO C:

Alicia is the coworker that you do not even want to say good morning to because you know she will have a negative response. She is always the victim and has the, “these things only happen to me” mentality. She is always complaining to you about everyone and anything. When you offer advice Alicia simply has no interest in making things better for herself and continues blaming her circumstances. Today she has a difficult task assigned to her and instead of starting the task she comes to you to “whine” about having to do it.

How would you apply your **PERSONAL BEST PRACTICES** to this scenario? (What do you say/do?)

PBP #1

PBP #2

PBP #3

SCENARIO D:

One especially busy morning Moesha comes into your cubicle while you are on an important business call. She proceeds to sit down and read your computer screen in order to keep herself “occupied” while you are on the phone. Then Moesha gets a cell phone call and decides to answer it and hold a personal conversation while “just waiting for you to finish up” your business call. When you finish your business call Moesha asks you about what she has read on your computer screen and starts gossiping about a coworker you highly respect.

How would you apply your **PERSONAL BEST PRACTICES** to this scenario? (What do you say/do?)

PBP #1

PBP #2

PBP #3

Are YOU Listening?

“Most people do not listen with the intent to understand;
they listen with the intent to reply.” Stephen Covey

SMALL GROUPS: What prevents you from listening to a difficult person?

Positive Phrases to Use to SHOW You are Listening:

1.	I need...
2.	My concern is...
3.	Let's talk about...
4.	My intention was...
5.	It might be best if...
6.	I'd like to suggest...
7.	This is a team effort...
8.	Let's look at options...
9.	I value your thoughts/opinion...
10.	Here's what I'm hearing...
11.	How would you approach...
12.	I'm sorry you feel that way...
13.	It can be difficult for me to...
14.	I can understand your perspective...
15.	I'm sure we can agree on something...
16.	I would appreciate the same respect I'm giving you...
17.	Tell me one thing I can do to make the situation better...
18.	I hear that's important to you. I'm asking you to consider my side...
19.	
20.	

Ten Ways to Maintain Mental Toughness

REVEAL SECRET



Our mindset plays a critical role before, during and after interacting with difficult people. Let's explore ways to preserve our mental health.

1. _____: own your part, take action
2. _____: person is the same or changed?
3. _____: do not give more thought or energy
4. _____: decide not to "play"; limit interaction
5. _____: don't let it fester, becomes bigger for YOU
6. _____: "their issue"; displaced anger?
7. _____: allows for open mindedness without bias
8. _____: manage feelings/emotions before, during and after
9. _____: reflect and assess – what could I have done better?
10. _____: meditation, exercise, listening to music, etc.

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Applying Mental Toughness to Difficult People Situations

Type	Characteristics	Which ones can you apply?
1.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Come in “hot” if triggered • Direct and harsh • May need an audience 	
2.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tell what you want to hear • Play sides – say one thing and do another • Negative influence on you 	
3.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Always right • Comes on strong • Subject “expert” • Questions everything 	
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