

# Working with Difficult People



with examples and  
hands-on exercises

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**WEBUCATOR**

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## **Class Files**

Download the class files used in this manual at

<https://static.webucator.com/media/public/materials/classfiles/MDP101-1.3.2.zip>.

## **Errata**

Corrections to errors in the manual can be found at

<https://www.webucator.com/books/errata/>.

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# LESSON 1

## The Impact of Unhealthy Personalities

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### Topics Covered

- ☑ About various types of work environments.
- ☑ The effects of low morale and high turnover.
- ☑ The legal implications relating to unhealthy behaviors.
- ☑ To recognize the hidden costs of unhealthy personalities in the workplace.
- ☑ About the benefits of a healthy environment.

### Introduction

Unhealthy personalities can have many negative effects throughout a workplace. In this lesson, we'll discuss the consequences of unhealthy personalities.

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### 1.1. Personality and Behavior

Personality is different from behavior, but it affects behavior.

Personality influences how we respond to information and experiences and is demonstrated in the way we express ourselves; it is a "style."

Behavior, on the other hand, is specifically what we do in different situations. While our behavior may be influenced by our personality style, behavior is controllable.

When we do not control our behavior, we experience negative consequences, and if we habitually allow our personality to dictate our behaviors, rather than influencing them, we may exhibit negative personality traits, which we will talk about in the next lesson.

Each personality has traits that give a person certain strengths and certain vocations. If those traits are unchecked, they may become weaknesses. For example:

1. A person who is meticulous with details may be an excellent accountant, but that passion for details may cause him or her to be a micromanaging boss.
2. If a person is willing to learn managerial skills and understands the value of delegation, a person may be both an excellent boss and an excellent accountant.



## 1.2. Workplace Environment

### ❖ 1.2.1. Performance and Morale

It is well known that attitude is contagious and impacts the environment around us, yet the environment we work in is directly related to our productivity. Not only that, but work environment has been shown to be almost as important to employees as pay.

An environment full of praise and encouragement will clearly motivate employees more than environment of oppression and criticism. The ideal workplace is a place where employees are:

1. Greeted in a positive way at the start of each workday.
2. Supported in a team environment.
3. Encouraged to do their best.

Conversely, when employees work in an environment that is demotivating, they are not likely to do their best. They are likely to want to leave that environment physically, and will certainly leave it mentally.

An environment that is less than ideal is a place where employees:

1. Feel they are exposed to anger from managers or co-workers.
2. Feel a critical eye is always upon them.
3. Feel threatened by managers or co-workers.
4. Do not feel supported.
5. Do not feel that they can do their best work.

## ❖ 1.2.2. Types of Environments

When these personality traits are allowed to get out of hand, they create negative environments. The environment affected by a negative personality can affect the morale and productivity of the other workers.

### The Oppressive Environment

An oppressive environment results when a person uses his or her authority, whether granted or perceived, to restrict the freedom of other workers. Oppressive environments can include the following:

1. A micromanaging supervisor who does not trust people to do things correctly.
2. A supervisor who dictates the actions of his or her employees.
3. Critical people who constantly barrage others with criticism of work or personal traits.
4. Leadership that attempts to control the speech or even the thoughts of the employees.
5. An employee who discounts the concerns of his or her staff or co-workers.

### Negative Environment

Negative environments are evident immediately and are created by unhappy people who:

1. Complain about the workload.
2. Complain about customers.
3. Complain about office surroundings and equipment, such as the copier machine.

Negative environment can also be marked by:

1. A distinct lack of smiles or other positive expressions.
2. Low employee interaction.
3. Gossip.

People in a negative environment are often victims of their own choosing. As difficult as it may be to maintain a positive attitude, negative people make a choice to be negative and to allow other negative people to influence them.

## The Untrusting Environment

The untrusting environment is an environment in which there is compromised trust between peers or between staff and supervisors.

Managers may not trust a staff member if that person is undependable or erratic, but many untrusting environments result from authoritarian supervisors who:

1. Do not trust their own staff to do the work delegated to them.
2. Repeatedly break promises.
3. Do not defend or protect their staff.
4. Show obvious preference for one staff member over others.

A lack of trust can take place in peer relationships as well. Co-workers who contribute to an untrusting environment may:

1. Take credit for other people's work.
2. Manipulate situations to their favor.
3. Manipulate situations to the other person's detriment.
4. Gossip.
5. Speak detrimentally about co-workers.

## The Overly Competitive Environment

Competition can motivate individuals in certain environments, but, in some highly competitive environments, the playing field isn't clearly communicated or kept fair.

When an environment becomes overly competitive, individuals may feel desperate to succeed, pushing them to undermine others or manipulates situations, causing productivity to decrease along with morale.

## The Leaderless Environment

Unproductive environments result when the authority structure is confused. When management does not take a leadership role, the direction their team should take becomes vague.

In an unproductive environment:

1. Supervisors hand over undue authority to their staff members.

2. Staff members make their own rules.
3. Little cohesiveness is found in processes between positions or departments.
4. Vertical and horizontal communication is weak.
5. There is no accountability for inappropriate behavior.

# Exercise 1: The Environment

 5 to 10 minutes

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In this exercise, you will respond to the following questions about personalities and the environment.

1. An environment in which a manager dictates how a staff member will do a task is called a(n):
  - A. Oppressive Environment
  - B. Overly Competitive Environment
  - C. Leaderless Environment
  
2. Productivity is primarily affected by which of the following:
  - A. Pay
  - B. Number of employees
  - C. The environment
  - D. A supervisor's personality
  
3. Personality is:
  - A. A reflection of one's attitude
  - B. How we express ourselves
  - C. How we behave
  - D. A style
  
4. Excessive competition:
  - A. Increases productivity
  - B. Increases morale
  - C. Creates a fun environment
  - D. Decreases morale



## Solution

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1. A. Oppressive environment
2. C. The environment
3. B. How we express ourselves and D. A style
4. D. Decreases morale

# Exercise 2: Personal Application for Personality and the Workplace

 10 to 15 minutes

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In this exercise, you will contemplate the questions below regarding work environment.

1. Imagine a workplace void of personality. Would you enjoy working in that environment? Why or why not?
2. Describe your work environment. Do you have any problems in your work environment related to personalities and behavior? What are the losses to people or the company resulting from that situation?



## 1.3. Morale and Turnover

### ❖ 1.3.1. The Role of the Supervisor

Many will say that employees do not leave their jobs; rather, they leave their bosses. This happens because:

1. Some supervisors lack managerial skills.
2. The supervisor's own supervisor does not delegate enough authority to manage well.

The lack of skills or authority is evidenced in two ways:

1. The supervisor is difficult to work with.
2. The supervisor does not manage other people who are difficult to work with.

The results of a Florida State University study were published in the fall 2007 issue of *Leadership Quarterly* (Ray, B. December 4, 2006, *Who's afraid of the big bad boss?* <http://www.fsu.edu/news/2006/12/04/bad.boss/> Accessed January 19, 2012). The results showed that 40% of employees felt they were working for a bad boss.

Other results indicated the following:

1. 39% of workers said their supervisors failed to keep promises.

2. 37% indicated their supervisor failed to give credit when due.
3. 31% said their supervisor gave them the silent treatment during the past year.
4. 27% report that their supervisor made negative comments about them to other employees or managers.
5. 24% indicate their boss invaded their privacy.
6. 23% said their supervisor blamed others to cover up personal mistakes or minimize embarrassment.

If 40% of employees felt they were working for bad bosses, and bosses are supposed to be the example for their employees, one can only wonder how many employees feel they work with bad co-workers.

Whether the problems stem from the behavior of a staff member, a peer, or a supervisor; the behavior can have a major impact on morale and morale is a major cause of attrition.

### ❖ 1.3.2. The Cost of Turnover

IT staffing services company JDA Professional Services studied the cost of turnover and reported the results on their website: <http://www.jdapsi.com/Client/articles/coh> (<http://http://www.jdapsi.com/Client/articles/coh>) (Del Monte, J., *IT Employer Information - Cost of Hiring/Retention (COH)*. Accessed January 19, 2012). Their study found that the costs of replacing a single employee can be very high because of both direct and indirect costs.

The direct costs of turnover can include:

1. Creating and posting job ads and marketing for the position.
2. Interviewing costs.
3. Recruiting fees.
4. Employment testing.
5. Reference checks and screenings.
6. Any salary increases over and above the previous employee.
7. Sign-up bonuses.
8. Relocation services.
9. Training.

Even for a lower-level employee not receiving sign-on bonuses, relocation services, and salary increases; the cost of hiring and training is estimated to be over \$10,000. Direct costs can range from 30% to 100% of a person's annual pay.

Moreover, turnover and morale are cyclical. Low morale results in turnover and turnover contributes to low morale. If the source of the low morale is never eradicated, the cycle continues.

## Exercise 3: Morale and Turnover

 5 to 10 minutes

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In this exercise, you will respond to the following questions about turnover.

1. What can be inferred if a supervisor inconsistently manages a staff member who exhibits difficult behaviors?
  - A. The supervisor is having a bad day.
  - B. The supervisor has not been trained.
  - C. The supervisor is a bad person.
  - D. The supervisor is not very smart.
  
2. What was the biggest complaint reported by employees about their supervisor in the Florida State University study?
  - A. Their supervisors are plagiarizers.
  - B. Their supervisor failed to give credit when due.
  - C. Their supervisor failed to keep promises.
  - D. Their supervisor made negative comments about them to other employees or managers.
  
3. Which of the following are common costs of employee turnover?
  - A. Training
  - B. Purchasing new supplies
  - C. Travel expenses
  - D. Creating and posting job ads and marketing for the position



## Solution

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1. B. The supervisor has not been trained
2. C. Their supervisor failed to keep promises
3. A. Training and D. Creating and posting job ads and marketing for the position

# Exercise 4: Personal Application for Morale and Turnover

🕒 5 to 10 minutes

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In this exercise, you will consider the following questions about turnover.

1. How would you describe the current morale and turnover in your company or department? Do any of the listed supervisory issues apply?
2. Does the morale contribute to turnover?
  - A. If you have turnover:
    - i. Can you quickly estimate the direct cost to the company for this turnover?
    - ii. Do you think it is too high? If so, what could be done to decrease it?
  - B. If you do not have turnover:
    - i. Estimate the cost of your own replacement.
    - ii. What is contributing to the stability in your department or company?

## Solution

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1. To answer this question, consider how people react to supervisors where you work. Is the supervisor easy to work with? Does the supervisor effectively address issues with other staff? Do you think the boss could be described as a “bad boss”?
2. Consider the questions about turnover in relation to your workplace and whether or not you have high turnover. Refer to the information about calculating the real cost of turnover given previously. There is a lot to replacing an employee. Also consider the positive things that are contributing to a lack of turnover. What do you think is keeping turnover from happening?



## 1.4. Legal and Illegal Implications

Some difficult personalities have the potential to cause legal problems. Oppressive personalities use various forms of harassment and intimidation to achieve their own goals. An oppressive person’s goal may be:

1. To build himself or herself up by tearing another person down.
2. To force better productivity.
3. To push a person to leave.

The behaviors may be mild or severe, or may be aimed at one person or everyone.

Any time we face a challenging personality, we should try to rectify the situation. However, in these cases if the situation cannot be rectified, it is important to know there are legal protections that may help. For employers, poor working conditions can lead to costly legal battles. Employers should do everything they can to prevent these situations from arising.

### ❖ 1.4.1. Grievance Processes

Most companies have a grievance process defined in their Policies and Procedures statement. If issues cannot be resolved directly, an employee may take their issue through that process. Employers who do not follow the grievance process as presented to the employees may be held legally liable, because the policies are considered a condition of employment.

## 1.4. Illegal Behavior

Certain behaviors may be directly illegal. Laws have been enacted, and continue to be enacted, to protect employees from behavior that may be harmful or unjust. Some of these laws are State laws, and some are Federal laws.

### ❖ 1.4.2. Bullying

Workplace bullying can include such tactics as:

1. Verbal abuse
2. Nonverbal abuse
3. Psychological abuse
4. Physical abuse
5. Humiliation

Nearly half of all states have introduced bills that address workplace bullying. These Healthy Workplace bills:

1. Forbid health-harming “abusive work environments.”
2. Hold employers liable unless they have taken steps to correct and prevent abuse when reported.

To date none of these bills have become law; however, many states have laws addressing hostile work environments.

### ❖ 1.4.3. Hostile Work Environments

A hostile work environment exists when:

1. An employee experiences workplace harassment and fears going to work because of the offensive, intimidating, or oppressive atmosphere generated by the harasser.
2. Management acts in a manner designed to make an employee quit in retaliation for some action. This allows employers to avoid unemployment benefit payments.

Many states have laws addressing the hostile workplace. There is no Federal law that addresses this situation, though hostility is addressed in part by anti-discrimination laws. Regardless of whether the behavior is illegal or not, the cost to the company is clear, and a wise company will work to keep this kind of behavior out of its ranks.

#### ❖ 1.4.4. Harassment

Federal law protects some people from harassment when the harassment is discriminatory. Illegal discrimination covers:

1. Race
2. Color
3. Religion
4. National origin
5. Disability
6. Genetics
7. Age
8. Sex

#### ❖ 1.4.5. Family Medical Leave Act

The Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) was put in place to protect people from retaliation or losing their job while suffering from unexpected health issues. People covered by the FMLA include:

1. The employee.
2. The employee's dependents.
3. The employee's immediate family.

The FMLA provides the following to employees:

1. 12 weeks of leave in any 12 month period.
2. The same health insurance coverage as prior to the leave.

If a health care provider is willing to diagnose a “serious health condition” related to workplace stress, it does not matter if the stressed-out employee is able to work elsewhere or otherwise engage in normal day-to-day activities. This includes stress and anxiety about a pending termination or other performance issues. That person is still entitled to FMLA leave and a company cannot retaliate against him or her for taking that leave.



# Exercise 5: Legal Implications

⌚ 5 to 10 minutes

In this exercise, you will respond to the following questions about the legal implications relating to difficult personalities.

1. Match the following descriptions with the behaviors that are, or soon may be, illegal by federal or state law:
  - A. Descriptions:
    - i. Verbal, nonverbal, psychological, physical abuse and humiliation.
    - ii. When someone fears going to work because of the offensive, intimidating, or oppressive atmosphere generated by the harasser.
    - iii. Discrimination relating to race, color, religion, national origin, disability, genetics, age or sex.
  - B. Behaviors
    - i. Hostile work environment
    - ii. Bullying
    - iii. Harassment
2. Which of the following is not a recourse an employee may have if an issue cannot be resolved directly?
  - A. Grievance process per the company's policies and procedures.
  - B. Quit the company.
  - C. A federal lawsuit, as defined by the Family Medical Leave Act.
  - D. Leave of absence with a doctor's determination.

## Solution

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1. i. Verbal, nonverbal, psychological, physical abuse, and humiliation, and ii. Bullying; ii. When someone fears going to work because of the offensive, intimidating, or oppressive atmosphere generated by the harasser, and i. Hostile work environment; and iii. Discrimination relating to race, color, religion, national origin, disability, genetics, age or sex, and iii. Harassment.
2. C. A federal lawsuit, as defined by the Family Medical Leave Act.

# Exercise 6: Personal Application for Legal Implications

 10 to 15 minutes

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In this exercise, you will consider the following scenario.

1. It is very important to know what options are available to us should situations get too difficult. As supervisors, we need to be aware of what is available to our staff. Do you know what state laws and company policies affect you in your workplace? If not, at your next opportunity check with your Human Resources Department or governing agencies to find out.

## Solution

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1. Consider what you have learned about legal implications. Each state is different so check resources available from your state and/or your Human Resources Department.



## 1.5. Hidden Costs to a Company

The majority of costs to a company are not obvious. The hidden and indirect costs of allowing disruptive behaviors in the workplace are very high. They include the following:

### ❖ 1.5.1. Decreased Productivity

Anyone who has experienced challenging behaviors at work can tell you how it affects their ability to produce. As a rule of thumb, a 40-hour-per-week position averages 30 hours per week of direct service to the company after factoring in:

1. Vacations
2. Sick leave
3. Meetings
4. Holidays

Evaluation  
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If a person earning \$50,000/year loses one hour of productivity per day, the annual cost to the company in lost wages and benefits is over \$9,000.

### ❖ 1.5.2. Leaves

Oppressive work conditions can increase the instances of both sick leave and FMLA. A recent Finnish study showed that these conditions can increase sickness by over 26% (Kivimäki, M., Elovainio, M., Vahterä, J. Workplace bullying and sickness absence in hospital staff. *Occup. Environ. Med.* 2000;57:656-660 doi:10.1136/oem.57.10.656 <http://oem.bmj.com/content/57/10/656.full> (http://http://oem.bmj.com/content/57/10/656.full) Accessed January 19, 2012). This is easy to understand because these conditions:

1. Cause direct stress.

2. Cause a decrease in a person's immune system making them more prone to disease.
3. Justify "mental health days."

Over 20 years ago the National Institute of Occupational Safety Health (NIOSH) measured the cost of FMLA due to stress among the workforce at \$19 billion per year (Sauter, S.L., Murphy, L.R., Hurrell, J. Prevention of work-related psychological disorders: A national strategy proposed by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH). American Psychologist 1990;45(10)1146-1158).

### ❖ 1.5.3. Replacement Costs

As noted earlier in this lesson, the cost of replacing and training new hires at lower levels runs from 30% to 100% of the employee's annual salary, and can be up to 300% of the annual salary, depending on the position. Additional costs of attrition include:

1. The loss of institutional knowledge (head knowledge) that went with the departing employee.
2. The loss of productivity between the time the person left and the time another person is trained into the position.
3. The decrease in the morale of other employees because of the loss of that person.
4. Additional stress on management and staff who have to fill in for the empty position.
5. Any overtime expenses required to make up for that missing person's work.
6. Litigation costs should an employee bring a suit against the company.

The indirect costs for a \$60,000 per year employee are estimated to average a little over \$100,000.

### ❖ 1.5.4. Image and Revenue

Sour people produce sour customers. As consumers, we have all had experiences with sour people. Some of these experiences may include:

1. Doing business with service personnel who were angry or rude.
2. Encountering people who clearly did not want to be at work.
3. Overhearing workers complain about work conditions or other workers.
4. Watching non-verbal signs that the person feels burdened when asked for assistance.

This sour mood affects the customers and discourages them from purchasing products and returning to the store. The behavior of employees directly impacts sales and customer base.

Evaluation  
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# Exercise 7: Hidden Costs to the Company

🕒 10 to 15 minutes

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In this exercise, you will respond to the following questions about turnover.

1. What four major factors affect the number of hours of direct service one can expect from an employee?
2. What factor causes an increase in both sick leave and FMLA?
3. Which of the following most affects the amount of merchandise purchased at a store?
  - A. A door greeter.
  - B. A clerk with a tattoo.
  - C. A grumpy employee.
  - D. Ambient lighting.

## Solution

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1. Four major factors that affect the number of hours of direct service one can expect from an employee are:
  - A. A. Vacations
  - B. A. Sick leave
  - C. B. Meetings
  - D. C. Holidays
2. Stress can cause an increase in both sick leave and FMLA.
3. C. A grumpy employee



## 1.6. The Benefits of a Healthy Environment

The benefits of a healthy environment should not be underrated. In an environment where personalities work cooperatively as a team, employees are motivated and want to be at work. Transforming a workplace environment from unhealthy to healthy can reduce costs by:

1. Reducing tardiness and absenteeism.
2. Decreasing turnover.
3. Eliminating the need for mental health days.
4. Dissolving workplace distractions.

Healthy environments also improve company profits. Companies with attractive environments can attract the best workers who have strong skill sets, thus creating a competitive edge in the marketplace. Additionally, the attitude and demeanor of a happy employee has a positive influence on customers.

The most powerful benefit a healthy company enjoys is employee loyalty. Loyalty is very difficult to measure, but very evident. Employees who are loyal to their company tend to:

1. Be willing to work longer hours.
2. Be dependable and self-driven.
3. Achieve goals on time.
4. Seek solutions to problems.

5. Be enthusiastic around customers.
6. Show ownership for company products and services.
7. Willingly brag about their company in a variety of business and nonbusiness settings.
8. Defend company policy and products.

Evaluation  
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# Exercise 8: The Benefits of a Healthy Environment

 10 to 15 minutes

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In this exercise, you will respond to the following questions about healthy environments.

1. Which of the following is not benefits of a healthy environment?
  - A. An increase in employee loyalty.
  - B. A decrease in turnover.
  - C. An increase in mental health days.
  - D. A decrease in absenteeism.
  
2. What kind of indirect advertising can a company expect to receive from loyal employees?
  - A. Increased sales.
  - B. Word of mouth advertising.
  - C. Public promotions.
  - D. Networking.



## Solution

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1. C. An increase in mental health days.
2. B. Word of mouth advertising.

Evaluation  
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# Exercise 9: Personal Application for Benefits of a Healthy Environment

 15 to 20 minutes

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In this exercise, you will consider the following questions.

1. Imagine your own work environment without the negative effects of difficult people. If you are not experiencing a difficult personality, think about another department that is challenged in this way.
2. Write a paragraph that describes your ideal work environment. Include how the stress level will be, how people will interact with each other, what kind of productivity will be seen, and who will take on which roles.
3. List three to five benefits that you as an employee will receive in this healthy environment.
4. List three to five benefits that your employer will receive in this healthy environment.

## Solution

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1. Think about any issues you've experienced or noticed in your workplace. What are the main issues contributing to the problem, in your opinion?
2. Your paragraph should give detail about how you see a healthy work environment functioning. Will there be no stress at all? A little? A lot?
3. Using what you've learned, make sure your list includes how employees will benefit.
4. Using what you've learned, make sure your list includes how employer will benefit.

## Conclusion

Evaluation  
Copy

In this lesson, you have learned:

- About various types of work environments.
- The effects of low morale and high turnover.
- The legal implications relating to unhealthy behaviors.
- To recognize the hidden costs of unhealthy personalities in the workplace.
- About the benefits of a healthy environment.

# LESSON 2

## Understanding People

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### Topics Covered

- ☑ About different personality types.
- ☑ How to recognize destructive behaviors.
- ☑ The motivation for difficult behaviors.

### Introduction

To be able to address problems with people, it helps to understand them. Understanding a person is not the same as agreeing with the person, or agreeing with his or her behavior. It simply means:

1. We can identify the negative behavior and the effect of the behaviors.
2. We realize why people act out as they do.

With this understanding we can address the problem closer to the source and thus, more effectively.



### 2.1. Personality Types

There are many interesting assessments that evaluate personality types. While some assessment center on relationships and others on vocation, there are many that center on the workplace. Some of the more familiar profiles and assessments used in the workplace include:

1. Myers-Briggs Personality Inventory
2. Keirsey Temperament Sorter
3. DISC Profile
4. StrengthsQuest Personality Assessment Inventory

Through these personality assessments we can recognize each person's unique personality, which exhibits both strengths and weaknesses. By teaming together different people with varying strengths, productivity can be increased tremendously.

Conversely, if people are teamed together in such a way that their weaknesses are exhibited and these personality traits are not kept in check, a great deal of harm can be done to employee morale and the productivity of the company.

### ❖ 2.1.1. DMS-IV Personality Types

There are 14 personality types defined by the American Psychiatric Association (APA) in their DMS-IV diagnostic system. By taking this assessment, one can learn:

1. What a person's predominant traits are as defined in one or more personality style.
2. The characteristics common to that style that are demonstrated as strengths.
3. The more extreme characteristics common to that style that are demonstrated as weaknesses.

Below is a chart with the personality types and behaviors one might observe in their stronger state.

| Personality style | Extreme style        | Extreme behaviors                     |
|-------------------|----------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Conscientious     | Obsessive-compulsive | Destructive, perfectionism            |
| Self-confident    | Narcissistic         | Self-inflation, lacking empathy       |
| Devoted           | Dependent            | Feels helpless, clings to others      |
| Dramatic          | Histrionic           | Exaggerated emotions, seeks attention |
| Vigilant          | Paranoid             | Suspicious                            |
| Sensitive         | Avoidant             | Unloving, feels unlovable             |
| Leisurely         | Passive-aggressive   | Says one thing, does another          |
| Adventurous       | Antisocial           | Non-empathetic; not bound by rules    |
| Idiosyncratic     | Schizotypal          | Disconnects from reality              |
| Solitary          | Schizoid             | Disconnects from people               |
| Mercurial         | Borderline           | Unstable                              |
| Self-sacrificing  | Self-defeating       | Random acts that block success        |
| Aggressive        | Sadistic             | Abusive                               |
| Serious           | Depressive           | Feels hopeless, sad                   |

This chart shows the wide variety of personalities which express themselves in many ways and to many degrees. When the strengths of each are channeled positively, this variety adds to the creativity and productivity in the workplace.

The goal here is not to try to psychoanalyze people; we leave that to the experts. Rather, we want to be aware of the many personality types we see in the workplace, and we want to be aware that these personalities present themselves in varying degrees in both positive and negative ways.

# Exercise 10: Personality Types

 10 to 15 minutes

In this exercise, you will respond to the following questions about personality types.

1. Which of the following is true:
  - A. People should not show their personality in the workplace.
  - B. Leisurely people are lazy.
  - C. The best team is composed of people with the same personality type.
  - D. Personalities have strengths and weaknesses.
  - E. People with negative personality traits cannot work with others.
  
2. Match the following personality types with the related extreme behavior:
  - A. Personality Types
    - i. Conscientious
    - ii. Self-confident
    - iii. Devoted
    - iv. Dramatic
    - v. Vigilant
    - vi. Leisurely
    - vii. Self-sacrificing
    - viii. Aggressive
    - ix. Serious
  
  - B. Extreme Behaviors
    - i. Abusive
    - ii. Says one thing, does another
    - iii. Destructive perfectionism
    - iv. Suspicious
    - v. Self-inflation, lacking empathy
    - vi. Feels hopeless, sad
    - vii. Feels helpless, clings to others
    - viii. Exaggerated emotions, seeks attention
    - ix. Random acts that block success



## Solution

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1. D. Personalities have strengths and weaknesses.
2. i. Conscientious and iii. Destructive perfectionism; ii. Self-confident and v. Self-inflation, lacking empathy; iii. Devoted and vii. Feels helpless, clings to others; iv. Dramatic and viii. Exaggerated emotions, seeks attention; v. Vigilant and iv. Suspicious; vi. Leisurely and ii. Says one thing, does another; vii. Self-sacrificing and ix. Random acts that block success; viii. Aggressive and i. Abusive; ix. Serious and vi. Feels hopeless, sad.

# Exercise 11: Personal Application for Personality Types

🕒 15 to 30 minutes

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In this exercise, you will consider the following questions.

1. Think about your personality and the personality of another person in your workplace.
  - A. Write down two strengths each of you possesses.
  - B. Write down two weaknesses each of you demonstrates from time to time.
  - C. Compare the strengths with the weaknesses. Are your strengths and weaknesses rooted in the same personality traits? Is the other person's?
2. If you have never taken a personality assessment, find one or two to try. They may be available at your work or you can do a web search. Use “free personality assessment” as keywords. While some may cost a small amount, there are many available for free. Once you receive your results, consider how your personality fits your work, your relationships, and your interests.

## Solution

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1. In thinking about this question, consider how your and your co-worker's strengths and weaknesses play into your daily work lives.
2. Is your personality assessment as expected? Did you find the assessment as expected or surprising? If surprising, how so?



## 2.2. Recognizing Destructive Behaviors

It is very important, especially from a managerial perspective, to acknowledge that destructive behavior may be taking place even if workers do not complain. The willingness of people to speak out about issues has a direct correlation to the perceived safety of the environment. If the environment is punitive, workers may remain quiet; however:

1. Turnover will be high.
2. Tardiness and sicknesses will increase.
3. Gossip will take place.
4. Customers will complain.
5. Productivity will be low.
6. Anonymous complaints may be received.

Wise managers will be watchful for negative issues that contribute to unhealthy environments, but they will also watch for an absence of healthy behaviors. A healthy environment in which people are working well together can be recognized by workers who:

1. Are happy.
2. Stay involved in their work.
3. Produce good work.
4. Achieve their objectives.
5. Communicate well.
6. Experience positive interactions.

In most working relationships, employees will meld together and learn to work with and around each other's personalities; but on occasion relationships can be challenging.

Personality conflicts are inevitable, and are exacerbated when a person has an extreme personality.

We will now look at some of the behaviors difficult personalities may demonstrate in the workplace.



## 2.3. Destructive Personality Styles

### ❖ 2.3.1. Authoritarian

Authoritarian personalities are seen in people who consider themselves right in nearly all circumstances. They place “being right” at a higher priority than getting along with other people, and certainly higher than compromise and collaboration.

The authoritarian personality may be seen in any level of the business. We may encounter:

1. Ruling peers.
2. Micromanaging bosses.
3. Subordinate staff.

These people are typically controllers who want everything their own way. For example, we may see a manager delegate a job, and then proceed to dictate how that job needs to be done without regard to the personality or needs of the individual assigned with the task.

Often authoritarian people will:

1. Try to control WHAT gets done.
2. Try to control HOW things get done.
3. Ignore company or departmental procedures.
4. Use given authority or use manipulation to make certain the work is done his or her way.
5. Attempt to dictate expectations to their own manager.
6. Take on an undelegated supervisory role with co-workers.

### ❖ 2.3.2. Manipulator

Another personality that may be encountered in the workplace is the manipulator. Manipulators use their behavior to get their way. The first two behavioral types listed below are rather obvious manipulative behaviors, while the following three are more subtle.

1. “Guilt mongers,” play on people’s emotions.
2. “Gossipers,” spread criticism and distrust among co-workers.
3. “Underminers,” do things that harm the efforts of other employees.
4. “Passive-aggressives” will:
  - A. Outwardly agree to do something.
  - B. Not follow through with action.
  - C. Justify the lack of action, often using guilt and acting like a victim.
5. “Lovable People” use positive words and amiable traits to persuade people to:
  - A. Do their work for them.
  - B. Cover for them.
  - C. Not apply consequences for his or her lack of achievement.

Evaluation  
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### ❖ 2.3.3. Pessimist

Some people are unhappy and seem content to be unhappy. Negative attitudes and behaviors, like all attitudes and behaviors, are a choice. The pessimist:

1. Notices everything that is wrong.
2. Complains about the people and things they encounter.
3. Tends to be grumpy and critical of others.
4. May criticize others behind their back, or to their face.
5. Automatically discounts new ideas.
6. Can be a powerful barrier to creativity and productivity.

### ❖ 2.3.4. Dramatic

Drama queens and kings always add excitement to the workplace. The goal of the dramatic person is to get attention or to build up himself or herself. Unfortunately the effects of the drama can be costly.

## Hero Syndrome

The hero syndrome is one presentation of the dramatic personality. The behaviors of the hero follow a distinct pattern:

1. Through his or her own behavior, creates a problem.
2. The problem eventually becomes an emergency and requires a “hero” to fix the emergency.
3. The very person who created the problem then becomes the hero and fixes the problem.
4. The behavior is reinforced by the gratitude of others when the problem has been resolved.

For example, a procrastinator postpones a project or delays the completion of a project until it becomes an emergency, causing worry or stress for others. The procrastinator then does an excellent job of completing the project, often sacrificing his or her own personal need to do so. Unfortunately, this causes other people stress and hardship when working around the procrastination, and may have detrimental effects on other people’s work or on quality.

## The Victim

Evaluation  
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Dramatics may play the victim role. When their own performance results in a consequence that they do not like, their reaction becomes extreme. They use drama to distract the focus away from the initial behavior, thus minimizing the impact of the real problem. They may:

1. Act shocked about the consequence.
2. Act persecuted, as though the consequence is unjustified.
3. Blame others.
4. Have an emotional outburst, such as crying or yelling.
5. Threaten extreme action, such as quitting or filing a lawsuit.

## ❖ 2.3.5. Lethargic

Finally, there is the plain-old lazy person. The lethargic person is often able, but not willing, to put effort toward achieving a goal. A lethargic worker:

1. Lacks motivation.
2. Does not perform his or her share of the work.

3. Will not take ownership of his or her responsibilities.
4. Cannot seem to do what he or she is supposed to do to get the job done.
5. Tends to be short-sighted.
6. Cares more about his or her own mood at the moment.
7. Does not consider the impact his or her behavior has on other people or on the future.

# Exercise 12: Recognizing Destructive Behaviors

 5 to 10 minutes

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In this exercise, you will respond to the following questions about destructive behaviors.

1. Some behaviors are seen in multiple personality types. Which personalities use guilt?
  - A. Authoritarian
  - B. Dramatic
  - C. Lethargic
  - D. Pessimist
  - E. Manipulator
2. Destructive behaviors may cause which of the following:
  - A. Anonymous complaints
  - B. An increase in sick time
  - C. High turnover
  - D. Low productivity
  - E. Customer complaints
  - F. A and C
  - G. B, C, and D
  - H. All of the above

*Evaluation  
Copy*

## Solution

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1. B. Dramatic and E. Manipulator
2. H. All of the above

Evaluation  
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# Exercise 13: Personal Application for Destructive Behaviors

 15 to 20 minutes

In this exercise, you will consider the following questions.

1. Fill in the chart below using people you have encountered at work or in your personal life who exhibits each of these destructive behaviors. Use yourself if you know you have destructive traits.
  - A. Under Specific Behavior, describe what the offender does that is problematic.
  - B. Under Replacement Behavior, describe behaviors that would make the workplace more effective and/or increase morale. If possible, include positive behaviors that will satisfy the needs of both the offending person and the offended person/people. For example, a person who controls processes may be willing to release control if they receive progress reports.

| <b>Destructive Behavior</b> | <b>Specific Behavior</b> | <b>Replacement Behavior</b> |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Authoritarian               |                          |                             |
| Manipulative                |                          |                             |
| Negative                    |                          |                             |
| Dramatic                    |                          |                             |
| Lethargic                   |                          |                             |

## Solution

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1. Remember that the purpose of this exercise is to learn to recognize behaviors in order to understand the actions of others and possibly your own. By identifying examples of the specific behaviors that fall under each behavior type, you can then figure out what a positive replacement behavior would be. For example, if you work with a Dramatic type, you may list a specific behavior such as “always finds some roadblock to getting started with a task”, and a possible replacement behavior could be “refocus attention on what is going right and what can be done to begin the task at hand”.



## 2.4. Understanding Motivation for Difficult Behaviors

Motivation initiates habitual, repeated, and new behaviors. Most motivation is, at its core, self-serving. While this sounds bad, it really is not, because often the resulting behavior serves others. For example:

1. Philanthropists feel good after helping other people.
2. Parents feel peace when they know their children are safe, so they sacrifice to protect them.
3. Taxpayers get deductions for charitable giving.
4. People volunteer services for organizations that reinforce their moral or ethical values.

Motivation will provide a person with any of the following:

1. Self-preservation
2. Self-promotion (attaining stature or power)
3. Self-defense
4. Self-stimulation
5. Self-reward (the comfort of a habit, a happy feeling, etc.)
6. Self-fulfillment (personal growth)

Difficult personalities are motivated by desires that disregard other people or the environment. These people place their own needs above those around them. More often than not, though, they believe they are doing the right thing for all concerned because in their own mind, they know what is right.

By default, we all believe that we are right in our thoughts, words, or actions, but we can be deceived by any of the following:

1. A lack of understanding.
2. False knowledge.
3. Misinterpretations.
4. Delusions.

These deceptions motivate us to act out in many ways to varying degrees. The following are example of how a person might behave given a certain motivation:

1. Not acknowledging other people's opinions or ideas.
2. Suppressing or invalidating ideas.
3. Experiencing negative emotions.
4. Speaking out compulsively or harshly.
5. Believing delusions (beliefs held with absolute conviction despite superior evidence).
6. Projecting behavior onto others.
7. Lying to ourselves and others.
8. Pretending to know something we do not know.
9. Rationalizing our actions.

While we expect these behaviors in all people at times, the extreme personality will demonstrate these behaviors more predominately, to the degree that it adversely affects them or the people around them.

# Exercise 14: Understanding Motivation for Difficult Behaviors

🕒 5 to 19 minutes

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In this exercise, you will match the motivations to the behavior that fits best.

## 1. Motivation

- A. Self-preservation
- B. Self-promotion
- C. Self-defense
- D. Self-stimulation
- E. Self-reward
- F. Self-fulfillment

**Evaluation  
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## 2. Behavior

- A. Bragging about one's skills
- B. Playing a radio too loudly
- C. Taking excessive breaks
- D. Doing personal searches on the Internet
- E. Gossiping about a competitor
- F. Interrupting repeatedly in a disagreement



## Solution

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1. A. Self-preservation and E. Gossiping about a competitor
2. B. Self-promotion and A. Bragging about one's skills
3. C. Self-defense and F. Interrupting repeatedly in a disagreement
4. D. Self-stimulation and B. Playing a radio too loudly
5. E. Self-reward and C. Taking excessive breaks
6. F. Self-fulfillment and D. Doing personal searches on the Internet

# Exercise 15: Personal Application for Motivation for Difficult Behaviors

 15 to 25 minutes

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In this exercise, you will consider the following questions.

1. Think about something you really like to do at work. It can be a task, a break-time activity, a committee responsibility, etc. Answer these questions in relation to that activity:
  - A. What motivates you to be a part of that activity?
  - B. Why do you feel good about it?
  
2. Now think of something you really do not like to do, and answer these questions.
  - A. Which motivating factor is causing you to feel the way you do about the task?
  - B. Could it be possible that there are deceptions that might be heightening your dislike for the activity?

## Solution

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1. Answers will vary but one example may be that you really like to participate on a committee because it gives you a chance to connect with your coworkers and do something other than work tasks so that when you return to work tasks you are refreshed.
2. You may hate doing research for your boss. Maybe you've found yourself avoiding research-related tasks because you don't like doing something related to something you know little about. Perhaps presenting information to your boss makes you feel uncomfortable because you are afraid of being wrong and this causes you to pretend to know something you don't.

Evaluation  
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## Conclusion

In this lesson, you have learned

- About different personality types.
- How to recognize destructive behaviors.
- The motivation for difficult behaviors.

# LESSON 3

## Communication

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### Topics Covered

- About the communication loop.
- About different forms of communication.
- How to give constructive feedback.
- To use feedback and communication tools.

### Introduction

One of the biggest factors in personality conflict is miscommunication. Miscommunication can be intentional, subconscious, or inadvertent or caused by a lack of understanding about communication itself.

Evaluation  
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### 3.1. The Communication Loop

There are six components of communication that we will review.

1. The sender.
2. The receiver.
3. The message.
4. Feedback.
5. Noise.
6. Filters.

#### ❖ 3.1.1. The Sender

The sender is the originator of the message.

### ❖ 3.1.2. The Receiver

The receiver is the person intended to receive the message.

### ❖ 3.1.3. The Message

The message is the information that the sender wants to give to the receiver. Messages relay information. If the information does not get delivered appropriately, it is simply meaningless data. All messages should be meaningful.

The intent of the message is to do one of three things:

1. Inform.
2. Persuade.
3. Entertain.

Good communication is important even in entertaining messages. After all, little is worse than telling a joke and having someone take it seriously.

### ❖ 3.1.4. Feedback

Feedback tells the original sender.

1. The message was received.
2. The message was received correctly.

Feedback can range from a grunt or an “OK” to a full paraphrasing of what was received.

Communication requires a complete loop, including feedback, unless the message is a broadcast intended to simply distribute information. In good communication, the message-feedback loop is repeated until both participants are satisfied that communication has taken place.

### ❖ 3.1.5. Noise

Noise, as it relates to communication, is not exclusive to sound. There are many kinds of noise, including:

1. Projects.
2. Children.

3. Work.
4. TV.
5. Daily activities.
6. Distractions.
7. Lack of interest.
8. Any other external disturbance that may interfere with accurate delivery of the message.

In most situations, there will be noise. It is both the sender's and receiver's responsibility to be aware of the noise in their environment and to do what is necessary to overcome that noise. This may mean:

1. Moving into another room.
2. Turning off or turning down the TV or music.
3. Pausing a project.
4. Speaking louder.
5. Focusing the attention on the conversation and speaker.

### ❖ 3.1.6. Filters

Filters modify the formation of the message and distort the reception of the message. Filters include:

1. Personal biases.
2. Traditions.
3. Values.
4. Preferences.
5. Self-centeredness.
6. Denial.
7. Negative emotions.
8. Defensiveness.
9. Selective hearing.
10. Other feelings, attitudes, and beliefs.

Filters are not all bad. Filters are what help us discern between right and wrong, and are a part of our evaluation process that we build through experiences and education. The key to good communication is to understand filters and manage our own filters intentionally.

The best communication takes place when both parties listen and speak intentionally, but even if one person takes the lead, the exchange improves tremendously. A wise communicator will:

1. Be aware of his or her personal biases.
2. Consider how his or her values and preferences affect the delivery or interpretation of a message.
3. Control the emotional impact and defensiveness triggered by filters.
4. Respect the other person's perspective, whether or not he or she agrees with it.

# Exercise 16: The Communication Loop

 5 to 10 minutes

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In this exercise, you will respond to the following questions about the communication loop.

1. List the six components of communication.
2. Match the following:
  - A. Terms
    - i. Feedback
    - ii. Filters
    - iii. Noise
    - iv. Message
  - B. Definitions
    - i. Distracts, and may cause messages to be received incorrectly.
    - ii. Informs, persuades, or entertains.
    - iii. Modifies the way messages are delivered or interpreted.
    - iv. Tells the sender a message has been received correctly.

*Evaluation Copy*

## Solution

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1. The six components of communication are:
  - A. The sender
  - B. The receiver
  - C. The message
  - D. Feedback
  - E. Noise
  - F. Filters
2. The following are the correct matches of terms and definitions:
  - A. Feedback; H. Tells the sender a message has been received correctly.
  - B. Filters and G. Modifies the way messages are delivered or interpreted.
  - C. Noise and E. Distracts, and may cause messages to be received incorrectly.
  - D. Message F. Informs, persuades, or entertains.

# Exercise 17: Personal Application for the Communication Loop

🕒 15 to 25 minutes

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In this exercise, you will consider the following questions.

1. Consider a recent situation in which you experienced poor communication.
  - A. What was the environment? Was there noise? Did the sender or receiver have filters that blocked the communication? Was the message clearly stated and was feedback given?
  - B. List all the factors that contributed to that poor communication.
  - C. Write down what you will do to help improve the communication process the next time a situation like that presents itself.
2. What new habits can you develop to improve the way you respond to words that trigger your emotions?

## Solution

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1. What is important for this question is that you apply what you've learned to fully consider the situation you choose. Poor communication may be caused by several factors. Think through how it can be prevented or fixed in future.
2. For example, you may want to make a new habit of reminding yourself that others also have personal biases and that those can explain others' behaviors as well as your own. By understanding why something is happening you're in a better position to handle it effectively.



## 3.2. Different Forms of Communication

There are many ways to communicate, the majority of which do not involve words. According to Mele Koneya and Alton Barbour, authors of *Louder than Words: Nonverbal Communication* (Interpersonal Communication series. Columbus, OH: Merrill), oral communication is:

1. 7 percent words.
2. 38 percent intonation.
3. 55 percent physical movements.

Evaluation  
Copy

Because written language does not include intonation or body language, it becomes all the more important to express one's self carefully.

The following are various forms of communication and how they present themselves.

### ❖ 3.2.1. Verbal Communication

Verbal communication is the choice of words being used, whether written or oral. Verbal communication is affected by:

1. Poor language skills.
2. Poor writing skills.
3. The arrangement of words.
4. Pronunciation.

### ❖ 3.2.2. Voice Intonation

Voice intonation is a form of nonverbal communication that affects how we present our words. It includes:

1. Speed
2. Volume
3. Rhythm
4. Inflection
5. Emphasis

The inflection is the pitch of the voice. Inflection tells a listener whether the person is making a statement or posing a question. It also communicates urgency. Notice how the inflection in the following sentences is distinctly different:

1. “You’re going to the mall?”
2. “You’re going to the mall!”

Emphasis is used to communicate the most important part of the sentence. Read the following sentences, placing the emphasis on a different word each time, and notice how the message changes:

1. I cut my finger and it *hurt!*
2. I cut *my* finger and it hurt!
3. I *cut* my finger and it hurt!
4. I cut my *finger* and it hurt!

### ❖ 3.2.3. Facial Expression

Facial expressions are the strongest form of form of physical nonverbal communication because listeners are usually looking at the speaker’s face. Facial expressions include, but are not limited to:

1. Eye contact.
2. Directing the eyes up, down, or to the side.
3. Raising and lowering eyebrows.
4. Smiling or frowning.

5. Shaking or nodding the head.
6. Tipping the head up or to the side.
7. Tensing or relaxing facial muscles.

### ❖ 3.2.4. Physical Stance and Movement

Physical stance is the position a person is in when they are talking to another person. It often communicates emotional status.

For example, when a person desires distance from the other person, he or she will:

1. Cross arms.
2. Cross legs.
3. Lean backward.
4. Stand further away from the other person.
5. Check his or her watch often.

When a person is feeling threatened or angry, he or she is likely to:

1. Clench fists.
2. Raise shoulders.
3. Put his or her hands on hips.
4. Breathe heavily.

A person who wants more intimacy with another will:

1. Lean forward.
2. Touch the other person.
3. Sit or stand close to the other person.

### ❖ 3.2.5. Culture and Physical Behavior

Cultural norms will confuse nonverbal communications. For example:

1. People from some cultures stand closer together or farther apart than in Western cultures.
2. Physical touch is expected in some cultures, and considered taboo in others.

To the best of one's ability, one should always consider the other person's cultural background before making assumptions about their communication.

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# Exercise 18: Different Forms of Communication

⌚ 5 to 10 minutes

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In this exercise, you will respond to the following questions about the different forms of communication.

1. If a person is scowling and clenching fists, he or she probably is:
  - A. Happy
  - B. Afraid
  - C. Angry
  - D. Depressed
  - E. Tired
  
2. If a person is smiling and standing close to another person and touching the other person's shoulder, he or she probably is:
  - A. Confused about the other person's words.
  - B. Familiar with the other person.
  - C. Trying to get a raise.
  - D. Trying to be distant from the other person.
  
3. A person is probably sorrowful if you see him or her:
  - A. Look down.
  - B. Raise his or her voice.
  - C. Squint his or her eyes at another person.
  - D. Cross his or her arms.
  - E. Drop his or her shoulders.
  - F. Sigh.



## Solution

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1. C. Angry
2. B. Familiar with the other person
3. A. Look down, E. Drop his or her shoulders, and F. Sigh.

# Exercise 19: Personal Application for Different Forms of Communication

 15 to 20 minutes

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In this exercise, you will consider the following:

1. Do a web search for “body language” and select three different images.
  - A. What positions are the people in?
  - B. What are they communicating with those positions?
  
2. Do a web search for “Facial language” and select three different images.
  - A. Specifically, what facial positions do you see and what messages do they send?

## Solution

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1. Use what you have learned to determine from the images you select what the people in the images are communicating by the physical positions they are in. For example, is the person's fists clenched? If so, he or she may be angry.
2. For example, is the person smiling or frowning? Tipping his or her head up or to the side, etc? Some facial expressions are easier to translate than others.



## 3.3. Constructive Feedback

Unless a message is a broadcast to distribute information or sent for entertainment purposes, one should always provide feedback to let the sender know that the message was received and the message was understood. Feedback may be:

1. A simple, "Okay."
2. A request for more information.
3. An answer to the initial message.
4. A rephrasing of the message.
5. A summary of the conversation.

### ❖ 3.3.1. Restating the Message

When a sender is explaining something to the receiver and there could be doubt whether the message was received clearly, it can help if the receiver parrots (repeats) or paraphrases (rephrases) what the sender said. The sender can then acknowledge that the message was received correctly or restate the message to make it clearer.

### ❖ 3.3.2. Offering Criticism

When giving an opinion on the value or quality of something, a message can sometimes be received as hurtful.

For example, when a supervisor is commenting on the need for an employee to improve an area of his or her work, the employee may become defensive or offended by the statement.

To prevent this, use the sandwich approach to “sandwich” constructive criticism between two compliments. In this technique, the sender will:

1. Give a compliment.
2. State the criticism.
3. Offer another compliment.

Using the sandwich approach, the supervisor may say, “I appreciate your attention to detail and the quality of your work. I would like to you get the work done in a more timely manner, though, so please submit the report by its due date tomorrow at noon. I know you’ve done a lot of research, so I’m really looking forward to reading your insightful report!”

This is likely to be more easily accepted than if the supervisor said, “You’re always late with your work. You need to get tomorrow’s report done on time.”

Using ‘I’ statements keeps the criticism from being focused directly on a person. In the previous message, we can see how the use of the words, “you” and “I” made a difference in the presentation.

### ❖ 3.3.3. Communicating Goals

The goal of critiquing is not to demean someone’s work, but to present the issue and offer support and ideas for improvement. For this reason, it is very helpful to illustrate what the expected outcomes are.

This may be in the form of:

1. A diagram.
2. An example.
3. A defined objective.

Objectives should always be clearly stated, and include:

1. Specific expectations.
2. A timeline.
3. Measurements.

Making something measurable provides the recipients with an understanding of the goal for which they are striving.

# Exercise 20: Constructive Feedback

 5 to 10 minutes

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In this exercise, you will respond to the following questions about constructive feedback.

1. Which of the following is false:
  - A. Parroting tells the speaker the words that were heard.
  - B. Paraphrasing tells the speaker the words were understood.
  - C. Parroting is better than paraphrasing.
  - D. A person can parrot a speaker but not understand the original message.
2. If an employee is not getting work done on time, which of the following sentences would be received the best and give the best constructive criticism?
  - A. What's wrong with you?
  - B. You do great work. Would it be possible to meet the deadlines? I know can do it.
  - C. You do great work. What do you need to help you meet the deadlines? I know you want to.
  - D. You're too slow.



## Solution

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1. C. "Parroting is better than Paraphrasing" is false.
2. C. You do great work. What do you need to help you meet the deadlines? I know you want to.

# Exercise 21: Personal Application for Constructive Feedback

 15 to 20 minutes

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In this exercise, consider the following questions.

1. Do a web search for SMART goals/objectives.
  - A. What does SMART mean?
  - B. Write a SMART objective for an employee, a co-worker, or for yourself in a way that will be well received.

## Solution

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1. In your search, you should have found that SMART means **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**ttainable, **R**ealistic, and **T**imely.
2. Answers will vary but your objectives should answer the criteria associated with SMART goals. For example, is your objective specific, is it realistic, is it timely, etc.?



## 3.4. Feedback and Communication Tools

A few feedback techniques were discussed in the last section. These included “I” statements, paraphrasing, and parroting. We will now look at some more skills and tools that can be used to improve communication.

### ❖ 3.4.1. Patience

Good communicators will take time to understand other people’s perspectives and hear the people when they are speaking. A good communicator knows communication done right the first time saves a lot of time in the long run, even if it takes more time initially.

People with little patience will:

1. Be more concerned with their own words and ideas than the other person’s.
2. Stifle two-way communication.

### ❖ 3.4.2. Listening

The value of listening cannot be underestimated. When we listen, we put ourselves into the receiver’s position, rather than the sender’s. We allow the speaker to state what is on his or her mind, and we take responsibility for giving feedback.

Active listening is the process of listening and responding with paraphrases and questions that ensure that the message from the speaker is being received.

Some active listening traits include:

1. Observing body language.
2. Observe feelings.

3. Listening for intent.
4. Paraphrasing.
5. Presenting an attitude of cooperation and collaboration.

### ❖ 3.4.3. Avoiding Assumptions

Assumptions are very dangerous. An assumption is something taken for granted and has the end effect of one person trying to read the mind of another person.

A sender should be cautious about assuming the receiver understood the message as intended. The receiver should seek clarification if there is any doubt about what was received.

### ❖ 3.4.4. Phrasing and Rephrasing

A communicator who confuses sentence structure when speaking confuses the listener. Every language has its own structure, and people are conditioned to follow that structure when they are listening.

Good communicators will:

1. Begin with an introduction.
2. Include background information as necessary.
3. Progress through the body of the message, either chronologically or procedurally.
4. End their statement with a conclusion or request.

For example, a good communicator might construct his or her communication with a co-worker as follows:

1. Jerry, I'd like to talk to you about the Baker project. (Introduction)
2. We are having issues with the outcomes, so we looked into the specs and found some incongruities. (Background information)
3. We would like to meet with your team to work out the kinks and put a plan in place to close the gaps to prevent future issues. (Body)
4. Can you give me a day and time when we can set a meeting to address this issue? (Request)

If we are not sure the other person received our statement correctly, we should ask them to paraphrase it.

We have all heard parents ask their children, “What did I just say?” When we hear this, we know the parent is checking to make certain the child really heard what was said.

In the same way we can ask other people to paraphrase what we say. We can ask, “I hope what I said made sense. Do you mind rephrasing what I just said so that I know that I communicated correctly? (Notice the use of I statements, and the explanation for wanting the reiteration.)

If they did not get the concept we intended to communicate, do not repeat the sentence verbatim. Instead, say the same thing using different words.

There might be something in the way we structured our original sentence or in the way they are receiving it that is not working. By rephrasing the sentence, we give the same information but in a way that they will understand.

### ❖ 3.4.5. Visual Aids

A picture is worth 1000 words. We have heard this said many times before, and it is very true. Some people are verbal learners and can form a visual image in their mind from spoken or written words. Others are visual learners who do better with a visual model.

Visual aids may include:

1. Diagrams.
2. Charts.
3. Outlines.
4. Models.
5. Pictures.
6. Examples.

When communicating important information, you may if appropriate and possible want to include a visual aid to communicate your point more effectively. If, for example, your boss is sharing how much higher sales numbers are this quarter, he or she may want to include a simple chart showing the dramatic difference. A simple graph can easily communicate the information more quickly than writing it out in sentences. Similarly, when you look at a picture or a chart or a diagram or other visual aid, it may take you several sentences to describe the information in the visual aid and/or convey the same message.

## Exercise 22: Feedback and Communication Tools

 10 to 15 minutes

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In this exercise, you will respond to the following questions about constructive feedback.

1. Which of the following rephrases this sentence best: “The complicated process needs to be changed, but to change it we need to go through the proper process.”
  - A. The process is complicated and needs to be changed.
  - B. There’s a process for processes.
  - C. We have to go through the proper channels to make the needed changes to the process.
  - D. There is a proper process to change processes.
  
2. Observing body language and listening for intent are two characteristics of:
  - A. Active listening
  - B. Rephrasing
  - C. Patience
  - D. The Communication loop

## Solution

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1. C. We have to go through the proper channels to make the needed changes to the process.
2. A. Active listening.

Evaluation  
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## Exercise 23: Personal Application for Feedback and Communication Tools

 5 to 10 minutes

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1. Select at a picture on the wall, in a book, or just look out the window.
  - A. Try to describe the image that you see or try to convey the same message that the image does. Pay attention to how many words you are using.

## Solution

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1. The idea here is that no matter the image you choose to look at it you will likely find it takes several sentences to convey the message of what you are seeing. For example, if you looked out your window and saw a building across the street, you may want to describe what the building looks like. Is it a home or a commercial building? Are there any signs conveying additional messages? Even if you chose to look at a simple picture of a flower for example, it may take a long description to describe the colors, the shape, the lighting, etc. that you see in the picture.

## Conclusion

In this lesson, you have learned

- About the communication loop.
- About different forms of communication.
- How to give constructive feedback.
- To use feedback and communication tools.

# LESSON 4

## Setting Boundaries

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### Topics Covered

- What a boundary is.
- About communicating boundaries and consequences.
- How to negotiate an agreement.
- The importance of enforcing boundaries.
- How to use a rubric to measuring behavior.

### Introduction

One of the most profoundly successful ways to deal with difficult people is to learn how to set and maintain boundaries.

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### 4.1. Boundaries

Boundaries are limitations on what we will or will not accept from others. Like a boundary set by a fence with a gate, relational boundaries allow positive things into our environment, and keep negative things out.

A boundary consists of an expectation and ensuing consequences. Some common workplace documents that reflect boundaries include:

1. A company's policies and procedures.
2. A department's procedural handbook.
3. Contractual agreements.

In the workplace there are many behaviors that are expected to be performed in a certain way, and most people behave accordingly. For example, most people will:

1. Arrive to work on time.

2. Do the work they are asked to do.
3. Ask questions when they need information.
4. Follow set policies and procedures.
5. Act politely and be respectful.

However, people with difficult personalities tend to disregard customary expectations, which results in:

1. Other people taking on excess workload.
2. A loss of privacy or space.
3. Offensive, disrespectful words that may include bullying.
4. Gossip.
5. Wasted time.
6. Other behaviors that prevent someone else from performing his or her work.

When this happens repeatedly, the person who is affected by the behaviors needs to create and communicate intentional boundaries. There is a process for setting boundaries, as follows:

1. Creating expectations.
2. Determining consequences.
3. Communicating the expectations and consequences.
4. Negotiating terms.
5. Enforcing the agreement.

This lesson explores the process of developing healthy boundaries.

## Exercise 24: Boundaries

 5 to 10 minutes

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In this exercise, you will respond to the following questions about boundaries.

1. Which of the following is not a boundary?
  - A. A backyard wall
  - B. A book
  - C. A country's borders
  - D. Skin
  - E. A water glass
  - F. A book cover
  
2. Choose the statement that best explains why boundaries are needed at work.
  - A. To create a fair workplace.
  - B. To make certain everyone has good attitudes.
  - C. To protect the ability of workers to perform their job duties well.
  - D. To protect the company from judicial proceedings.

**Evaluation  
Copy**

## Solution

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1. B. A book
2. C. To protect the ability of workers to perform their job duties well.

# Exercise 25: Personal Application for Boundaries

 10 to 15 minutes

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In this exercise, you will consider the following questions.

1. Have you ever felt resentful toward someone at work? Do you know why? Resentment is a result of broken boundaries.
  - A. List situations that annoy you or cause you resentment.
  - B. For each situation, describe what you'd like to see happen to stop the negative feelings.
  - C. Consider each desire and evaluate as objectively as possible whether or not your expectations are realistic. If you feel comfortable doing so, have another person review your expectations and give you their objective opinion.
  - D. Hold on to these issues; you'll refer back to them later.

## Solution

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For this exercise, think about your own workplace and be honest about your answers to the questions. You do not have to share them with anyone. Focus especially on what you'd like to see happen in the way of a solution.



## 4.2. Communicating Boundaries and Consequences

A person who is feeling resentment toward another because of the other person's behavior has an obligation to communicate their concerns to that other person. However, communicating boundaries can be challenging, especially if one is working with someone who has a difficult personality.

If the other person is reactive, a friendly environment and attitude can prevent inflaming the behavior. Here are a number of tactics that can help with the communication of boundaries:

1. Make certain your expectations are realistic.
2. Have a positive attitude.
3. Create a non-threatening atmosphere by meeting in a neutral area.
4. Minimize stress by setting a dedicated time to meet so that interruption can be avoided.
5. Avoid emotion, even if the other person gets emotional.
6. Use 'I' statements to keep the focus on the concern and minimize defensive behavior.
7. Use positive feedback as learned in the last lesson.
8. Listen and negotiate terms that are acceptable to both parties.
9. Concentrate on the problem, not the person.

### ❖ 4.2.1. Consequences

Expectations are only productive if they have related consequences. Consequences take place when a boundary is upheld and when a boundary is broken. Both the expectation and the consequence should be communicated together. Consequences should be:

1. Clear.

2. Appropriate.
3. Realistic.
4. Understood by both parties.

A consequence that cannot be fulfilled is an empty threat and leads to broken promises. Here is an example of a communicated boundary:

1. I'm struggling to get my work done on time because it depends on having up-to-date flowcharts. (Stating the problem)
2. I'd appreciate it if you would complete them the day before I do my reports. (Stating the boundary)
3. If the charts can't be completed, I'll need to talk to your supervisor to see if they can get you more help or arrange another way to get the work done. (Describing the negative consequence)
4. But if all the flowcharts are done on time for the next three months, I'll bring in pizza for both our teams. (Describing the positive consequence)



# Exercise 26: Communicating Boundaries and Consequences

⌚ 10 to 15 minutes

In this exercise, you will respond to the following questions about the boundaries and consequences.

1. Match the following:

A. Terms

- i. Emotion
- ii. "I" statements
- iii. Feedback
- iv. Expectations
- v. Positive
- vi. Problem
- vii. Neutral location

B. Related Terms

- i. Reduce defensiveness
- ii. Attitude
- iii. Nonthreatening
- iv. Avoid
- v. Realistic
- vi. Not person
- vii. Positive

2. What happens when boundaries have no consequences?

- A. The threat of a consequence will suffice.
- B. The boundary will be unproductive.
- C. People will feel better about the boundary and will respect it.



## Solution

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1. The answers to question 1 are as follows:
  - A. i. Emotion and iv. Avoid
  - B. ii. "I" statements and i. Reduce defensiveness
  - C. iii. Feedback and iv. Positive
  - D. iv. Expectations and v. Realistic
  - E. v. Positive and ii. Attitude
  - F. vi. Problem and iv. Not person
  - G. vii. Neutral location and iii. Nonthreatening
  
2. B. The boundary will be unproductive.

# Exercise 27: Personal Application for Communicating Boundaries

 10 to 15 minutes

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In this exercise, you will...

1. Refer to the list of situations you created in the previous personal application exercises.
  - A. Write a boundary for each, including:
    - i. Your expectation.
    - ii. What the consequence will be if the boundary is respected.
    - iii. What the consequence will be if the boundary is not respected.

## Solution

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Recall that for this exercise you will use the items you listed in the last personal application to form your answer. Answers will vary. One possible answer as an example could be that my problem situation is that my colleague who answers the phones first does not use as professional and friendly of a tone as I'd like and she forwards calls to me that she could answer herself:

1. My expectation is that the customer service rep who answers the phones first will use a more friendly and professional tone and that she will try harder to answer the easy questions some customers have rather than forwarding to me. Call that are forwarded to me should be ones that she can't answer..
2. The consequence if this does improve and the boundary is respected will be that I will thank my colleague for making my job easier when customers are already pretty happy when they are forwarded to me and I should notice a decrease in calls coming to me that don't need to.
3. The consequence if this does not improve will be that I will talk to our supervisor about my concerns and how it negatively impacts me and my performance. (For example, when calls are forwarded to me customers are sometimes annoyed because they were not treated well on first contact.)

Evaluation  
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### 4.3. Negotiating Terms

When reasonable boundaries (expectations and consequences) are communicated, most people will:

1. Accept the boundary.
2. Understand the rationale.
3. Agree to the boundary.

However, a person may object to the boundary if he or she feels the boundary creates problems. When trying to work with a difficult person, the possibility of an objection is all the more likely because they will perceive things as problems that other people will not.

If a clearly stated boundary is not accepted, the decision has to be made:

1. To keep the boundary and stand firm.
2. To adjust the boundary.

If the decision is made to adjust the boundary, it may be beneficial to bring the other person into the boundary development process. This is called, negotiation.

### ❖ 4.3.1. Win-Win Negotiations

During negotiations, the goal should be to create a win-win situation in which both parties benefit.

Things to ask include:

1. What do I need/want? (Be specific.)
2. Why do I need it?
3. How do I need it?
4. When do I need it?
5. What does the other person need/want?
6. Can I do what I have agreed to do? Is it realistic? Is it beneficial?
7. What might I be able to offer the other person to encourage him or her to accept the boundary?

The negotiating process should never include behavior or words that are:

1. Intimidating.
2. Derogatory.
3. Inflammatory.
4. Critical.

These are negative approaches that shut down communication. The most desirable approach will include a respectful discussion with the most open and honest attitudes possible.

Some negotiations can be rather challenging and may require extra steps. These extra steps may include:

1. Scheduling a second meeting if emotions get inflamed.
2. Scheduling recurring meetings to refine terms until they are mutually agreeable.
3. Reducing immediate expectations and working on smaller boundaries that are components of the full boundary.

4. Bringing in a third party to help with communication. A third-party person should be:
  - A. Neutral.
  - B. Acceptable to both parties.

### ❖ 4.3.2. Compromise

Negotiations often result in compromise. The final desired outcome should not be changed during negotiations, but the way those outcomes are met may be open for discussion. For example:

1. A boundary may be proposed that a component will be delivered by the courier at a certain time every few days.
  - A. Receiving the component is the desired outcome and non-negotiable.
    - i. How that component is delivered may not be of concern.
  - B. Receiving the component every few days may not be negotiable.
    - i. Which days the component is delivered may not be of concern.
2. Two points open for discussion are how the component is delivered and on what days.

Often an offer of service will resolve the problem. In the example given in the first section of this lesson, a boundary was set for getting flowcharts completed in time for the reports.

To help achieve the desired goal, the offer may be extended, “I know you get interrupted by phone calls a lot, so if it will help, my staff will take the calls that come in for two hours on that day. Will you be able to train them on how to take the calls?”

The other person will:

1. Accept the offer.
2. Reject the offer. Rejecting the offer often negates the argument, thus negating the barrier to perform the needed service.

### ❖ 4.3.3. Healthy Boundary Concepts

As we negotiate with the other person, we always need to uphold healthy boundaries for both parties.

Determining a healthy boundary requires an understanding of the following nine boundary principles:

1. Healthy boundaries consider multiple perspectives and are considerate of the needs of both parties.
2. The boundaries of both parties must be respected to achieve mutual benefit.
3. People are responsible for their own:
  - A. Behaviors.
  - B. Attitudes.
  - C. Emotions.
  - D. Thoughts.
4. It is acceptable to help others overcome a problem.
5. It is not acceptable to rescue others from their own:
  - A. Responsibilities that have been delegated to them.
  - B. Consequences resulting from their own actions, because the other person:
    - i. Will be denied the opportunity to learn from the experience.
    - ii. Will be denied the opportunity to enjoy the success of overcoming the problem.
6. It is acceptable for someone to:
  - A. Feel “hurt” by a boundary.
  - B. Be required to put out more effort.
7. It is not acceptable for a boundary to “harm” a person by exposing him or her to:
  - A. Physical danger.
  - B. Unjust judgment by other employees.
8. Behaviors always result in consequences that may be positive or negative.
9. Helping people to one’s own detriment is unhealthy.

## Exercise 28: Negotiating Terms

 10 to 15 minutes

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In this exercise, you will respond to the following questions about the negotiations.

1. Which of the following are not a personal responsibility?
  - A. Behaviors.
  - B. Attitudes.
  - C. Atmosphere.
  - D. Emotions.
  - E. Thoughts.
2. True or False:
  - A. The goal of negotiations is to get what we want.
  - B. If something hurts a person's feelings, it shouldn't be done.
  - C. Helping a person too much rescues them from their responsibilities.
  - D. Consequences are a punitive concept.
  - E. Boundaries often have negotiable and non-negotiable components.
  - F. If a person does not agree to a boundary, we should talk to Human Resources.
  - G. There is a difference between "hurt" and "harm."

**Evaluation  
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## Solution

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1. C. Atmosphere.
2. Answers are as follows:
  - A. The goal of negotiations is to get what we want. False
  - B. If something hurts a person's feelings, it shouldn't be done. False
  - C. Helping a person too much rescues them from their responsibilities. True
  - D. Consequences are a punitive concept. False
  - E. Boundaries often have negotiable and non-negotiable components. True
  - F. If a person does not agree to a boundary, we should talk to Human Resources. False
  - G. There is a difference between "hurt" and "harm." True

## Exercise 29: Personal Application for Negotiating Terms

 10 to 15 minutes

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In this exercise, you will consider the following question.

1. For each boundary created in the Exercise above, list everything you can think of that is negotiable.

## Solution

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For this exercise, answers will again vary. As an example, I can refer back to my example about the improved first-line customer service in the last personal communication. In that example, I think the following are negotiable:

1. Time. I think it can be negotiable when more positive results can be seen. It may take a day or two for the front-line customer rep to improve her performance and get in the habit of trying to answer the easier customer questions.
2. How. I think how this change is made can be negotiable. For example, the front-line customer service rep may need a cheat sheet or checklist of sorts to refer to for answering the questions I expect her to be able to answer.



## 4.4. Enforcing Boundaries

The most difficult part of maintaining a healthy boundary is enforcement. Enforcing a boundary may trigger conflict, and conflict can be quite uncomfortable.

Whenever possible, consequences should be enforced; however, in some situations the choice may be made to not enforce a boundary. We'll discuss those situations in the next section.

Choosing not to enforce a boundary carries potential problems:

1. Trust is created when a boundary is enforced:
  - A. A boundary and its consequences are promises.
  - B. Not imposing a boundary breaks the promises; this is, or appears to be, deceitful.
  - C. Deceit creates an untrusting relationship.
  - D. It is harder to set future boundaries when trust has been broken.
2. If we make concessions too often, we invalidate the boundary.
3. A boundary that needs to be changed often is one that was not well formulated to begin with.

If a boundary turns out to be unenforceable, the consequence need to be reevaluated and realistic ones formulated.

## ❖ 4.4.1. Evaluating Consequences

There are two questions to ask when evaluating whether a consequences should be enforced:

1. Why was the boundary broken?
2. What will be the results if the consequence is not applied?

The flexibility one gives to a consequence depends on the severity of the outcome when that boundary is broken.

1. There is more flexibility if the outcome is rather minor.
2. There is less flexibility If the outcome:
  - A. Is severe.
  - B. Is costly.
  - C. Promotes habitual behavior.

Using the previous example, if the report was extremely important and our own supervisor needed it first thing the next morning, the outcome is severe, so there is not any latitude to give more time.

Intent is another consideration when evaluating boundaries. Enforcing boundaries may be inappropriate if a boundary is broken:

1. By accident.
2. Through no action on the part of the other person.

However, boundaries should be adhered to if the boundary was broken by:

1. Intent.
2. Carelessness.
3. Habit.

For example, we communicate to a staff member that we need a certain report by the end of the day and if he or she does not complete the report, he or she will be required to stay late to finish the task.

- At the end of the day we have not received the report.
- The staff member says he or she has to get home for a child's birthday party.

How do we know whether to enforce the boundary or change it? We are better off enforcing the boundary if:

1. The person was given ample time to complete the task.
2. The person chose to complete other tasks that are lower priority.

We are likely to not enforce consequences if:

1. We know that the person had done everything within his or her power to complete the task.
2. The person encountered obstacles outside of their own control.

We may search for a compromise if:

1. If the outcome for not completing the report is severe.
2. Flexibility is reasonable and justifiable.

To exemplify the third point, one might allow the person to go home with the report unfinished, provided he or she returns to work early the next morning to complete the task before normal work hours.

# Exercise 30: Enforcing Boundaries

🕒 10 to 15 minutes

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In this exercise, you will respond to the following questions about enforcing boundaries.

1. Consequences should be enforced if a boundary is broken by:
  - A. Accident
  - B. Cost
  - C. Principle
  - D. Habit
  - E. Severity
  
2. When a boundary is broken and consequences are not enforced:
  - A. People are grateful.
  - B. People will continue to break boundaries.
  - C. Trust is broken.
  - D. No harm is done.
  - E. People don't get hurt feelings.

*Evaluation  
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## Solution

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1. D. Habit
2. B. People will continue to break boundaries and C. Trust id broken.

# Exercise 31: Personal Application for Enforcing Boundaries

 10 to 15 minutes

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In this exercise, you will consider the following.

1. Using one of the boundaries you wrote in the previous personal application exercises, describe a situation in which the boundary should be enforced and a situation in which the boundary might be negotiated. Remember the considerations that were listed in the Negotiating Terms section of this lesson, particularly the concepts of help vs. rescue and hurt vs. harm.

## Solution

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1. **Example in which boundary should be enforced.** Using our example from the previous personal application exercises, an example of a broken boundary where the boundary will need to be enforced is if the front-line customer service representative does not accept the boundary and the situation gets worse (for example, if more calls are coming through in which the customer's questions could have been answered easily). Though this result would be frustrating, we need to remember that the customer service rep may feel that the boundary "hurts". While this is acceptable for her to feel this way, it is still okay to require that more effort is given to this situation to comply with, and enforce, the boundary. Even though the rep did not comply, that does not make it okay to harm that person by judging her. Note it is also unacceptable to rescue the rep by taking over her unmet responsibility. We will need to be careful helping her to our own detriment.
2. **Example in which boundary can be negotiated.** In our example, if the customer service rep has shown an effort toward respecting the boundary but has some questions and ideas about how better to handle some of the responsibility of answering the questions, the end solution may be negotiable.

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## 4.5. Measuring Behavior

It may be helpful to define measurements for behavior to:

1. Determine whether boundaries and consequences are appropriate.
2. Remove as much emotion from a situation as possible.

Measurements can be qualitative or quantitative. Quantitative measurements may be used if one expects:

1. A task to be performed within a certain timeline.
2. A certain amount of product to be produced.
3. A certain number of repetitive tasks to be performed.

Qualitative evaluations are needed if the behavior cannot be specifically measured. Examples of this include:

1. The courtesy of a sales representative.
2. Leadership.

3. Customer satisfaction.

#### ❖ 4.5.1. Rubrics

A great system for evaluating behavior is the rubric. Rubrics are commonly used in education and in job performance; they can also be used in relationships. The rubric is a document that:

1. Lists expected actions or behaviors.
2. Defines criteria for the actions or behaviors based on levels of quality or quantity.
3. Assigns a value to the actions based upon the criteria achieved.
4. Supports decision making by providing a method by which to objectively discern qualitative factors.

This is an example of a job performance rubric:

## Performance Rubric

|                             | <b>Needs Improvement</b>                 | <b>Below Expectations</b>                          | <b>Meet Expectations</b>                           | <b>Exceeds Expectations</b>                          | <b>Excels</b>  |
|-----------------------------|--|--|--|--|--|
|                             | 1 pts                                    | 2 pts  | 3 pts  | 4 pts  | 5 pts  |
| Attitude                    | Shows no interest                        | Shows little interest in work                      | Shows interest in work and does not complain often | Clearly enjoys work and has a good attitude          | Enthusiastic, interested in work, and is motivated to do well          |
| Punctuality                 | Regularly late for work and/or meetings  | Late to work or meetings more than 10% of the time | Late occasionally                                  | Rarely late  | Never late   |
| Following Instructions      | Does not follow instructions             | Needs repeated, detailed assistance                | Follows instructions with little difficulty        | Follows instructions with no difficulty              | Follows instructions consistently and seeks our additional information |
| Interpersonal Relationships | Disruptive and uncooperative with others | Needs to improve relationships                     | Interactions with others is acceptable             | Poised, courteous, and tactful with others           | Interacts well with all people   |
| Quality of Work             | Does little or low-quality work          | Needs help to do quality work                      | Does expected amount of quality work               | Exceeds expectations in quality and quantity of work | Performs above and beyond expectations. consistently neat and accurate |

Translated into a decision-making tool for determining boundaries with a difficult person who has a bad attitude and is verbally abusive, the rubric may look like this:

- Situation: Co-worker demands things on her timeline without consideration of my workload.
- Boundary: I will provide her with needs when I am able, but not at the risk of my own work. I will not accept demeaning words.

## Boundaries Rubric

|          | <b>Unacceptable Behavior</b>   | <b>Tolerable Behavior</b>   | <b>Acceptable Behavior</b>   | <b>Pleasant Behavior</b>  | <b>Exceptional Behavior</b>                        |
|----------|--|---|--|---|--|
| Respect  | Calls me names or insults me   | Has haughty attitude but does not use rude language   | Speaks politely  | Speaks in soft tones, says please and thank you                           | Smiles and offers compliments                      |
| Requests | Waits until the last minute to request things and expects me to stop everything to help with her job | Waits until the last minute to request things or requests things in a timely manner but expects me to help with her job | Requests things in a timely manner and asks for help with her job occasionally | Gives advance notice of needs and asks for help with her job occasionally | Gives advance notice of needs and does her own job |

Response:

1. Unacceptable Behavior - Apply boundary: Say no; report behavior to supervisor
2. Tolerable Behavior - Apply boundary: Say no to immediate help, but help when time allows
3. Acceptable Behavior - Be courteous, help when able and offer assistance when able
4. Pleasant Behavior - Be courteous, give assistance as soon as possible, make extra effort to help
5. Exceptional Behavior - Provide assistance in advance

The rubric helps a person think through a situation and minimize the emotional responses that can inflame situations. Also, when appropriate, the rubric may be helpful to include in negotiations so that both parties are fully aware of the consequences of certain behaviors.

## Exercise 32: Measuring Behavior

 5 to 10 minutes

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In this exercise, you will respond to the following questions about the measuring behavior.

1. A rubric is:
  - A. Used exclusively for performance evaluations.
  - B. An objective measurement tool.
  - C. A small, square puzzle.
2. True or false:
  - A. Qualitative measurements are easier than quantitative measurements.
  - B. Quantitative measurements are easier than qualitative measurements.
  - C. Measuring behavior is judgmental.
  - D. In all situations, we should follow our heart to resolve problems.



## Solution

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1. B. An objective measurement tool.
  - A. Qualitative measurements are easier than quantitative measurements. False
  - B. Quantitative measurements are easier than qualitative measurements. True
  - C. Measuring behavior is judgmental. False
  - D. In all situations, we should follow our heart to resolve problems. False

# Exercise 33: Personal Application for Measuring Behaviors

🕒 15 to 20 minutes

In this exercise, you will complete the following rubric.

1. Complete the rubric below for a situation you know of that involves the behaviors of a difficult person.

Situation:

Boundary:

## Boundaries Rubric

|          | Unacceptable Behavior | Tolerable Behavior | Acceptable Behavior | Pleasant Behavior | Exceptional Behavior |
|----------|-----------------------|--------------------|---------------------|-------------------|----------------------|
| Respect  |                       |                    |                     |                   |                      |
| Requests |                       |                    |                     |                   |                      |

My response:

1. Unacceptable Behavior - Apply boundary:
2. Tolerable Behavior - Apply boundary:
3. Acceptable Behavior
4. Pleasant Behavior
5. Exceptional Behavior

## Conclusion

In this lesson, you have learned

- About communicating expectations and consequences.
- How to negotiate an agreement.
- The importance of enforcing boundaries.
- How to use a rubric to measuring behavior.



# LESSON 5

## Handling Conflict

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### Topics Covered

- ☑ How to confront a difficult person.
- ☑ Techniques for successful negotiations.
- ☑ When mediation is needed.
- ☑ How and when to applying formal consequences.

### Introduction

A difficult person, particularly one who has a reactive personality, can be challenging to confront. Most people prefer to avoid confrontation and dislike uncomfortable situations.

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#### 5.1. Confronting the Difficult Personality

A difficult person, particularly one who has a reactive personality, can be challenging to confront. Most people prefer to avoid confrontation and dislike uncomfortable situations.

Some interesting things about people with difficult personalities and behaviors are they:

1. Do not always share these inhibitions.
2. May even use conflict to their advantage.

There are five things to consider when confronting difficult individuals, and we will explore them now.

##### ❖ 5.1.1. Safety Issues

The first and foremost consideration should always be safety. Always take into consideration whether or not the other person is:

1. Irrational.

2. Verbally abusive.
3. Prone to physical outbursts.

If there is any doubt, take safety precautions. The following are important steps to take when safety is a concern.

### ❖ 5.1.2. Find a Watchdog

If there are any safety concerns, let somebody else know that the conversation could be heated. If another person knows about the concerns, he or she can keep an eye and ear out during the meeting.

To avoid sharing confidential information, the watchdog can be:

1. A supervisor.
2. A Human Resources Department representative.
3. A company ombudsman.
4. A person in a position of authority or confidentiality.

### ❖ 5.1.3. Open Doors

Keep an open door. Open doors minimize the likelihood that a person will demonstrate negative behaviors.

The best protection is prevention; planning the meeting space in advance will avoid:

1. Closed-door meetings that prohibit quick escapes.
2. Meeting in a room without free access to an exit.
3. Sitting with the other person between you and the door.

Finding a place that is both private and yet allows an escape may be problematic. If it is and if safety is a concern, a location off site, such as a restaurant or coffee shop, may be an option.

### ❖ 5.1.4. The Nature of the Relationship

Conversations transpire differently depending on whether you are confronting:

1. A person with greater authority.

2. A peer.
3. A subordinate.

### ❖ 5.1.5. Confronting a Higher Authority

Supervisors and others with authority may make final decisions, regardless of whether or not the decision is rational or seemingly beneficial.

If the confrontation is with a person holding a supervisory position, his or her decision will need to be respected, at least for the time being.

Most supervisors will:

1. Listen to subordinates.
2. Work out an agreement that works for all concerned.

But difficult supervisors are more likely to state their opinion and not compromise. In those situations a choice will have to be made to:

1. Accept his or her decision.
2. Escalate the issue to a higher authority.
3. Address the issue with an outside authority (outside the department or outside the company).
4. Leave the position.

This can be a difficult decision to make, but ultimately each person has to discern whether a situation is acceptable or not.

### ❖ 5.1.6. Confronting a Subordinate

If the confrontation is with a subordinate, the dynamics are reversed. In this situation the subordinate must take the position of accepting the supervisory decision. A supervisor has:

1. The authority to make the final decision.
2. The responsibility to make a decision that benefits:
  - A. The company.
  - B. The department.
  - C. The work team.

#### D. The workplace environment.

It is essential that a supervisor listen to the concerns of the subordinate, even if the subordinate is a difficult person. Even excessive complaints often have some bits of truth in them, and by listening for those bits of truth, a supervisor can make the wisest decisions. Final decisions should always:

1. Follow company policy.
2. Take into consideration the needs of all affected parties.

#### ❖ 5.1.7. Confronting a Peer

Ideally, confrontation with a peer should be cooperative, if not collaborative. However, with a difficult person we can only hope for, but not expect cooperation.

Ideally, there will be equal power between the two parties, but often one person will have greater influential power because of support given through:

1. The chain of command.
2. Longevity.
3. Friendships.
4. Other reasons.

Evaluation  
Copy

Communication between people of equal position can be a source of frustration because there is no obligation by either party to placate the other's desires.

In stalemates, the goal may change from resolution to fact-finding. Pull together enough information to take the issue to a person at a higher level.

#### ❖ 5.1.8. Emotional Escalation

The best protection against an emotional outburst by another person is to manage one's own behavior and emotions. Not doing so pulls one into emotional exchanges and gives emotional power to the other person. If the conversation begins to get heated one should:

1. Speak in a low tone.
2. Check one's own emotions.
3. Be aware of the other person's body language and voice intonations.
4. Be watchful of one's own nonverbal expressions and body language.

5. Place both chairs in comparable positions.
6. Avoid any position of dominance.
7. Check the tone of voice.
8. Look the other person in the eyes.
9. End the conversation if it gets uncomfortable.
10. Not continue the conversation if there is a feeling of intimidation or fear.
11. Not continue the conversation if there is emotional distress.
12. Avoid histrionics (dramatic displays).

In a conversation with a difficult person, the goal is to guide the other person to understand a different perspective. Verbal strikes at the other person can repel rather than attract. Unchecked emotions lead to words that are:

1. Hurtful.
2. Insulting.
3. Accusatory.
4. Otherwise destructive.

An outcome of any meeting, even those with difficult people, should be an improvement in working relationships.

# Exercise 34: Confronting the Difficult Personality

🕒 5 to 10 minutes

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In this exercise, you will respond to the following questions about confronting difficult people.

1. Which of the following may be beneficial when confronting a difficult person?
  - A. Informing someone about the conversation.
  - B. Offering refreshments.
  - C. Speaking in low tones.
  - D. Escalating the issue to a higher authority.
  - E. None, it's not safe to confront difficult people.
  
2. Which of the following minimize emotional escalation?
  - A. Maintaining a position of power.
  - B. Using neutral tones and body language.
  - C. Directly pointing out where the other person is wrong.
  - D. Dramatic displays.
  - E. Rescheduling the meeting when feeling intimidated.



## Solution

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1. A. Informing someone about the conversation, C. Speaking in low tones and D. Escalate the issue to a higher authority
2. B. Using neutral tones and body language, and E. Rescheduling the meeting when feeling intimidated.

# Exercise 35: Personal Application for Confronting the Difficult Personality

 10 to 15 minutes

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In this exercise, you will consider the following questions.

1. It's beneficial in all aspects of our lives to be able to manage emotions. Consider a time when you confronted a difficult person and became emotional during the process. Analyze the dynamics and situation.
  - A. What could have been done to make that situation more successful?
  - B. Log your emotions throughout the day. When you recognize your emotional state, are you able to change it?
  - C. Practice emotion control:
    - i. What can you think about that gives you happy emotions?
    - ii. What can you think about that gives you sad emotions?
    - iii. Practice separating yourself from a situation to bring your emotions to a neutral state.

## Solution

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For this exercise, keep in mind what you have learned so far and consider your honest answers to these questions.



## 5.2. Negotiation Techniques

In the previous lesson we talked about negotiating boundaries. Here we'll address techniques and best practices for negotiation.

There are three parts of negotiation:

1. Process, or how negotiation takes place. The process of negotiation is three-fold:
  - A. Preparation.
  - B. Negotiation.
  - C. Conclusion.
2. Behavior, including the relationship of the individuals.
3. Substance, or what is being negotiated.

When entering into a conversation to talk about sensitive issues it is essential to be prepared. The more you know ahead of time, the better you can handle adversity.

### ❖ 5.2.1. Process: Know Your Resources

Think ahead about what alternative options are available should negotiations fail. Should an agreement not be reached with the difficult person, know in advance:

1. What alternative solutions might fulfill the needs.
2. What other steps can be taken.
3. What policies, laws, and constraints regulate the situation.
4. Who is available to offer support.

## ❖ 5.2.2. Process: Motivation

If possible, find out in advance what the other person's goal and underlying motivation are. Often, particularly with difficult personalities, what is said on the surface is only a part of what is desired.

Confrontation is more successful when the other person's motivation is understood and can be satisfied. If his or her motivation is:

1. To improve the situation, negotiations will focus on change.
2. Self-preservation, exhibited as a fear of change, negotiations will focus on the assurance that no harm will result.
3. Self-promotion, negotiations will focus on the other person's worth.

## ❖ 5.2.3. Concluding the Negotiations

At the end of the negotiation, there are two essential action steps to be taken:

1. A verbal summary within the meeting reiterating everything that was agreed upon.
2. A written summary sent to all interested parties.

The written recapitulation will insure all parties are in agreement and will form documentation should it be needed.

## ❖ 5.2.4. Behavior

Behavior includes:

1. Words.
2. Actions.
3. Relationship between the parties.

The use of each of these in negotiations is deeply influenced by personality and emotion.

## ❖ 5.2.5. Behavior: Negotiation Styles

Most people fall into one of five negotiating styles, and unless a person is a trained negotiator, these styles relate closely to his or her personality. Understanding one's self and the other party can be a tool in negotiations. The five styles are described here:

1. The accommodating person:
  - A. Is aware of other people's emotional states and non-verbal communication.
  - B. Enjoys helping other people.
  - C. Places value on relationships.
  - D. Tends to be emotionally sensitive.
2. The avoiding person:
  - A. Doesn't like conflict or negotiations.
  - B. Avoids confrontation, making it hard to get a commitment from him or her.
3. Difficult people are rarely collaborators. The collaborating person:
  - A. Finds pleasure in working with others.
  - B. Enjoys solving problems.
  - C. Is good at brainstorming.
4. The competing person:
  - A. Negotiates to win.
  - B. Is often a good negotiator.
  - C. May be heartless in his or her negotiations.
5. The compromising person:
  - A. Is eager to get the job done.
  - B. Rushes the process and thus make concessions easily.
  - C. Is eager to find what is equitable for both parties.

### ❖ 5.2.6. Behavior: Emotion in Negotiations

Emotions play a powerful role in negotiation. The decision to agree is in part dependent on emotional factors.

Positive emotions often facilitate the agreement process and help maximize gains for both parties. A positive emotional effect:

1. Increases confidence.
2. Produces a tendency to cooperate.
3. Increases the pleasure associated with the interactions.

4. Reduces contentious behavior and aggressive tactics.
5. Supports better decision making processes, including:
  - A. More flexible thinking.
  - B. Creative problem solving.
  - C. A respect for others' perspectives.
  - D. A willingness to take calculated risks.

Negative emotions can trigger intense and even irrational behavior, particularly in people who are predisposed to behave irrationally. Negative emotions can escalate conflict. A Negative emotional affect:

1. Increases the use of competitive strategies.
2. Reduces cooperation.
3. Decreases the level of trust.
4. Negatively affects judgment by:
  - A. Narrowing the focus of attention.
  - B. Changing the goal from agreement to retaliating.
  - C. Increasing the likelihood of errors.
  - D. Triggers self-centeredness.
  - E. Increases the probability of rejecting profitable offers.

### ❖ 5.2.7. Substance

Substance includes the desired goal and any related logistics. Many of these related factors are nonessential, and may be compromised during negotiations.

Depending on the circumstance, these may include the:

1. Who
2. What
3. When
4. Where
5. How

To know what can or cannot be compromised, one must understand the needs of both parties and be willing to sacrifice the non-essentials for the sake of the goal.

### ❖ 5.2.8. Substance Understanding Everyone's Needs

Negotiations should provide opportunity for both parties to fully present their desired outcomes and to fully understand each other's outcomes. To reach this point:

1. Invite the other party to present:
  - A. Information.
  - B. Ideas.
  - C. Positions.
2. Formulate the solution so that it includes the issues presented by both parties whenever possible.
3. Consider what can be traded so both parties feel they are receiving benefit.
4. Explore alternative outcomes acceptable to both parties. For example, a situation in which a person delivering reports disrupts the workflow and demeans staff may be resolved by:
  - A. Training in communication skills and attitude control.
  - B. Delivering the reports through a different person, thus avoiding the negative interactions with the staff.

### ❖ 5.2.9. Substance: Win-win or Win-lose

A successful agreement is not one which achieves great results for one party. A successful agreement:

1. Achieves good results.
2. Maintains a working relationship with the other party.
3. Leaves an open door for future negotiations if the end result was less than the desired result.

In a win-lose situation, particularly with a difficult personality, the other party will fulfill their part:

1. Uncooperatively.
2. Legalistically.

A win-lose agreement should only be considered is when there is no future relationship with the other party.

Value  
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# Exercise 36: Negotiation Techniques

🕒 5 to 20 minutes

In this exercise, you will respond to the following questions about negotiation.

1. The three parts of negotiation are
  - A. Preparation
  - B. Negotiation
  - C. Substance
  - D. Conclusion
  - E. Process
  - F. Behavior
  
2. True or False:
  - A. Negotiations should always conclude with a written contract.
  - B. A successful agreement maintains a working relationship.
  - C. Negative emotions can trigger irrational behavior.
  - D. During negotiations parties should present information, ideas, and positions.
  
3. Match the following:
  - A. The accommodator
  - B. The avoider
  - C. The collaborator
  - D. The competitor
  - E. The compromiser
  - F. Likes working with others.
  - G. Are good negotiators.
  - H. Is aware of non-verbal communication.
  - I. Wants to find equity for both parties.
  - J. Avoids confrontation.



## Solution

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1. The three parts of negotiation are:
  - A. C. Substance
  - B. E. Process
  - C. F. Behavior
  
2. True or False:
  - A. Negotiations should always conclude with a written contract. False
  - B. A successful agreement maintains a working relationship. True
  - C. Negative emotions can trigger irrational behavior. True
  - D. During negotiations parties should present information, ideas, and positions. True
  
3. The answers are as follows:
  - A. A. The accommodator and H. Is aware of non-verbal communication
  - B. B. The avoider and J. Avoids confrontation
  - C. C. The collaborator and F. Likes working with others
  - D. D. The competitor and G. Are good negotiators
  - E. E. The compromiser and I. Wants to find equity for both parties

# Exercise 37: Personal Application for Negotiation Techniques

🕒 10 to 15 minutes

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In this exercise, you will...

1. Reading through the five negotiating styles, which one fits your personality the most?
  - A. Has your negotiating style limited your ability to successfully negotiate?
  - B. Write down your negotiating strengths and weaknesses.
    - i. What can you do to strengthen the weaker aspects and build win-win negotiating skills?

## Solution

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Using what you've learned in this section, figure out which of the styles fits your personality the most and consider the questions. Think about how this affects past performance and how you'll use this information in the future.



### 5.3. Mediation

In general, children are discouraged from tattling on other children. Parents do not want children to run to them every time another child does something he or she perceives as wrong. The reason for this is to teach the children:

1. Not to be moral judge and jury of other children.
2. To communicate with their peers.
3. To resolve issues between the two parties.
4. To find ways that to make both parties happy; in short: negotiate.

When the situation cannot be worked out between the two children, parents will intervene.

The same rules apply to adults. Adults should try to resolve issues between each other directly. However, there are times when issues just cannot be resolved between two parties.

A third-party mediator is needed when all attempts to work directly with the other party have failed, regardless of whether the barrier to resolution is caused by:

1. A personality conflict.
2. An abuse of power.
3. Selfishness.
4. A difficult personality.
5. Any other situation in which the two parties are unable to find a win-win solution.

#### ❖ 5.3.1. Choosing a Mediator

Before confronting a person that you know will be challenging to communicate with, one should research what the company's policies and procedures regarding conflict are, and whether there is a channel for mediation.

A mediator may be:

1. A peer or colleague.
2. A supervisor.
3. An external third party.
4. The organization's trained mediator, often located in one of these:
  - A. Human Resources Department.
  - B. Ethics Department.
  - C. Ombudsman Program.

Formal mediators are trained to handle difficult situations. Mediators are trained to:

1. Be neutral and impartial.
2. Keep all things said in confidentiality.
3. Provide a safe environment.
4. Help check emotions and reduce outbursts in the conversations.
5. Facilitate discussions toward resolution without detrimentally impacting personnel records.
6. Help identify and reframe issues.
7. Provide a resources such as:
  - A. Applicable policies and procedures.
  - B. A list of counselors.
  - C. Educational information on communication.
  - D. Other resources, as needed.

Many organizations have no official form of mediation. In organizations that do not provide mediators, a colleague may be able to do the mediation. This person should:

1. Be agreed upon by the two parties.
2. Strive to remain neutral.
3. Be able to facilitate discussions.
4. Put out every effort to keep communication open.
5. Not be decision makers.



## Exercise 38: Mediation

🕒 15 to 25 minutes

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In this exercise, you will respond to the following questions about mediation.

1. Which of the following is true?
  - A. Mediators can stop people from being difficult.
  - B. Maintain confidentiality.
  - C. Mediators are trained decision-makers.
  - D. Mediators are neutral.
2. True or False:
  - A. It is acceptable to ask a friend to be a mediator.
  - B. A trained mediator must always be used in difficult situations.
  - C. Formal mediators are trained to handle difficult situations.
  - D. When a trained mediator is used, the issue is noted in the personnel records.
  - E. Mediators provide resources.
  - F. Mediators should be agreed upon by the two parties.
  - G. Mediators should be friendly people.

Evaluation  
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## Solution

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1. B. Maintain confidentiality and D. Mediators are neutral.
2. The answers are as follows:
  - A. It is acceptable to ask a friend to be a mediator. False
  - B. A trained mediator must always be used in difficult situations. False
  - C. Formal mediators are trained to handle difficult situations. True
  - D. When a trained mediator is used, the issue is noted in the personnel records. False
  - E. Mediators provide resources. True
  - F. Mediators should be agreed upon by the two parties. True
  - G. Mediators should be friendly people. False

# Exercise 39: Personal Application

 5 to 10 minutes

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In this exercise, consider the situations you are facing with difficult people at work. What would need to take place that would cause you to seek mediation?



## 5.4. Applying Formal Consequences

In those rare situations when all resources have been expended and no resolution has been found, formal consequences may need to be applied. Formal consequences take place when control is relinquished and the situation is handed over to another who is in authority.

Applying formal consequences is similar to enforcing one's boundaries, but at a higher, more intense level. Formal consequences use the systems that have been put in place to address unbearable circumstances.

Most organizations have a written policy that addresses the formal process for problems. The policy may direct employees to:

1. Follow a complaint process with the Human Resources Department.
2. Use an ombudsman program.
3. Follow a grievance process.

If none of these are available, the first formal consequence becomes the other party's supervisor. From there, the issue is escalated through the supervisory chain of command.

Sometimes personalities are so intense and difficult that none of these steps resolve problems. In those situations, there may be an outside resource, which may include:

1. Pursuing the issue through the judicial system.
2. Filing formal complaints with accrediting or certifying agencies.
3. Seeking external mediation services.
4. Seeking assistance from labor advocacy organizations.

## ❖ 5.4.1. Documentation

Because situations can escalate to these levels, it is wise to document steps that have been taken. Documentation demonstrates to others that you've done everything possible to resolve the situation and you've followed all stated processes. Documentation should include:

1. Times and dates of every interaction in which negative behavior is demonstrated. Interactions may be:
  - A. Phone calls.
  - B. Formal meetings.
  - C. Casual meetings in the hallway.
  - D. Emails and other written communications.
2. A summary of the inappropriate behavior that took place during those interactions.
3. Witnesses who have seen the person's inappropriate behavior.
4. An itemization of things done to resolve the situation, including:
  - A. Boundaries and consequences that have been communicated and enforced.
  - B. Compromises.
  - C. Every attempt to resolve the situation.
  - D. The process followed to find resolution.

Documentation is very time consuming, but it can be the best defense when outside assistance is solicited.

# Exercise 40: Applying Formal Consequences

 10 to 15 minutes

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In this exercise, you will respond to the following questions about formal consequences.

1. Internal or External?
  - A. Accrediting or certifying agencies.
  - B. Labor advocacy organizations.
  - C. Human Resources Department.
  - D. Contractual mediation services.
  - E. Grievance process.
  - F. Ombudsman program.
  - G. Going to court.
  
2. Which of the following are records that should be documented?
  - A. Times and dates of all interactions.
  - B. A list of attempts at resolution.
  - C. Irrational text messages.
  - D. Times and dates of all interactions in which negative behavior was demonstrated.
  - E. Boundaries communicated.
  - F. Results of boundaries.
  - G. Times when you've compromised.
  - H. All of the above.

*Evaluation Copy*

## Solution

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1. Internal or External?
  - A. Accrediting or certifying agencies: External
  - B. Labor advocacy organizations: External
  - C. Human Resources Department: Internal
  - D. Contractual mediation services: External
  - E. Grievance process: Internal
  - F. Ombudsman program: Internal
  - G. Going to court: External
2. H. All of the above.

**Evaluation  
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## Conclusion

In this lesson, you have learned

- How to confront a difficult person.
- Techniques for successful negotiations.
- When mediation is needed.
- How and when to applying formal consequences.