



HOW TO DEAL WITH DIFFICULT PEOPLE

(IN INFLUENTIAL POSITIONS)

ISPE October 2018 Meeting

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Agenda

- Learning Styles: how we see the world differently
- Difficult conversations
- Influencing others



STRATEGY FOR DEALING WITH DIFFICULT PEOPLE #38:
HAND THEM A DUCK. WALK AWAY DURING THEIR
STUNNED, SILENT CONFUSION.



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Roles of difficult people

- Your boss/superior
- Client/ internal customer
- Subordinates
- Peers



*Are you in management?
Are you a client?
Are you a subordinate?*



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Difficult People...

They're everywhere!!



So; how do you deal with them? (Without your Zombie Ray-gun)



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**Why did you choose to attend
this event?**

**Describe a difficult person you
have had to deal with**
(Currently or in the past)



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Difficult People...

We're everywhere.



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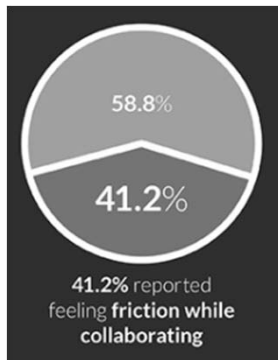
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Findings from A 2016 Organizational Dynamics Survey:



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What Makes it so Difficult?



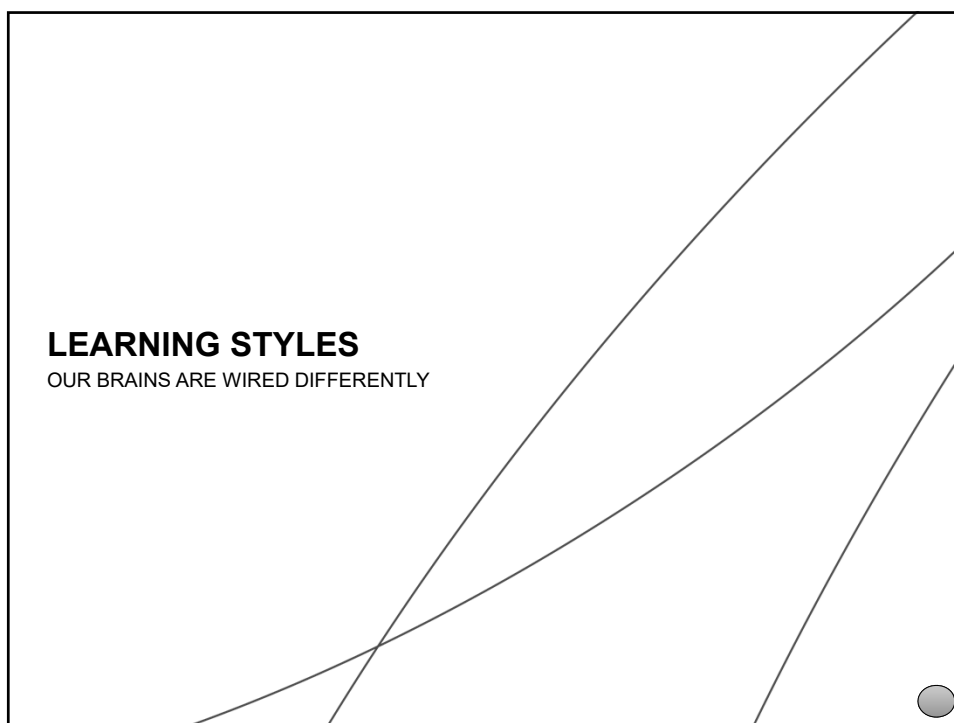
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Early Brain Development Influences How You Connect with Others

- Which stimuli you select
- How you process information
- Your perceptions and assumptions



**Working relationships can be made more effective by understanding
and appreciating the different drivers of our impulses**



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BS1

Your natural energy impacts your areas of focus and work preferences

Explore:

Wants to know: that it will be innovative

Wants to feel: inspired

Preferred part of work process: Generating ideas and seeing possibilities

Excite:

Wants to know: the impact on people

Wants to feel: involved

Preferred part of work process: Creating energy and excitement in people



Examine:

Wants to know: that it is fact based

Wants to feel: safe

Preferred part of work process: Developing structure and detailed plans

Execute:

Wants to know: about bottom-line results

Wants to feel: situation is in control


Preferred part of work process: Making the plan happen



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Slide 11

BS1

Bruce Sohmer, 10/31/2017

Your natural energy influences your view of success and your communication style

Explore evaluates success by:

How creative you were and how well you grasped big picture



Communicate with this energy by:

- Answering the question: "How?"
- Explaining the concepts; showing the Big Picture
- Giving them information that reflects the underlying process, so they can connect everything into a whole.
- Allowing them to generate a multitude of ideas.
- Use analogies and present content in multiple ways: they are associative learners



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The Chaotic one... Give the appearance of being Unfocused or Disorganized

- Get lost in the world of ideas - speak in uncertain terms
- They can be hard to nail down to commitments - keep changing things or revisiting decisions
- They lose track of / forget things
- They don't show up to meetings they accepted, don't pay attention to deadlines



How to deal:

- *Learn how to speak their language.*
- *Minimize impact on you by:*
 - *YOU writing and publishing meeting minutes*
 - *YOU keeping original documents*
 - *Making it a point to get signatures on decision documentation*



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Your natural energy influences your view of success and your communication style

Excite evaluates success by:

How energized you were and how you energized others



Communicate with this energy by:

- Answering the question: "Who?" (who is involved; who is impacted)
- TALKING to them about it – they learn through conversation
- Use personal stories, implications
- Allowing enough time (keeping on schedules can be a challenge)
- Visuals & colors help
- Inspire them with praise



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The Rambler A Creative persona

- Impulsive
- Never stop talking
- Easily distracted
- Has trouble staying focused on the topic at hand
- Can be over the top or inappropriately silly
- They can seem frivolous and overly-optimistic



How to deal:

Maintain control of the agenda & timetable

Be prepared to professionally interrupt

These types put real weight in written directives from upper management – so management.

- Leverage project sponsors
- Leverage corporate policy
- Leverage project/ department mission statement



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Your natural energy influences your view of success and your communication style

Examine type evaluates success by:
The quality of your data and planning



Communicate with this energy by:

- I. Answering the question: "Why?"
- II. Prepare your data and be ready to defend your view: accepting that they will critically look for inconsistencies or errors
- III. Lay out your argument linearly.
- IV. Demonstrate the following:
 - A. Logic
 - B. Cause and Effect
 - C. Hypothesis and Conclusion
 - D. Facts
- V. Expect the following attitudes and approach:
 - A. Serious and Focused
 - B. Punctual and Efficient
 - C. No tolerance for imprecise or loose language



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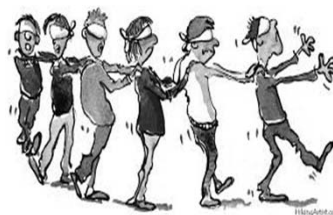
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Seemingly Judgmental Misinformed/Insecure

- Don't have the latest information or direction from Management.
- Skilled but seem to lack confidence/ Cant make a decision
- Critical and judgmental
- Get lost in analysis-paralysis
- Pessimistic – see a million reasons why everything won't work
- Constantly want to revisit data



How to deal:

These people put real weight in written directives from upper management – so quote them.

Leverage project sponsors

Leverage corporate policy

Leverage project/ department mission statement



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Your natural energy influences your view of success and your communication style

Execute evaluates success by:

How effectively and efficiently your goals were met



Communicate with this energy by:

- ☑ Answering the question: "What?" What's the purpose? What's the point? What's my immediate assignment?"
- ☑ Be concise, efficient, punctual
- ☑ Give objectives, expectations, clearly delineated levels for success
- ☑ Offer a challenge!
- ☑ Show practical applications, be action-oriented
- ☑ Less is more: Bullet points
- ☑ Give few options
- ☑ Know that they may criticize, then follow with immediate instruction



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Demanding People (Sometimes the Easiest to deal with)

They may be stressed from Management requests

Or, They aren't swayed by personal life or family obligations (theirs or yours)

Or, they always want work-product to be better regardless of the true quality of content



Traits:

Dominating and pushy – try to control every situation

Competitive – will do anything to win "they leave dead bodies in the wake"

Impatient and distracted – miss important nuance or details b/c they want to move to action

Ignore interpersonal dynamics and others' needs or values

How to deal:

Stay on your game

Look at similar content generated from this person – mirror that.

Don't give all info immediately –play your cards slowly & well

Don't give details of very latest status



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**Appreciating other's preferences and adjusting
your communication style can make you more
influential**

(i.e.: Learn to speak another language)

Explore

Examine

Excite

Execute



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Tackle your Zombie #1

Which Learning Style(s) are you?

**How do you prefer others
communicate with you?**

**What do you think your Zombie's
learning style is?**

**How can you communicate
more effectively with them,
given their learning style?**



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**Other types – there are many
(we may not have time to review)**

- Was promoted early/ out of necessity
- Or; Is new to the industry / field
- Or; Can not naturally multi task



How to deal:

Unofficially take some of their tasks you can readily handle – in exchange for what you need

Give them concise information and give them confidence in your own abilities through your actions

Enlist help from their subordinates & superiors through discrete conversations expressing concern not criticism

- Argumentative
- Finds way to escape responsibility/ blame others
- Has their own secret agenda
- Derails things, Enjoys chaos, big ego



How to deal:

Take the high road but don't appear naive.

Remain objective and unemotional, even in the midst of accusations.

Document /publish even the most simple action items



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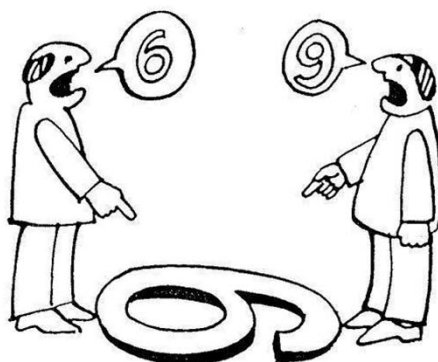


CRUCIAL CONVERSATIONS

WHEN A DIFFICULT SITUATION ARISES



Conflict Happens...now what?



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Conflict happens: What to do when a difficult situation arises

Pause

- Avoid fight or flight
- Stop or slow down

Outcomes

- What outcome do you want for this situation?
- What outcome do you want for the relationship with this person?

Plan

- My personality/communication type/their type?
- What are the facts and what is perception?
- What is our mutual purpose?



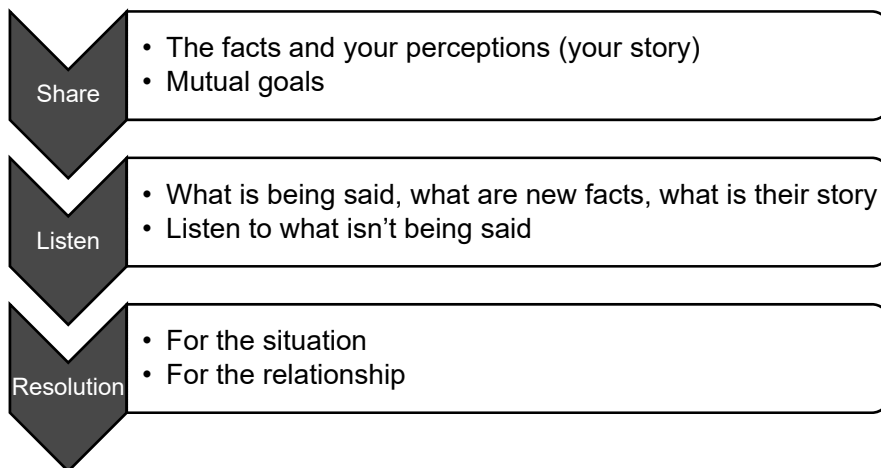
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Conflict happens: What to do when a difficult situation arises



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How to successfully interact with such people? (Without your Zombie Ray-gun)

Depends on your goal!

- Why do you need to interact?
- What do you want out of it or from them?
- What are the risks of engaging or not engaging them?
- Is it a hierarchical relationship?
 - Is it project related?
 - Is it for career growth?



Stay focused on your goal...



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Tackle your Zombie #2

What outcomes do you want? For the situation? For the relationship?

What are the facts?

What are your perceptions?

What are your mutual goals / objectives?



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INFLUENCE



Influence Requires both Substance and Style

5 Categories of Influence:

• You insist that your ideas are heard and you challenge the ideas of others

Asserting



• You put forward your ideas and offer logical, rational reasons to convince others of your point of view

Convincing



• You look for compromises and make concessions to reach outcomes that satisfy your greater interest

Negotiating



• You build relationships and connect with others through listening understanding and building coalitions

Bridging



• You advocate your position and encourage others with a sense of shared purpose and exciting possibilities

Inspiring



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Tackle your Zombie #3

What is your most comfortable influence style?

Which style could you use to influence your zombie more effectively?



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INFLUENCE IS A PRO-ACTIVE BUSINESS

Build Trust: Co-workers are more open to influence when they trust you

Network: Develop relationships with those who can support you.

Look for the Mutual Goal: View the person you're dealing with as a peer and keep their goals in mind

Consultation: Advocate the outcome and invite ideas

Find Support: Amplify the argument; include various stakeholders



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Summary

- **Appreciate that others may be naturally focused on – and value - different attributes of “success” than you**
- **Learn to communicate with all learning styles – don't just use your own preference**
- **Planning and true listening make for a better conversation: separate facts from assumptions**
- **Always stay focused on the mutual goal**
- **Build trusting relationships in order to effectively influence**



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DEALING WITH DIFFICULT PEOPLE IN POSITIONS OF INFLUENCE

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