



Dealing with People & Difficult Situations

Sonya Meekel MBA, MSc, M.A,
BScEng, Dip Eng, P.G Dip.Proj Mang, P.G
Dip Ed, C.Eng, M.I.E.I.



CMG Training



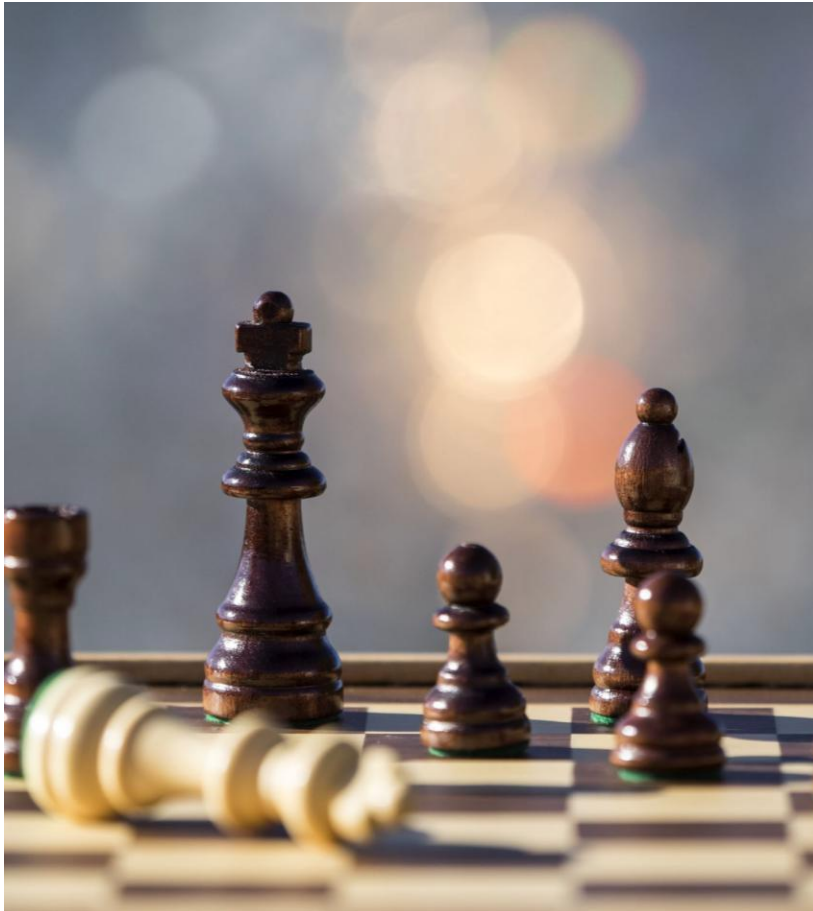
So...what are your challenges?



Remember its all about being “Self aware”



What makes someone “Difficult”?



Their stuff.

- Their history, personal mythology, perceptions, biases, experiences, psychosocial development/history

My stuff.

- My history, personal mythology, perceptions, biases, experiences, psychosocial history/development

Our stuff.

- Our shared history, relational patterns of interaction, established patterns of behaviour, expectations etc.

Why Does Communication Go Wrong



Communication breakdown

Lost in translation

- This doesn't necessarily mean a language barrier, but rather how the reader interprets certain words, phrases or sentence structures.

When you're cooking and
the recipe says
**"Chill in the fridge for
one hour"**





We are all guilty of this....

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NFvEdxKZTZU>

Communication Breakdown

Information Flow

- Without a streamlined flow, overload of information can occur if too much is being communicated



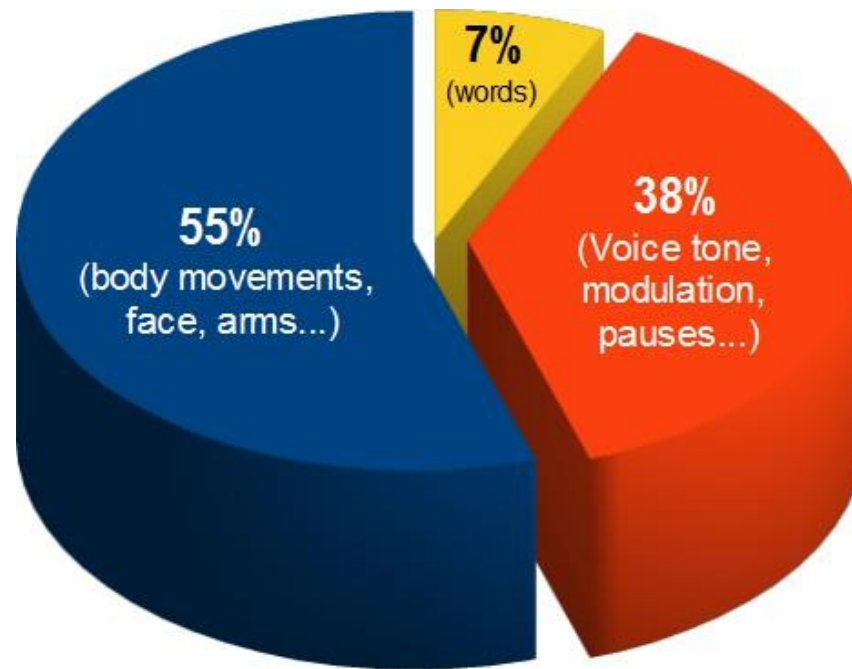
Communication

What are the three elements of communication?



Communication

What are the three elements of communication?





Collaboration

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f60dheI4ARg>

Collaborative Communication Skills

The Ability To Get On With People

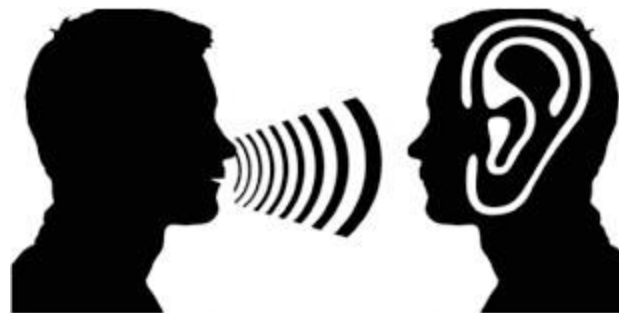
- The starting point for an effective collaborator. A people person will have the capacity to work well with a wide range of individuals, is a natural communicator and knows how to get the best out of others.



Collaborative Communication Skills

Being Able To Listen

- This ability is especially important in situations when there may be a difference of opinion or even conflict



Collaborative Communication Skills

Effective Organiser And Project Manager

- Good organisational skills are essential for collaborators. People will be required to share information and resources, use online project management tools, collaborate and edit shared documents as well as organising files and data.



Collaborative Communication Skills



Commitment And Enthusiasm

- Effective collaborators must be committed and enthused. They should be willing and able to invest the necessary time and energy to completing the tasks on time and fulfilling the expectations of their role within the project.

Communication- Your Style





Confidence

- <https://www.youtube.com/shorts/yOTCzuaPIIU>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p6rMMyeXXwI>

Building Confidence



Develop a Leadership Mindset

- Shift from individual contributor to leader – Your success is now measured by how well your team performs....Remember Jack!
- Embrace a growth mindset – Expect to learn and improve over time rather than aiming for perfection right away.

Building Confidence

Know Your Strengths and Weaknesses

- Leverage what you're good at while actively working on areas that need improvement.
- Seek feedback from peers, mentors, and even your team to understand where you can grow.



Building Confidence

Celebrate Small Wins

- Acknowledge progress in both yourself and your team.
- Boost morale by recognising individual and team achievements.



Trust Yourself

- You were chosen for this role for a reason – believe in your abilities.
- Keep learning, adapting, and growing – confidence comes with experience



Building Confidence



Seek Mentorship and Training

- Find a mentor who has been in your shoes before.
- Invest in leadership training – workshops, books, and online courses can provide valuable insights.

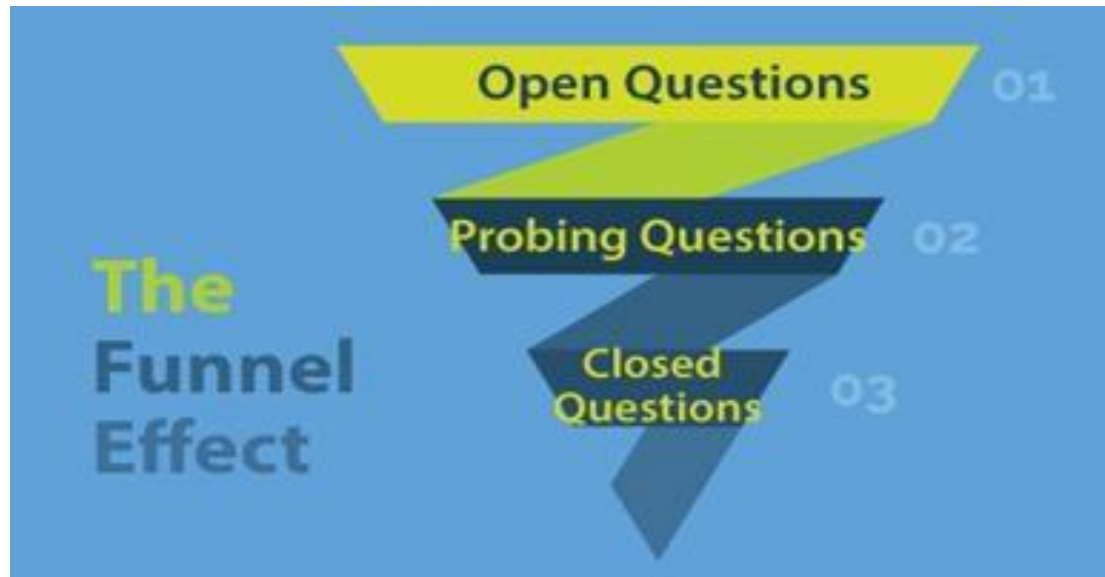
Building Confidence

Seek Feedback and Keep Improving

- Ask your team for feedback – Encourage, “Is there anything I can improve in how I communicate?”
- Learn from mentors or senior managers – Observe and adopt their best communication practices.
- Take communication courses – Books, workshops, or online training can enhance your skills.

I am open to feedback
and always seek
to improve

Listening – The Funnel Effect



Purpose of Good Listening Skills

- Ensure understanding
- Gather missing information
- Examine assumptions, expectations, values
- Explore the issues



Good Listening Skills

- React to the words, not to the person and/or their manner.
- Create a need to listen: concentrate and try to understand the problem.
- Forgive and ignore any irritating mannerisms on the others part.
- Be flexible and don't get distracted by irrelevant details.
- Stay calm – don't interrupt.



Questioning



Types of Questions

- Closed questions
- Open questions
- Clarifying questions
- Hypothetical questions
- Challenging Questions
- Confronting Questions
- Appreciative Questions



Closed Questions

- Response is limited to “yes” “no” and “maybe”
- Focus on specific information
- Restricts the discussion
- Examples:
 - “Do you want to meet?”
 - “Will you supply the water?”



Open Questions

- Requires an answer other than “yes”, “no” or “maybe”
- Allows freedom to answer in many ways
- Encourages person answering to explore their thoughts and feelings
- Keeps people talking and bringing more information
- Usually use what, how, why, when, where
- Examples:
 - “What do you think about establishing a schedule?”
 - “How could you help in bringing objective criteria to value this land?”



Clarifying Questions

- Explore what has been said to gain more information
- Promote a clearer understanding
- Example:
 - “What specifically do you mean when you say line A didn’t work?”



Hypothetical Questions

- Focus the person on potential situation, scenarios or outcomes
- Introduce the person to what might happen in a particular proposal on the table
- Help the person explore the consequences of proposals
- Examples:
 - “What if your manager cannot attend the meeting?”
 - “What will you do if there is not enough resources or support for your project?”



Challenging Questions

- What's the evidence for this?
- What makes you think this?
- Could that be viewed in another way?
- Is that logical?
- Is that helpful?
- Is that an interpretation or a fact?

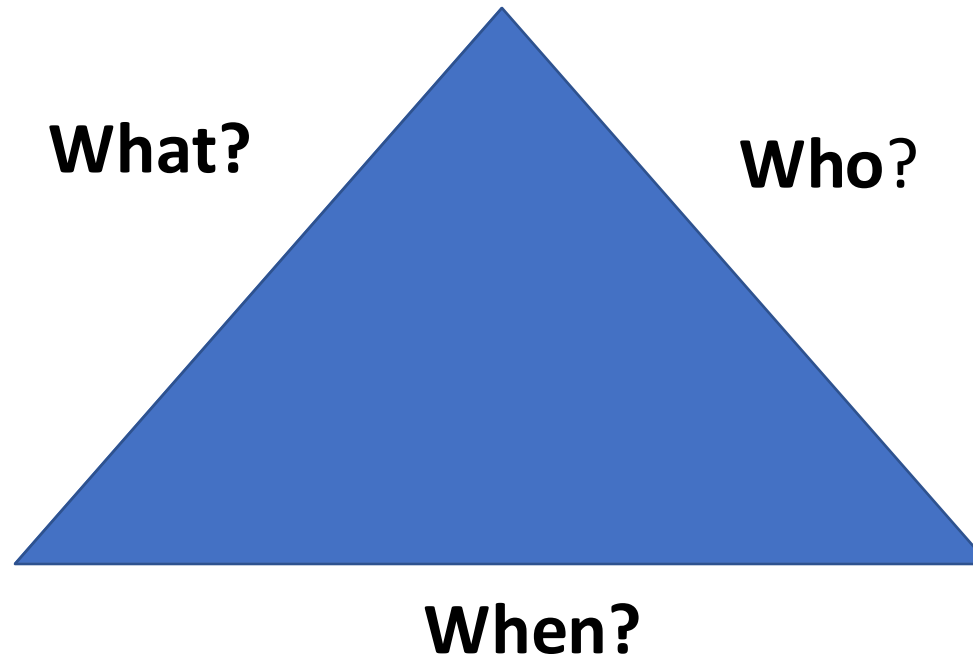


Confronting Questions

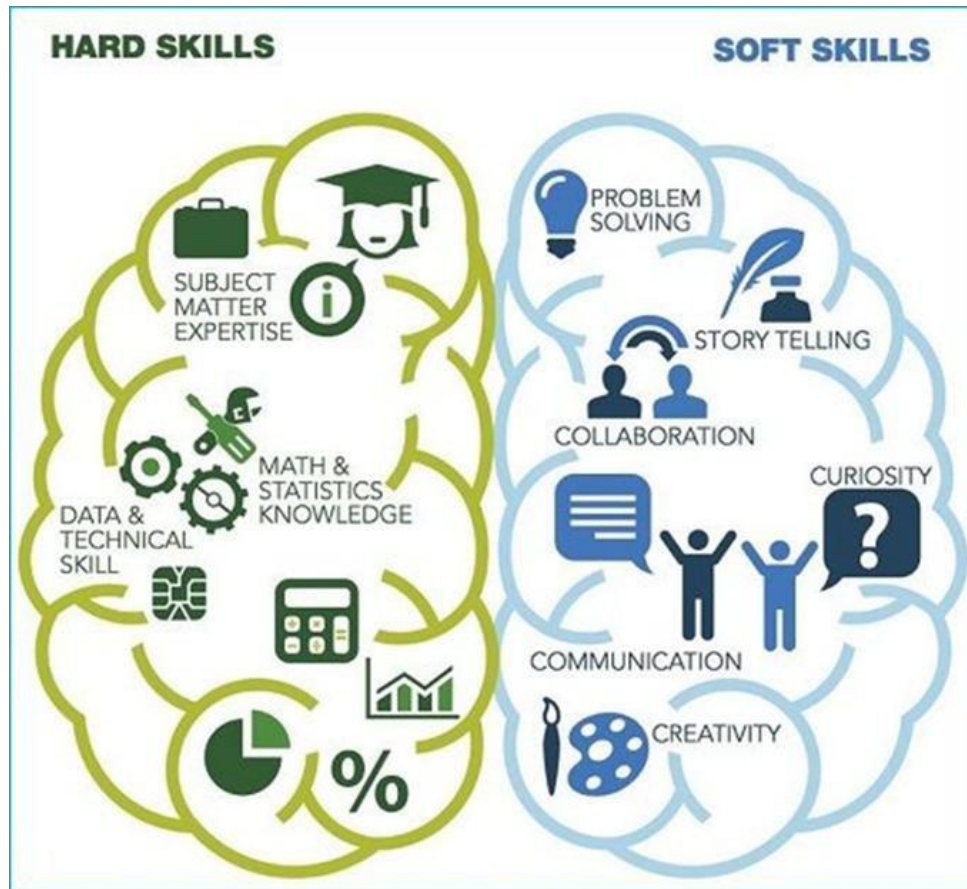
- Can you help me here? On the one hand you say ... but on the other hand you state ...
- You claim you ... but you ...
- You claim you're ... yet you ...



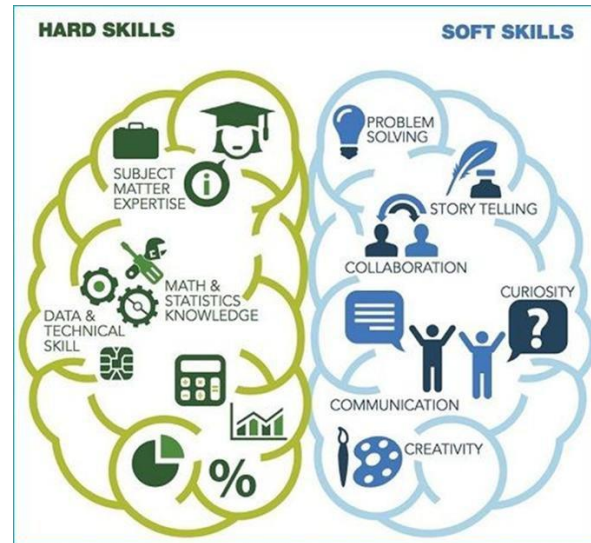
When listening remember - The Action Triangle



- Precisely what is going to be done
- Who will take responsibility?
- When the action should be completed.



The Skills
you will
need



Left Brain Functions

Facts—storage and retrieval
 Abstract concepts
 Math & science
 Processes & systems

Right Brain Functions

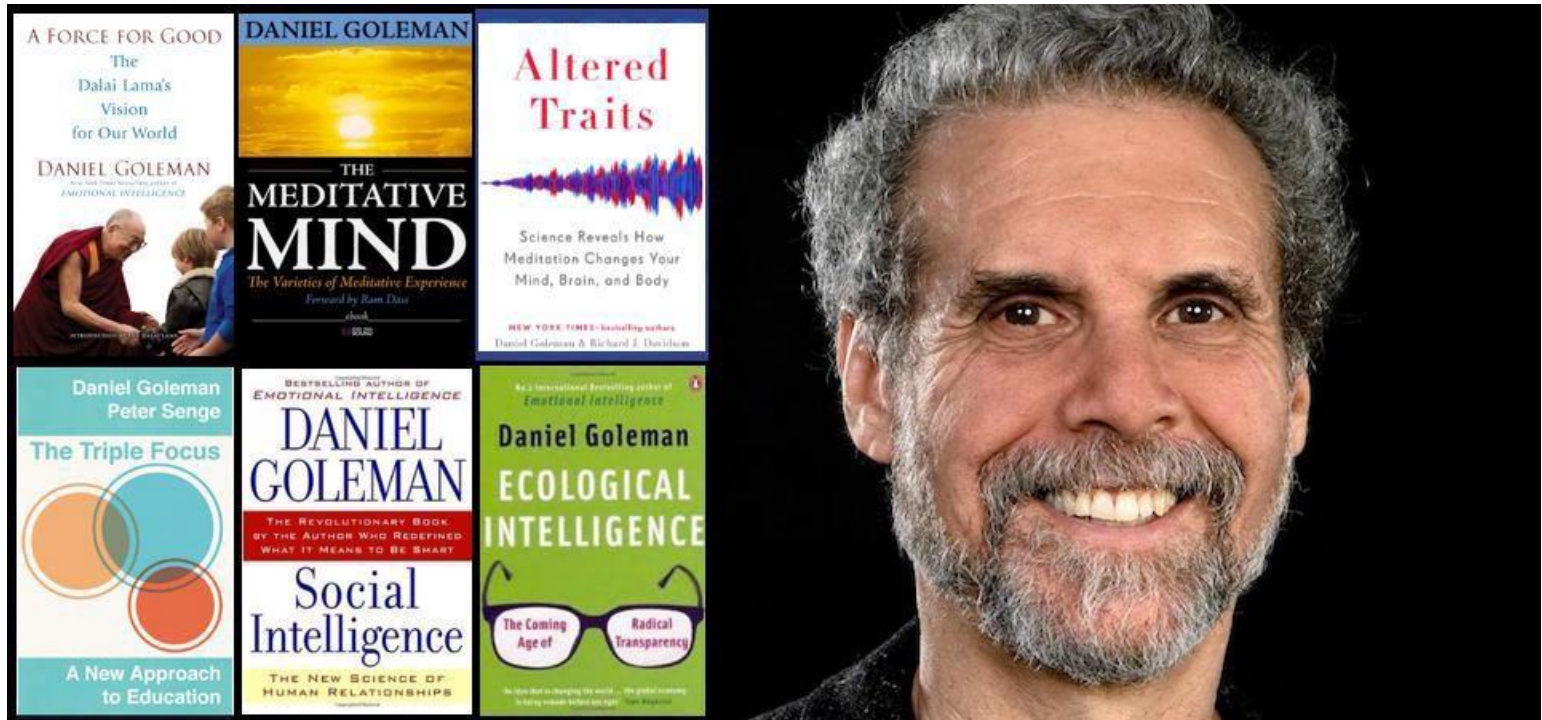
Emotions—storage and retrieval
 Physical-environment perception
 Language, humanities, & history
 Creativity & artistic expression

SOCIAL SKILLS **SELF-AWARENESS** **SELF-REGULATION** **EMPATHY** **MOTIVATION**



EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

Short introduction



- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FTmPyhfY7FQ>

EI- THE 5 CRUCIAL COMPETENCIES



**Strong, Healthy
and Effective
Relationships**

**The driving purpose of
emotional intelligence
and life in general!**



Effective Relationship

Empathy

Social - Motivation

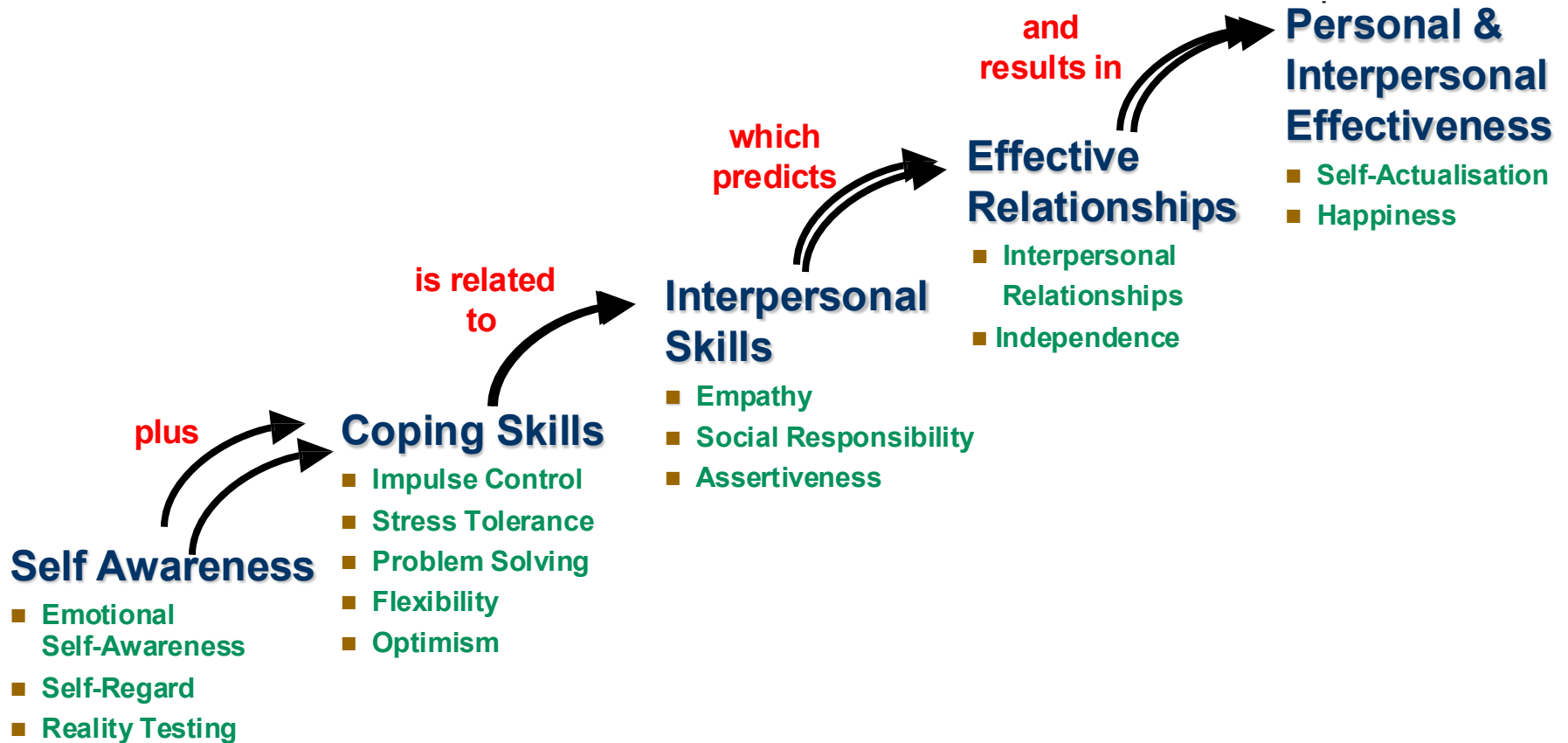
Self - Regulation

Self - Awareness

EI- Testwhat do you think you are?



THE FOUNDATION



Ask yourself 2 very important Questions....



Your role is crucial!



Positive Intelligence

- <https://www.positiveintelligence.com/saboteurs/>

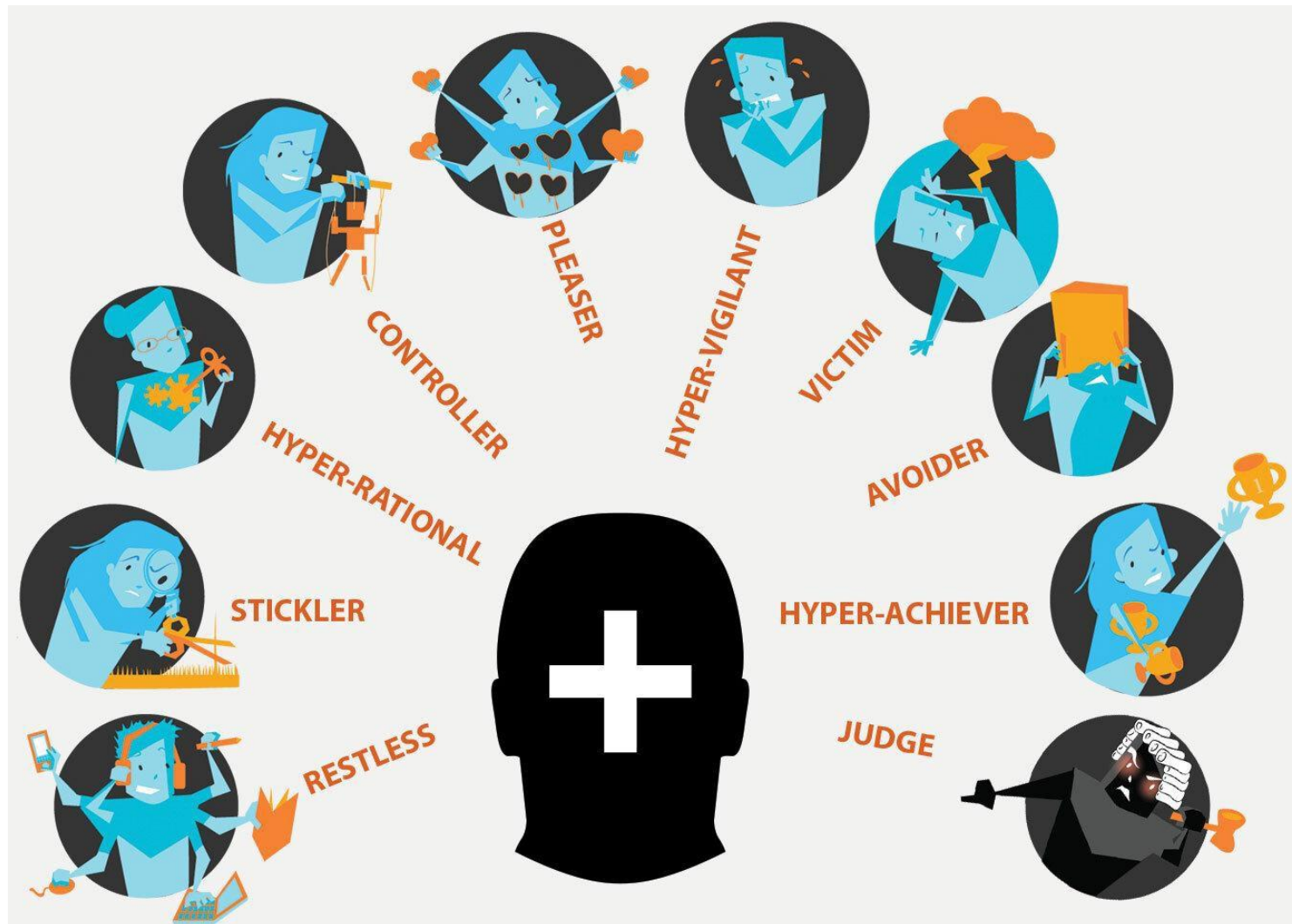


Meet the Judge

- The Judge is the universal Saboteur that afflicts everyone. It is the one that beats you up repeatedly over mistakes or shortcomings, warns you obsessively about future risks, wakes you up in the middle of the night worrying, gets you fixated on what is wrong with others or your life, etc. Your Judge activates your other Saboteurs, causes much of your stress and unhappiness, reduces your effectiveness, and harms your relationships

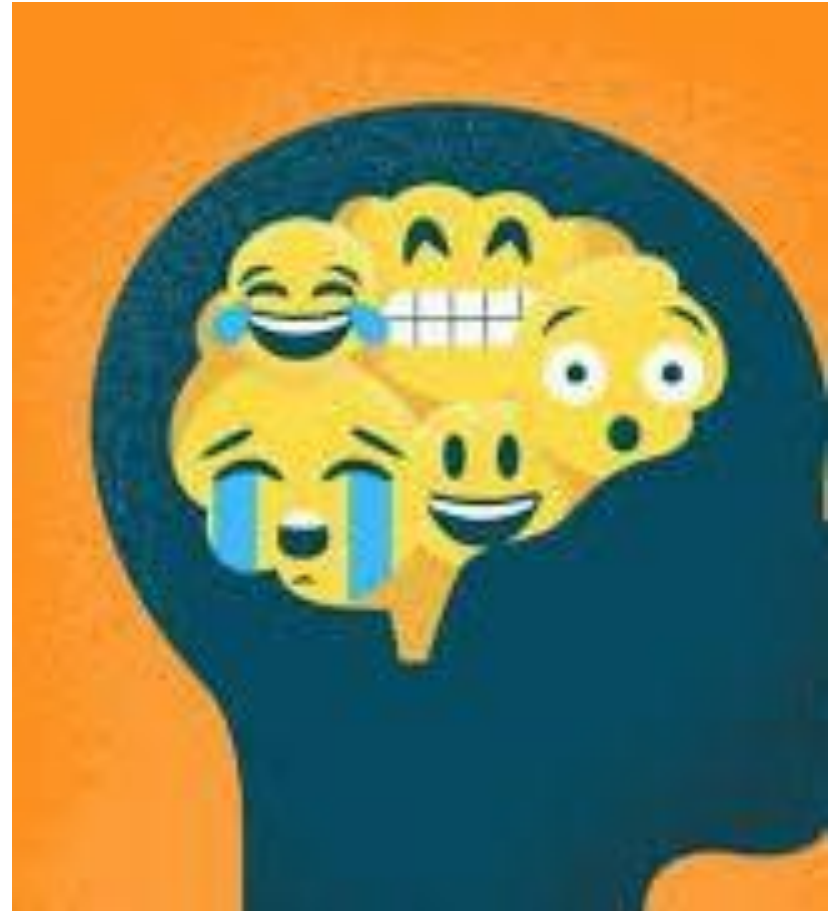


The Accomplice Saboteurs



Do not forget!

- Emotionally intelligent people are quick to forgive, but that doesn't mean that they forget. Forgiveness requires letting go of what's happened so that you can move on. It doesn't mean you'll give a wrongdoer another chance.
- Smart people are unwilling to be bogged down unnecessarily by others' mistakes, so they let them go quickly and are assertive in protecting themselves from future harm



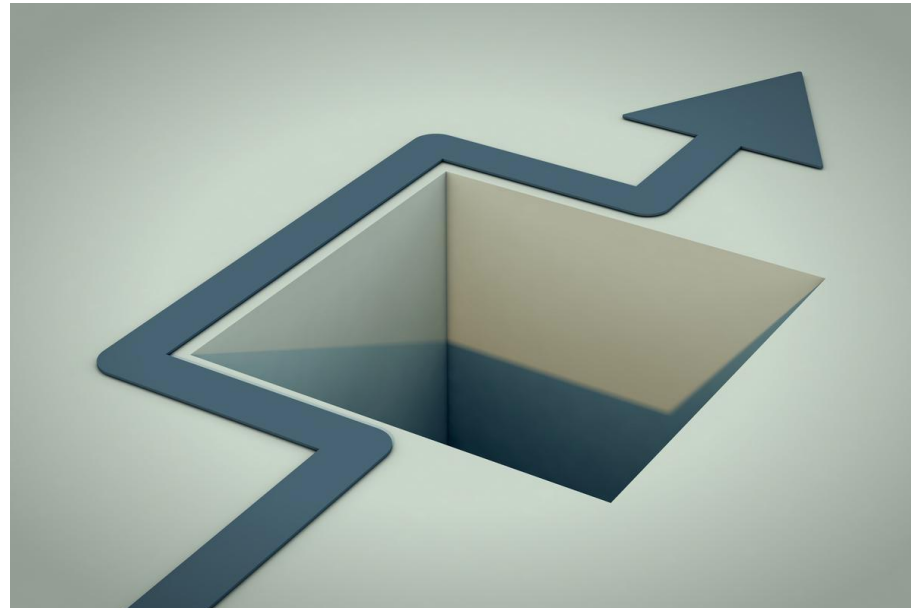
8 Power Moves Of Highly Emotionally Intelligent People



Tip



- Most difficult situations can be avoided, so they should be avoided “if” planned properly.



Drama

- Things are not as bad as bad as they seem
- Beware of drama kings/ queens



Do NOT Ignore!

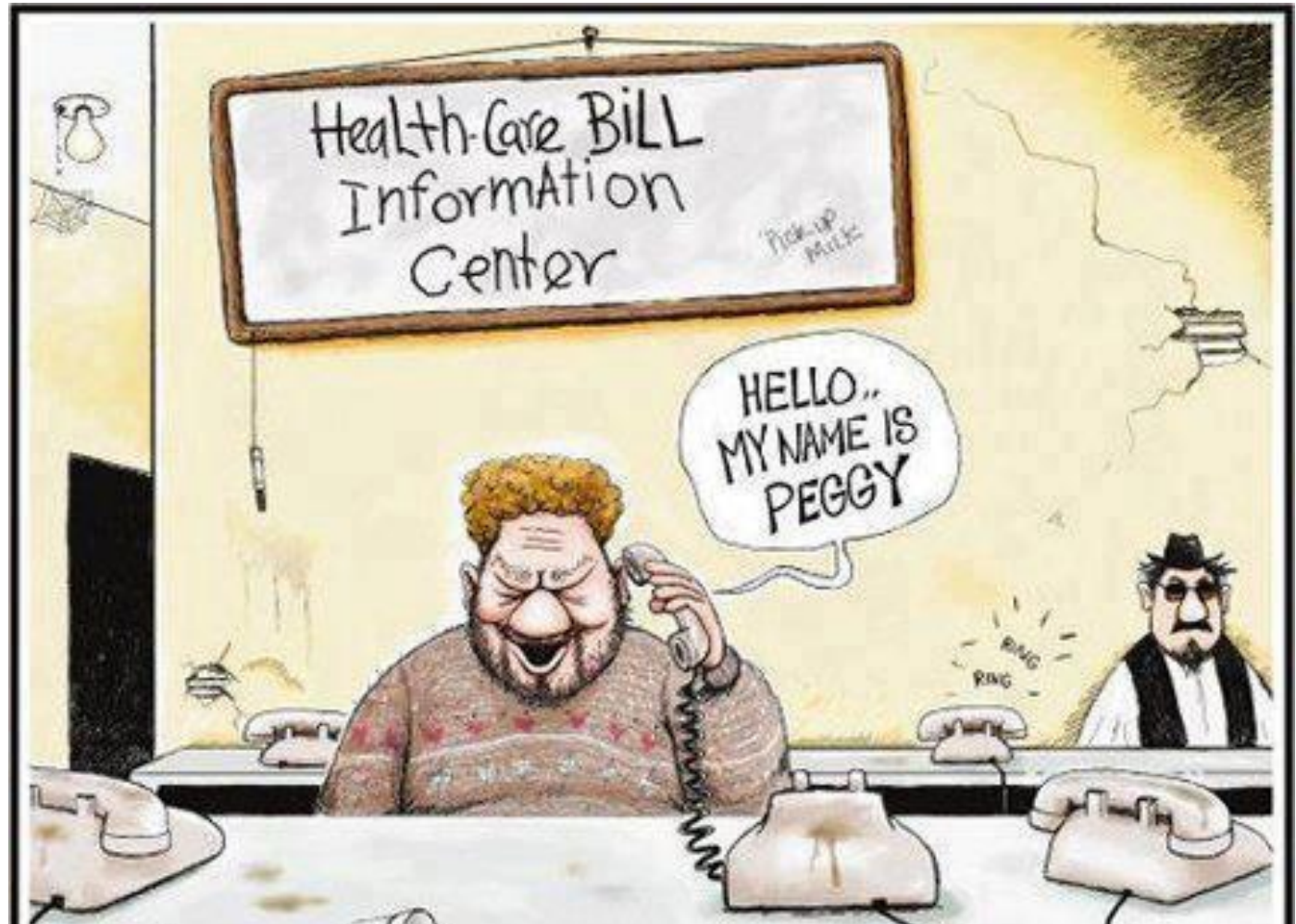
- Don't wish the problem away or ignore it.
- It is still there!
- Address it professionally





"Your bad attitude was starting to affect the others. That's much better."

No Deception!



Acknowledge That You Can't Control Other People's Behaviour

- Remember that you can only control yourself and your own behaviour, so do your best to stay calm.
- Tip:
- The LADDER mnemonic is an effective way of assertively resolving problems.



LADDER

- ☞ **L** – Look at your rights and what you want, and understand your feelings about the situation
- ☞ **A** – Arrange a meeting with the other person to discuss the situation
- ☞ **D** – Define the problem specifically
- ☞ **D** – Describe your feelings so that the other person fully understands how you feel about the situation
- ☞ **E** – Express what you want clearly and concisely
- ☞ **R** – Reinforce the other person by explaining the mutual benefits of adopting the site of action you are suggesting.

Shield and Sword Always.....lets try



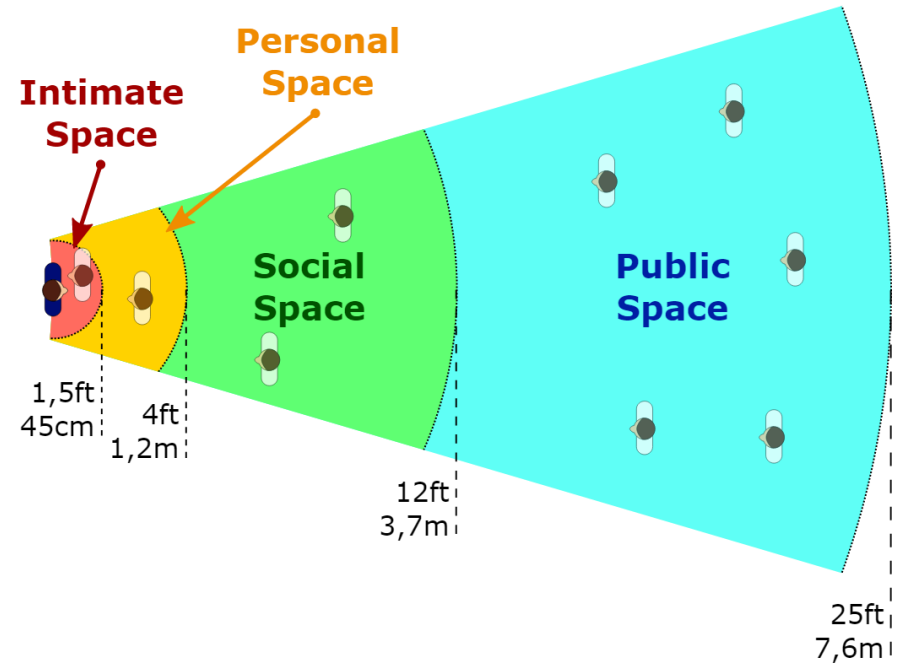
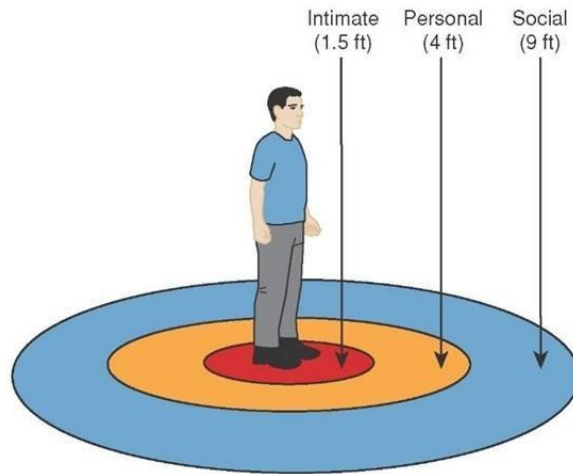
Remember with Boundaries



Dance Space...



Proxemics



Break Time



Leaders and followers

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DZkRF7hQd3I>





The Mountain

Emotional Vampires



Emotional Vampires

- Some people might be more susceptible to being around emotional vampires because we can be drawn to warmth, compassion and bright energy.
- Emotional vampires feast on these qualities to satiate themselves while leaving the other person feeling sick and drained.



Reframe Triggers into Teachers

- I know you don't want to hear it, but the people who trigger you the most are those who also have the most to teach you about yourself and life and offer the most valuable lessons in leadership



Hold up a Mirror

- Sometimes people just do not realise how they are 'showing up.' Sometimes one thing you can do is to let them know the impact they are having :
- “When you talk like this (or about ‘.....’) I can’t help but feel offended, etc.” - and then encourage them to focus on what they can do versus what they can't



Sometimes when you are angry with someone, it helps to sit down and think about the problem.



Assertiveness vs Aggression

Communication Style

Assertiveness:

- Clear, direct, and respectful.
- Expresses opinions, needs, or boundaries without dismissing others.
- Uses "I" statements ("I feel...", "I need...").



Aggression:

- Hostile, forceful, or disrespectful.
- Dismisses, interrupts, or dominates others.
- Often uses blaming or "You" statements ("You never...", "You should...").

Assertiveness vs Aggression

Body Language

Assertiveness:

- Open posture, steady eye contact, calm tone.
- Relaxed gestures that match words.

Aggression:

- Tense posture, glaring, pointing, or invading personal space.
- Raised voice, harsh or threatening tone.



Assertiveness vs Aggression

Emotional Impact

Assertiveness:

- Builds trust, respect, and cooperation.
- Encourages dialogue and problem-solving.

Aggression:

- Creates fear, resentment, or defensiveness.
- Shuts down communication.





Faces of
Anger



The Four Angry “I”s

- 1. **Injustice:** A rule of conduct, a cherished belief or instrumental goal is being threatened or abused; you see yourself (also others with whom you are psychologically dependent or connected) as a victim of an injustice, unfairness or disloyalty.
 - 2. **Injury:** You feel disrespected, discarded or ignored; there’s a sense of insult and humiliation along with injury -- often psychological, at times also physical.
-



The Four Angry “I”s

- 3. **Invasion:** You perceive your freedom, autonomy, boundary and personal as being constricted, disrupted or violated; your identity and bodily and/or psychological integrity are being threatened or attacked.
 - 4. **Intention:** There is an energy and determination to do something about the above injustices, injuries and invasions; you are ready – reflexively and/or purposefully – to challenge the status quo.
-



A Multifaceted Model

- **“Purposeful”**: when anger expression is intentional, with a significant degree of consideration or calculation; there is also a significant degree of self-control.
- **“Spontaneous”**: When anger expression is immediate with little premeditation or planning; there is little-moderate self-control.



A Multifaceted Model

- **“Constructive”**: when anger expression affirms and acknowledges one’s integrity and boundary without objectively intending to threaten or violate another’s integrity or appropriate boundary.
 - **“Destructive”**: when anger expression defensively projects and rigidly fortifies one’s vulnerable identity and boundary by intending to threaten or violate another’s integrity and appropriate boundary (whether the intention is conscious or not).
-

A Multifaceted Model

	Constructive	Destructive
Purposeful		
Spontaneous		

A Multifaceted Model

	Constructive	Destructive
Purposeful	Assertion. 	Hostility. 
Spontaneous	Passion. 	Rage. 

So what ...



- **Neutral language:** Choose words that describe observable behaviours and effects vs your interpretations of a person's intentions and effects.
 - “Yes, and...” instead of “Yes, but...”
 - **Not-Your-Typical-I-Statements:** I’ve noticed, I’m concerned, I need your help, I want to make sure I understand, I want to be able to help you, etc.
 - **Validate and move on:** “I understand you feel (think) that way. Others have felt (thought) that way, too. What I’ve found is...”
-



And....

- **Listen, Reflect and Probe:** “What I’m hearing you say is...Does that sound accurate? Is there anything else?”
 - **Blend:** Verbal and non-verbal communication that is similar to the other person’s
 - **Contrast:** Verbal and non-verbal communication that is different from the other person’s
 - The goal is to stay calm, show understanding and empathy (when appropriate) and find out how you can help so you can move the conversation from problems to solutions.
-



Use the 'L.E.A.R.N.' method

Step-by-step model :

- Listen carefully
- Empathise and Understand the situation
- Acknowledge
- Resolve the issue
- Now act immediately

Manage the issue, not the person

Role play



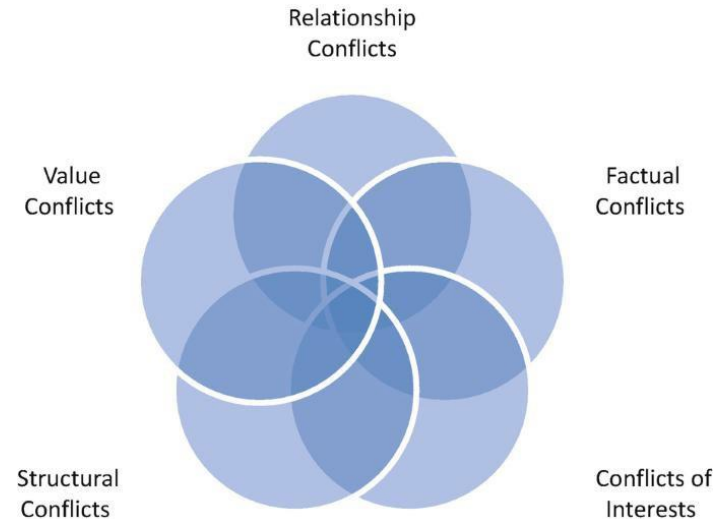
What is Conflict Resolution



- Conflict resolution can be defined as the informal or formal process that two or more parties use to find a peaceful solution to their dispute.

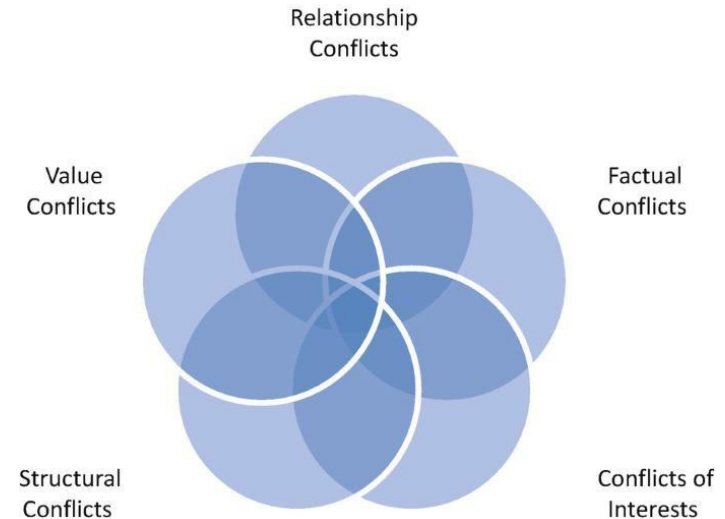
What Causes Conflict?

- **Information/ Factual** conflicts arise when people have different or insufficient information, or disagree over what data/fact is relevant.
- Allowing sufficient time to be heard, in a respectful environment facilitated by a neutral person can allow parties to clear up information disparities.



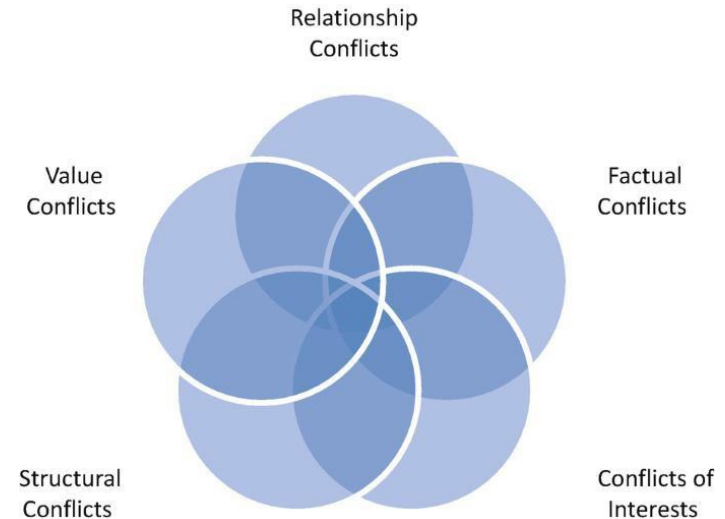
What Causes Conflict?

- **Values conflicts** are created when people have perceived or actual incompatible belief systems.
- Where a person or group tries to impose its values on others or claims exclusive right to a set of values, disputes arise.
- While values may be non-negotiable, they can be discussed, and people can learn to live peacefully and coherently alongside each other.



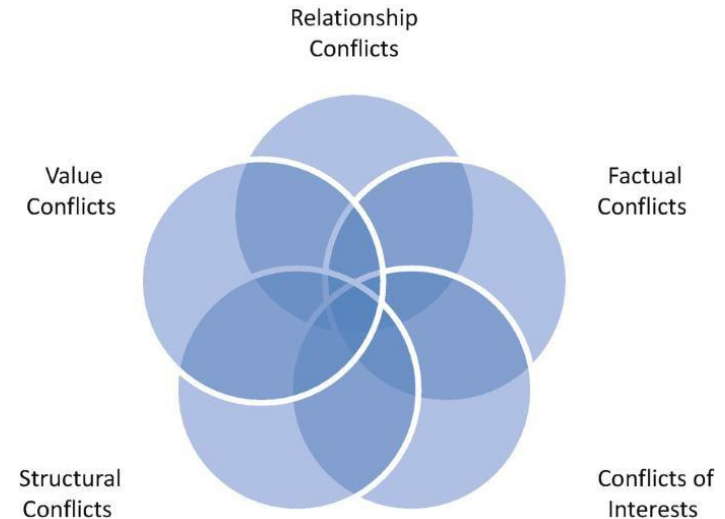
What Causes Conflict?

- **Conflicts of interests** are caused by competition over perceived or actual incompatible needs. Such conflicts may occur over issues of money, resources, or time.
- Parties often mistakenly believe that in order to satisfy their own needs, those of their opponent must be sacrificed.
- We need to help identify ways to dovetail interests and create opportunities for mutual gain.



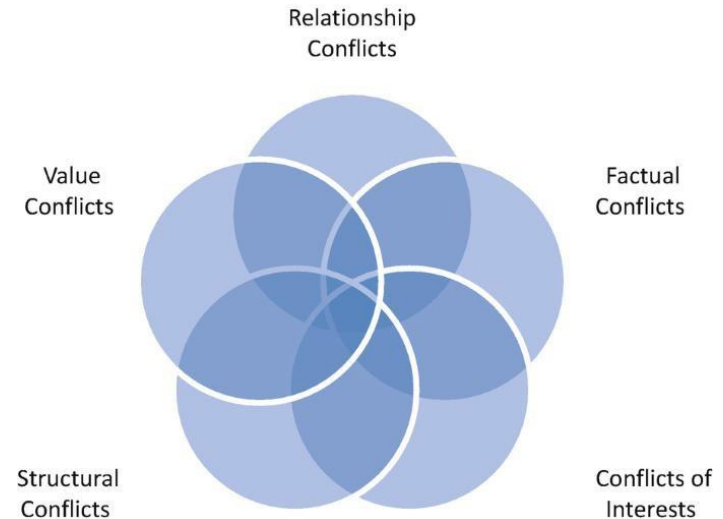
What Causes Conflict?

- **Relationship conflicts** occur when there are misperceptions, strong negative emotions, or poor communication.
- One person may distrust the other and believe that the other person's actions are motivated by malice or an intent to harm the other.
- Relationship conflicts may be addressed by allowing each person uninterrupted time to talk through the issues and respond to the other person's concerns.

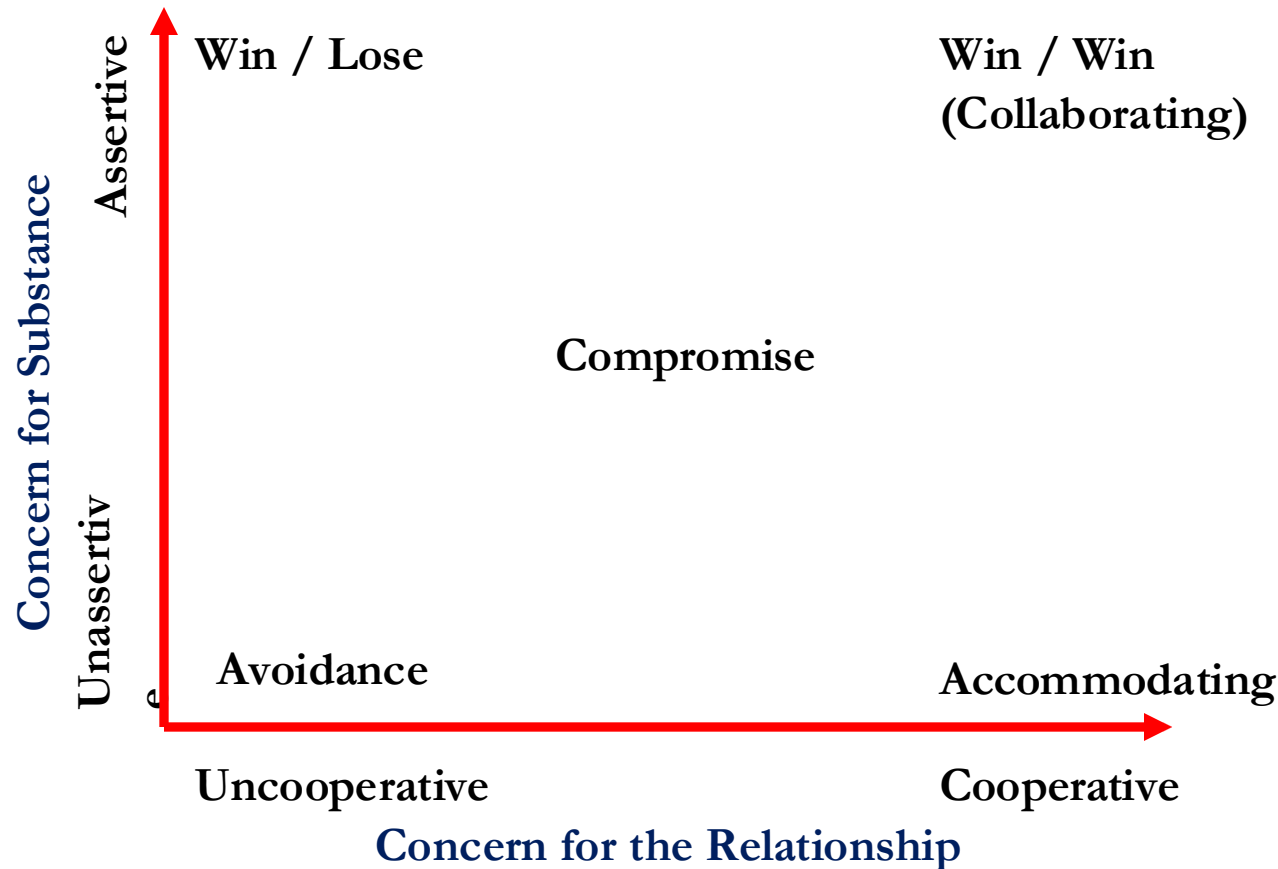


What Causes Conflict?

- **Structural conflicts** are caused by oppressive behaviours exerted on others. Limited resources or opportunity as well as organisation structures often promote conflict behaviour.
- The parties may well benefit from mediation since the forum will help neutralize the power imbalance.



The Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument



Competing-The goal is to Win



Behaviours

- Monopolises the conversation
- Not Listening
- Attacking

Good Or Bad

- Stands up for what they believe in
- Stands up for themselves and the team
- Can be seen as insensitive

Competing-The goal is to Win



Competing is effective:

- When quick decisive action is needed
- When unpopular action must be taken on important issues
- When the issue is vital and the right course is clear
- To protect against people who take advantage of non-competitive behaviour

Accommodating – The goal is to yield



Behaviours

- Sacrificing
- Bends the rules
- Wants to appeal to others

Good Or Bad

- Allows others to get “their way”
- Tolerates decisions they don’t agree with
- Don’t “Rock the boat”

Accommodating – The goal is to yield



Accommodating is effective:

- When you are wrong, learning is important, or demonstrating reasonableness is critical
- When creating goodwill is paramount
- When harmony is important

Avoiding – The goal is to delay



Behaviours

- Miss meetings
- Avoids co workers
- Withholds information

Good Or Bad

- Side steps and lets others handle things
- May be seen as not caring or interested
- Delays responding

Avoiding – The goal is to delay



Avoiding is effective:

- When the issue is relatively trivial
- When you know you can't be satisfied
- When the costs of conflict outweigh the benefits of resolution
- To allow time to “cool off”
- When others can resolve the issue more effectively

Collaborating – The goal is mutual Participation



Behaviours

- Risk Sharing
- Continues to problem solve even when not working
- Challenges thought

Good Or Bad

- Great to see both sides of discussions
- Always allows others to have opinion
- May be seen as not wanting to make decisions

Collaborating – The goal is mutual Participation



Collaborating is effective:

- When it's important that both sides be integrated
- When you want to learn and fully understand others' views
- To merge different perspectives and insights
- To work through hard feelings that have interfered with interpersonal relationships

Compromising –The goal is to find a middle ground



Behaviours

- Posturing
- Rushing to settle and get agreement
- Wearing down a position

Good Or Bad

- Great at making fast decisions that work for both parties
 - May be seen as someone who wants to move on quickly
 - Doesn't want to spend time debating
-

Compromising –The goal is to find a middle ground

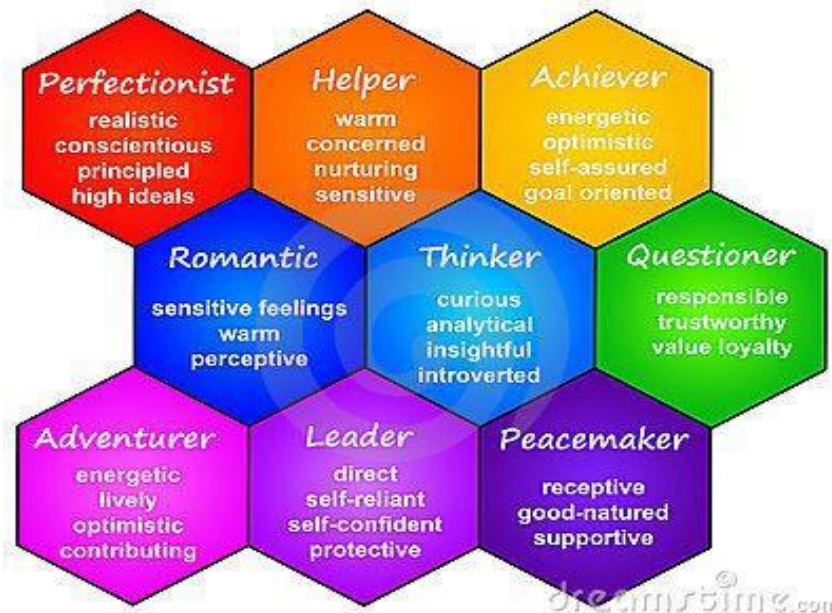


Compromising is effective:

- When goals are less important than avoiding the disruption caused by more assertive conflict resolution styles
- When people have equal power and commitment to mutually exclusive goals
- To quickly reach a solution
- When it's important to reach a win-win for all involved



Which one are you??



Lets do the test....

The Man Himself...



- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Oy-sEmPVV30>
-

**I DON'T HAVE
TO ATTEND
EVERY ARGUMENT
I'M INVITED TO.**

UNKNOWN





What is your role in conflict?

As Participants

- We often contribute to conflict—sometimes knowingly (through disagreement, competition, or defensiveness) and sometimes unknowingly (through miscommunication, assumptions, or neglect).
- Recognising our own triggers, biases, and communication patterns helps us see how we might escalate or de-escalate tensions.

As Responders

- Even if we did not start a conflict, we play a role in how it unfolds.
- We can choose to escalate (argue, blame), withdraw (avoidance, silence), or engage constructively (listening, clarifying, problem-solving).



Emotional Escalation

Conflicts rarely explode instantly; they build step by step:

1. **Trigger** – A complaint or frustration sparks irritation.
2. **Perception of Threat** – The brain (especially the amygdala) interprets it as an attack, even if mild.
3. **Physiological arousal** – Heart rate increases, stress hormones rise - “fight or flight” mode.
4. **Defensive response** – People argue back, dismiss, or shut down, which fuels the other person’s frustration.
5. **Escalation loop** – Each side raises intensity (louder voice, harsher words, stronger emotions).



Managing Different Behaviours



Annoying



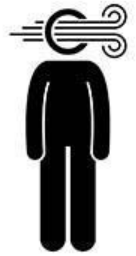
Anxious



Abrupt



Arrogant



Airy-Fairy



Argumentative



Aimless



Authoritative



Absent-Minded



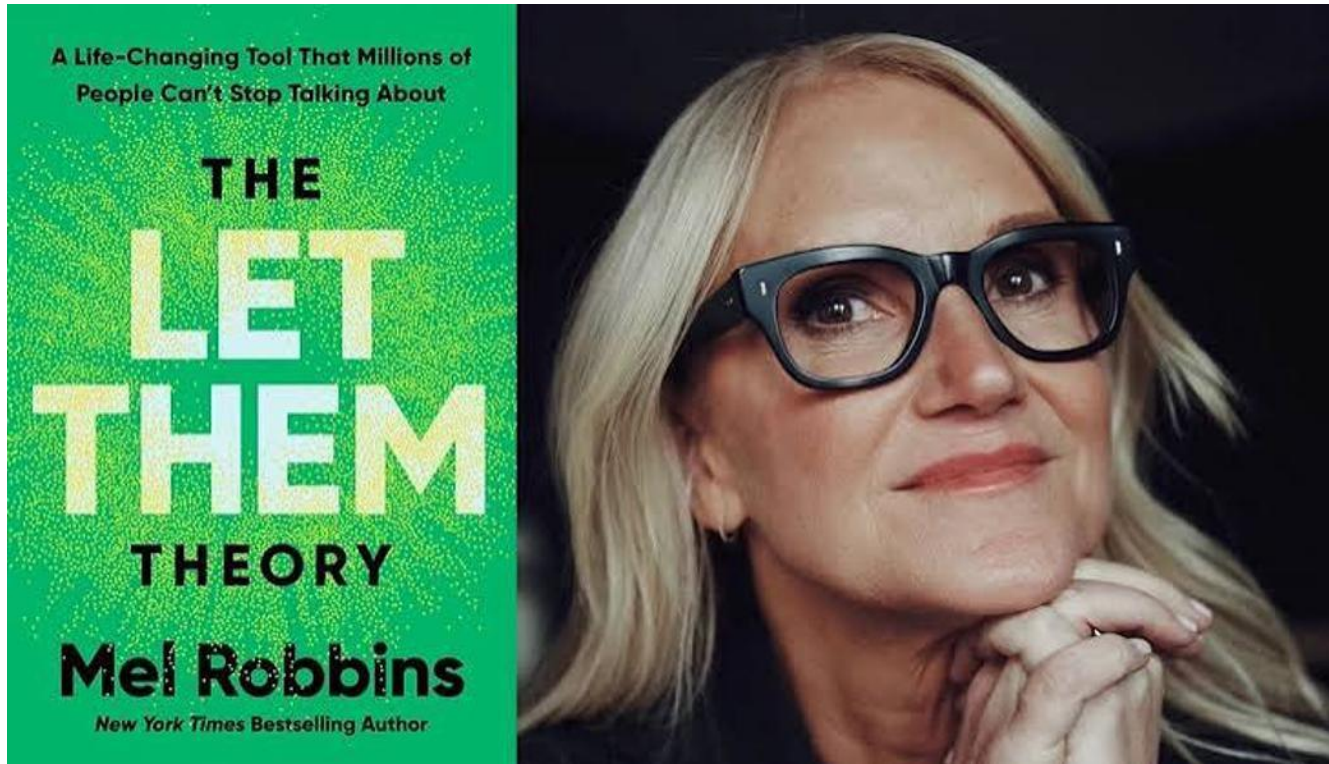
Arbitrary



Group Exercises

In groups, suggest possible solutions to the following scenarios:-

1. Someone who puts in minimal effort and avoids responsibilities.
 2. Someone who always seems to agree outwardly, but then sabotages silently.
 3. Someone who is too talkative and craves attention and seems to thrive when conflict occurs.
-



- <https://www.tiktok.com/@melrobbins/video/7596009019836353805>

The Micro Manager



- **Traits:**
 - Obsessed with control and details
 - Doesn't trust others to do their jobs
 - Constantly checking in or "hovering"
 - Resistant to delegation
- **Impact:** Kills creativity, lowers morale, and increases stress

How to manage:

- Build trust: Regularly update them before they ask; show you're reliable.
- Clarify expectations: Get clear on deliverables so there's less room for interference.
- Set boundaries: Politely push back if oversight becomes counterproductive.
- Use facts: Document progress and outcomes to prove your capability

The Victim



Traits:

- Always sees themselves as wronged
- Avoids responsibility
- Quick to complain but slow to act

Impact: Creates drama, shifts blame, stifles progress

How to manage:

- Encourage ownership: Ask, “What part of this can you control?”
- Avoid rescuing: Offer help but don’t take over their responsibilities.
- Stay neutral: Don’t get pulled into drama.
- Keep them focused: Reinforce action over blame.

The Slacker



Traits:

- Puts in minimal effort
- Avoids responsibility
- Relies on others to pick up the slack

Impact: Decreases productivity, breeds resentment

How to manage:

- Use accountability tools: Project boards, progress updates, shared deadlines.
- Document contributions: So there's clarity on who's doing what. Involve supervisors if needed: Especially if the team is affected.
- Set clear expectations: Define roles and deadlines from the start.

Passive Aggressive



Traits:

- Indirect communication of frustration (e.g., sarcasm, procrastination) Avoids confrontation but shows resistance subtly
- May agree outwardly, but sabotage silently

Impact: Undermines teamwork, fosters confusion and mistrust

How to manage:

- Address behaviour directly (but kindly): “Hey, I noticed X — is something bothering you?”
- Don’t feed the behaviour: Stay calm, don’t get drawn into sarcasm or emotional games.
- Encourage open communication: Offer safe, neutral opportunities to talk things out.

The Snowman



Traits:

- Indirect communication to other team members – “pokes” until the other members “throws their snowball”
- Always appears to be onboard and team member, but sabotage silently

Impact: Undermines organisational goals , fosters mistrust

How to manage:

- Pay attention to whom the snowman is communicating with, these are the intended “pitchers”
- Constant communication required with the team, so no power of “did you hear” – rumour mill

The Kitty Cat



Traits:

- Very reactive personality
- Strong sense of justice, usually very vocal and has a self sense of importance

Impact: Slows down progress, “time eater” .
Potential to throw “snowballs”

How to manage:

- Pay attention to whom the Kitty Cat is communicating with, try not to have them sitting with Snowman
- Constant communication required with the Kitty Cat, maybe even feed the Cat a sub task – feed the sense of importance – “tactics” required

The Know It All



Behaviours:

- Believes they are always right
- Dismissive of others' ideas
- Often talks over people

Challenges:

- They Interrupt Constantly
- They Disregard Expertise
- They May Reject Help
- They Can Confuse or Mislead

Tips:

- Acknowledge what they say
- Compliment them on their research
- Be generous with praise
- Don't put them in their place no matter how tempting
- Don't try to be smart – you can't win!
- Ask them questions and use them to improve your knowledge

The Talkative One



Behaviours:

- Goes off topic easily
- Takes a long time to explain any issue
- Speaks without pausing
- Thinks out loud
- Asks a lot of unrelated questions
- Wants to keep talking

Challenges:

- Time management issues
- Difficulty staying focused
- Emotionally Draining
- Increased risk of miscommunication
- Hard to steer the conversation

Tips:

- Ask closed questions
- Limit the time available for them to interrupt (don't have long pauses)
- Provide minimal response
- Smile and be pleasant, but don't encourage them
- Wind up – thank them for coming, walk them to the door but don't be rude or dismissive

The Indecisive One



Behaviours:

- Asks Lots of Questions, Repeatedly
- Struggles to Commit
- Frequently Changes Their Mind
- Looks for Constant Reassurance
- Overanalyses
- Involves Too Many Opinions

Challenges:

- They Struggle to Make Decisions
- They Keep Changing Their Mind
- They Take Up a Lot of Time.
- They Ask for Too Many Opinions.
- They Fear Making the “Wrong” Choice

Tips:

- You questions to explore their needs
 - Ask them for their suggested solutions
 - Assume control gently and point out the best course of action from what they’ve told you they need
 - Be as logical as possible
 - Confirm a plan of action with them -Maybe even put it in writing
-

The Suspicious One

**Behaviour:**

- Thinks you're hiding something, sceptical of policies or motives.

Challenges:

- Defensive tone, resistant to explanations.

Tip:

- Be transparent.
 - Show evidence or documentation.
 - Reiterate policies calmly, reassure them of your intentions.
-

The Complainer

**Behaviour:**

- Frequently complains, often about minor or subjective issues.

Challenges:

- Hard to satisfy long-term, may never be fully happy.

Tip:

- Set a positive example: Try not to mirror their negativity.
- Listen, document patterns, offer clear resolutions, and—if necessary—know when to escalate or politely set limits.

The Bully



Behaviour:

- Yelling, using harsh language, demanding immediate action.

Challenges:

- Emotionally charged, hard to reason with.

Tip:

- Stay calm, don't mirror their energy.
- Acknowledge their frustration, set boundaries if needed ("I want to help, but I need us to speak respectfully")
- Listen Actively
- Set Boundaries Politely - "I really want to help you, but I need us to keep this respectful so I can do that."
- Acknowledge Their Emotions - "I understand you're angry - let's work together to fix this."

The Drama Queen/King



Behaviours:

- Overreacts to minor issues
- Craves attention
- Thrives on office gossip or conflicts

Challenges:

- Can cause reactive state

Tips:

- Don't engage emotionally: Stay steady and unreactive.
- Set boundaries.
- Shift focus to facts and tasks: Bring the conversation back to work.

Role play



Lunch Time



How to calmly express effects of behaviour



V's





Use the “Behaviour–Impact–Feeling” (BIF) formula

Behaviour: Objectively describe what the person did (no judgments or labels). “When you interrupted me during the meeting...”

Impact: State the tangible or emotional effect it had on you or the situation. “...it made it harder for me to share my point.”

Feeling: Calmly express your emotional response (if appropriate). “...and I felt dismissed.”



Focus on “I” statements, not “you” statements

Avoid saying “You made me feel...” or “You always...”, which can sound accusatory.

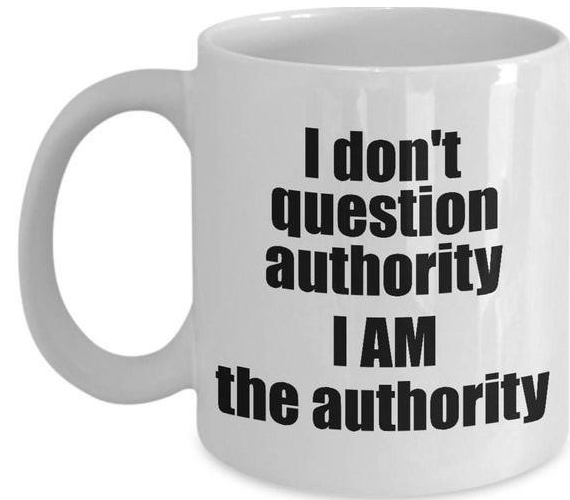
Instead use:

- “I felt...”
- “I noticed...”
- “I found it difficult when...”

This keeps the focus on your experience, not their intention

Be Clear on the Authority

- If you have the authority, act immediately!
- If you need to defer to a manager, give a timeline for response



Stop People Getting Defensive



Stop People Getting Defensive

Start with Agreement

- Find common ground:
- “I agree this is an important issue”
- Acknowledgement lowers walls and shifts conversations

Ask, Don't Assume

- “Can you help me understand your perspective on this?”
- Shifts energy from Conflict to curiosity

That's helpful to Know

- That helps me understand your perspective



Stop People Getting Defensive

“I see where you are coming from”

It validates without agreeing or disagreeing

“Let's try figure this out together”

Builds partnership

“I could be missing something.
What do you think?”

Removes ego and invites feedback



Be Personable and Present

Be fully present.

When you're with your people, be with people.

- Focus on the moment.
- Slow down.
- Listen actively—not just to respond, but to understand.
- Distraction kills trust; presence builds it.



Be Personable and Present

Ask meaningful questions.

Lean into curiosity. Maybe ask:

- “How can I support you?”
- “What’s are the biggest challenges right now?”

These questions show care, but they also invite deeper insight.

The more specific you are about a problem ...it can lead you to a possible solution.



Be Personable and Present

Show your humanity.

It is not about perfection—it's about authenticity.

Show yourself. Your realness makes you approachable and relatable.



Be Personable and Present

Find your calm.

How sustainable is anxiety as a motivator? Our work environment and our society is no stranger to frenetic energy.

While some of this shows up as excitement or assertiveness, we believe staying present with a sense of calm is an increasingly important attribute for working with people.

Let the work be intense but let yourself take a breath.



Be Consistent

Be clear and steady in your communication.

Be consistent in what you say and how you say it. Mixed messages create confusion and chip away at trust.



Follow through on your commitments.

When you say you'll do something, do it. Your actions should match your words every time. Nothing erodes trust faster than broken promises or unfulfilled commitments.



Be Consistent

Model consistent behaviour.

Show up steady, intentional, and aligned with your values



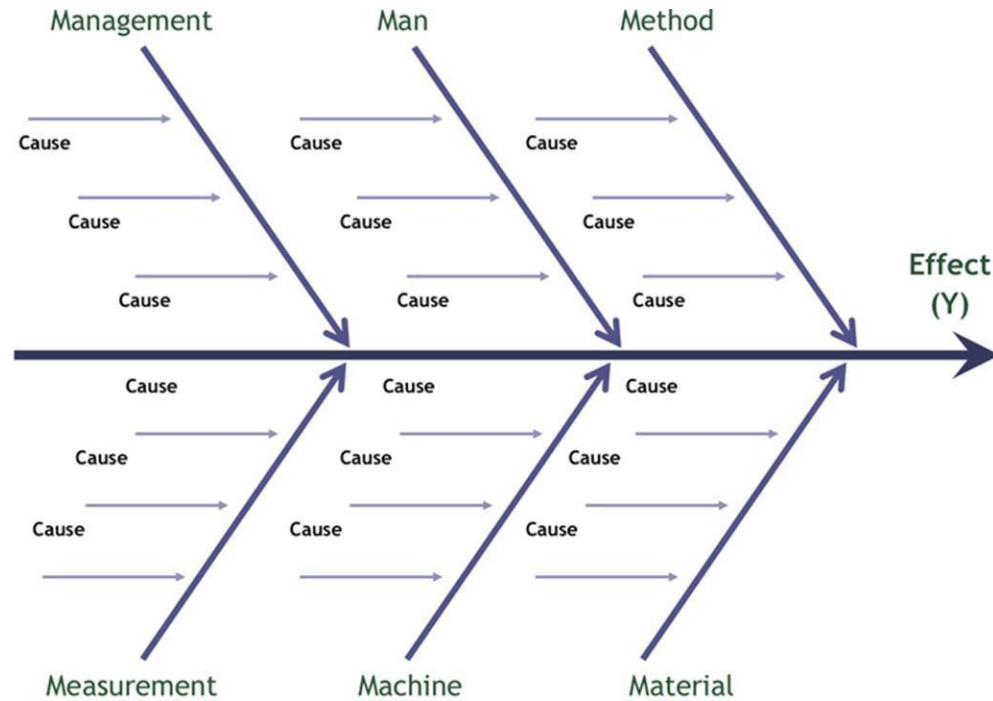
Managing People who Refuse to Engage

Diagnose the Root Cause

Before enforcing, understand why they are not complying.



Route Cause - Fishbone Analysis



Managing People who Refuse to Engage

- **Lack of awareness:** They may not fully understand the policy or why it exists.
- **Perceived unfairness:** They might see it as irrelevant or inconsistent.
- **Low engagement or morale:** A deeper issue with leadership, workload, or culture could be at play.
- **Habitual defiance:** Some individuals simply test boundaries.



Managing People who Refuse to Engage

Reinforce Expectations Consistently

- **Refer to the policy in writing** (handbook, HR portal, email).
- **Set clear expectations:** what compliance looks like, and what happens if it's ignored.
- **Be consistent** — if others see selective enforcement, compliance will erode across the board



Managing People who Refuse to Engage

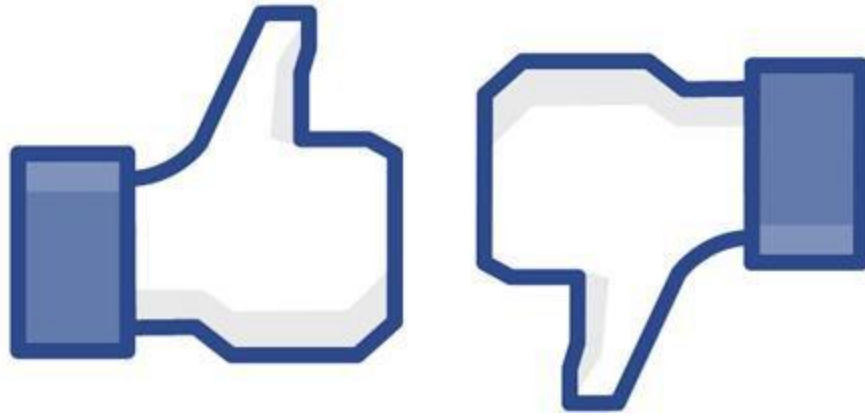
Model Compliance Yourself

Employees mirror leadership. If managers bend or ignore policies, others will too.

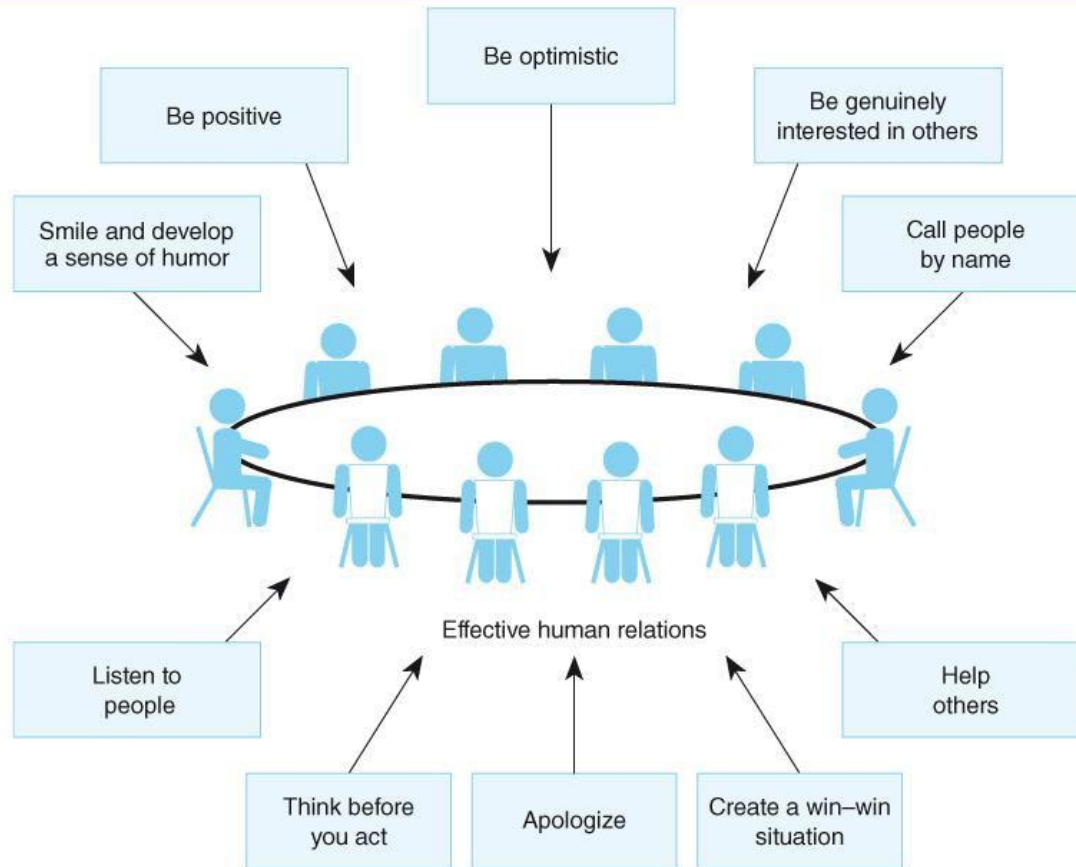
- Demonstrate integrity by following the same rules.
- Acknowledge your own accountability openly.



Likeability



Likeability



A close-up photograph of a young woman with long, dark brown hair, smiling broadly at the camera. She is wearing a dark jacket over a light-colored top. The photo is positioned on the left side of the slide, partially overlapping the text area.

Likeability

Optimistic

- Is your glass half full or half empty?
- Don't let failures keep you down

Positive

- Praise and encourage others – don't criticise
- Don't complain – no one wants to hear it
- Complaining is contagious & it's depressing

Genuinely interested in others

- No one likes someone who is self-centred
 - And no one likes a fake
-

Smile & sense of humour

- It takes more work to frown than to smile
- Relax and learn to laugh at yourself
- True humour is never at the expense of others

Call people by name

- A person's name is the most important sound to them
 - But remember cultural standards
 - If you use their name it makes them feel significant and validated
 - Make an effort and practice learning names
-

Likeability



Listen to people

- Encourage others to talk about themselves – ask appropriate questions – listening shows your interest – we generally don't like people who don't pay attention or listen to us
- Make an effort to learn specific pro-active listening skills

Help others

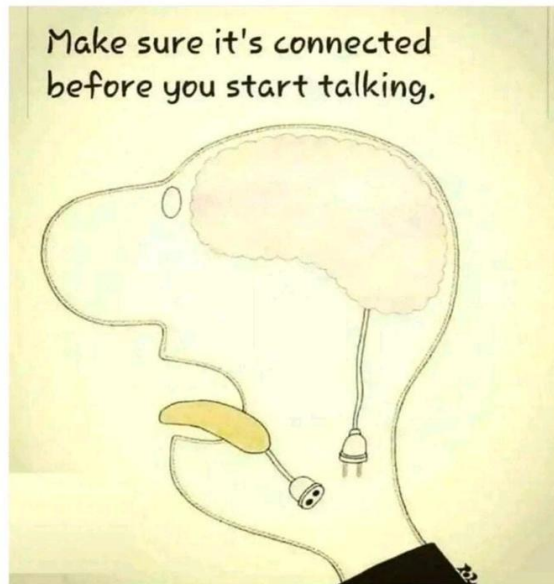
- A basic law of success!
 - Don't use others – be open and honest
 - Remember what goes around comes around
-

Likeability



Think first before you act...or talk!

- Engage your brain before opening your mouth – don't say things you'll regret later
- Ok to feel your emotions – but control your behaviour
- Remember how you say things is as important as what you say



Apologise

- We are all capable of hurting someone's feelings
- We are sometimes reluctant to apologize (men more than women)
- A sincere apology (even if you think you were right) can help repair and create more satisfactory relationships

Create a win-win situation

- The best way to get what you want is to help others get what they want and vice versa – “quid pro quo”

Trust

- Face to face..built on..."best time to plant a tree is 20 years ago"...build on existing foundations



Trust and control have a very interesting relationship!



ABI

- A – Ability
- B – Benevolence
- I – Integrity





Establishing Trust & Respect

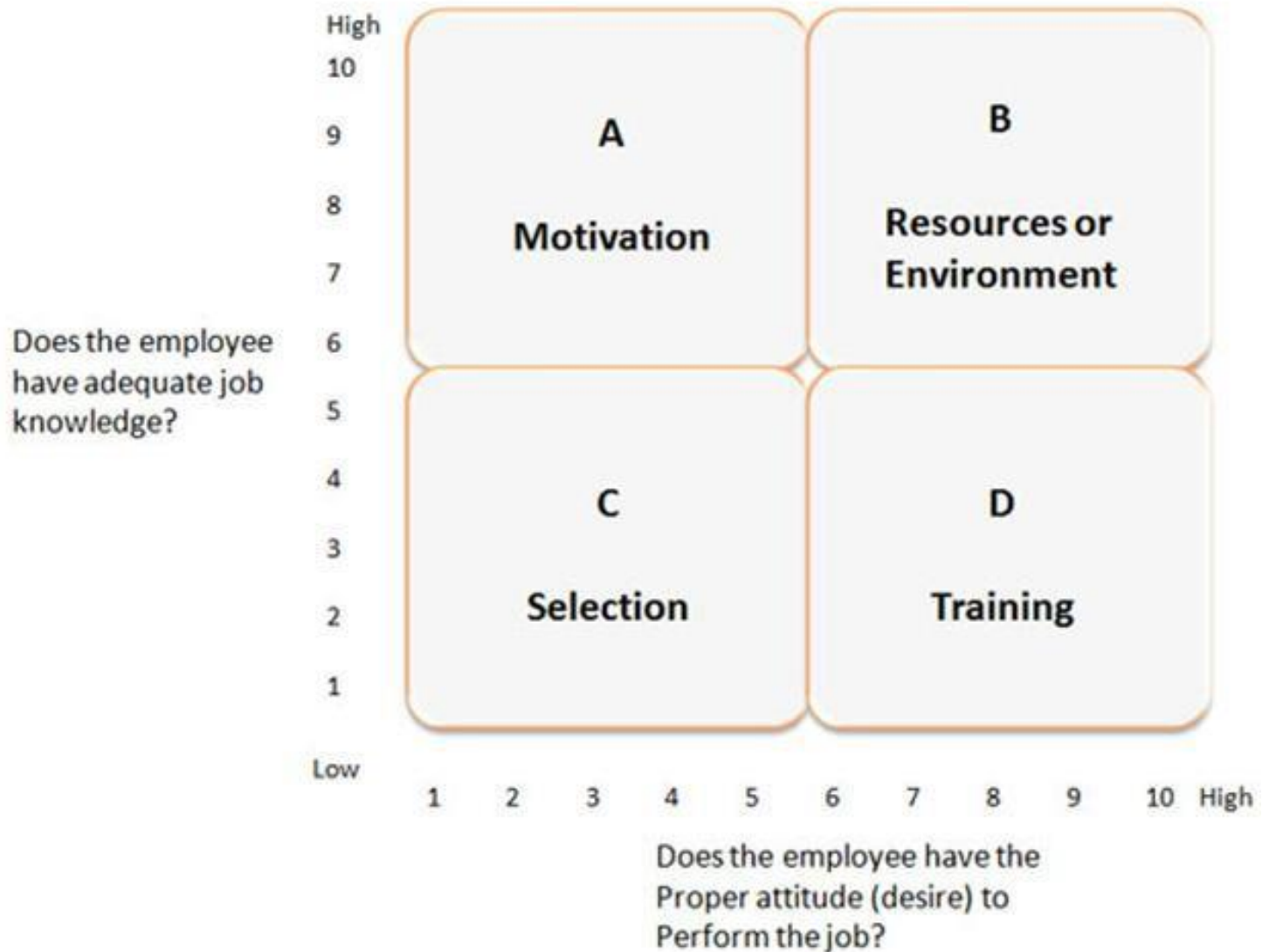
- Be consistent, reliable and predictable!
 - Ensure confidentiality
 - Trust is reciprocal
 - Once trust is lost it is very difficult to rebuild
 - Value and respect differences
-

Trust v's Performance

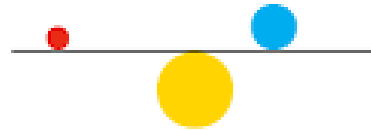
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PTo9e3ILmms>



Performance Analysis Quadrant (PAQ)



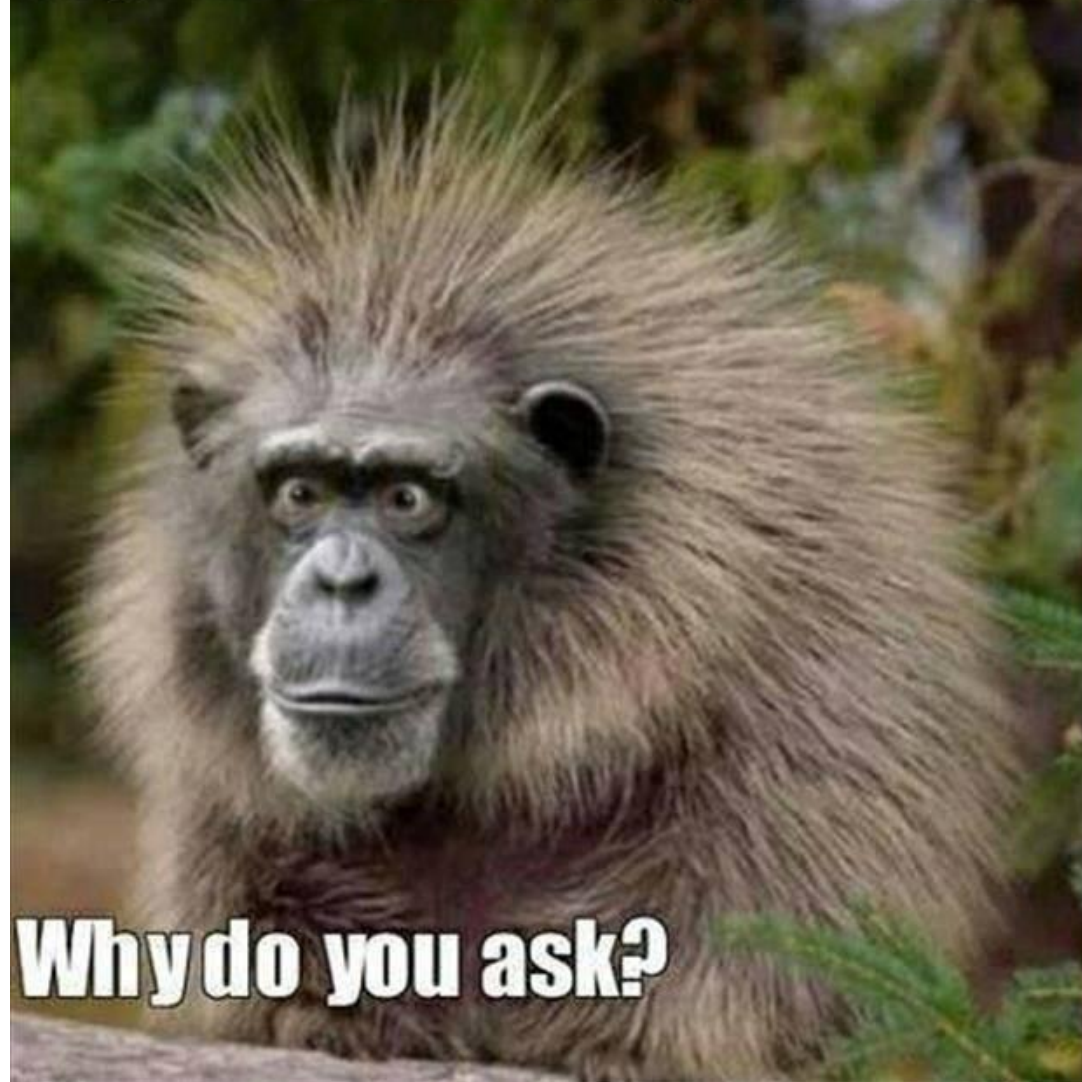
Stress



Balancing Stress*

Practical skills to cope with stress

No, I have not slept well...



Why do you ask?

Sleep!

- Sleep deprivation raises stress hormone levels on its own, even without a stressor present.
- A good night's sleep makes you more positive, creative and proactive in your approach to toxic people, giving you the perspective you need to deal effectively with them.



Early Signs of Stress: What to Watch For

Behavioral Signs

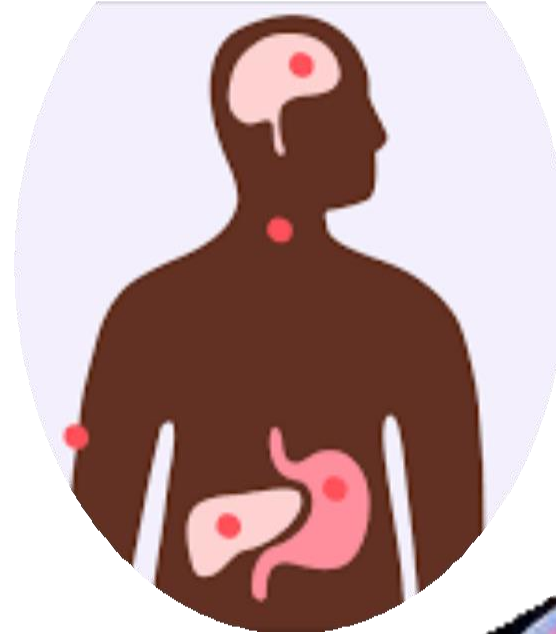
- Procrastination – Putting off tasks more often than usual
- Changes in appetite – Eating more or less than usual
- Withdrawal – Avoiding social interactions or responsibilities
- Increased use of substances – Turning to caffeine, alcohol, or other substances to cope
- Neglecting self-care – Skipping meals, exercise, or hygiene routines



Early Signs of Stress: What to Watch For

Physical Signs

- Fatigue – Constant tiredness, even after adequate sleep
- Headaches – Frequent or tension-related
- Muscle tension – Especially in the neck, shoulders, or back
- Upset stomach – Indigestion, nausea, or digestive changes
- Sleep issues – Trouble falling or staying asleep, or restless sleep



Early Signs of Stress: What to Watch For

Emotional Signs

- Irritability – Easily frustrated or short-tempered
- Anxiety – Constant worry, unease, or racing thoughts
- Mood swings – Rapid shifts from calm to angry or sad
- Feeling overwhelmed – Struggling to cope with everyday tasks
- Loss of motivation – Declining interest in work or social activities



Early Signs of Stress: What to Watch For

Cognitive Signs

- Forgetfulness – Difficulty remembering things or staying organised
- Poor concentration – Trouble focusing or making decisions
- Negative thinking – Persistent pessimism or self-doubt
- Mental fog – Feeling mentally "cloudy" or disconnected





Sparks Tool- Self Assess

- A self-care tool for professionals

THE **SPARK** TOOL

Burnout

Early detection is key.

Common symptoms include:

- Chronic fatigue or insomnia
- Cynicism or detachment from work
- Decreased productivity
- Frequent illnesses
- Emotional numbness or irritability



How to Prevent or Reduce Burnout

Foster Open Communication

- Create a safe space for honest feedback and concerns.
- Hold regular one-on-ones or check-ins to assess workload and stress.

Monitor Workload Fairness

- Regularly review task distribution.
- Prevent over-reliance on “high performers” and ensure balance.



How to Prevent or Reduce Burnout

Promote Autonomy and Flexibility

- Allow flexibility in hours, remote work, or task ownership.
- Avoid micromanagement—trust your team.

Recognise and Appreciate

- Acknowledge wins, even small ones.
- Celebrate individual and team contributions



How to Prevent or Reduce Burnout

Encourage Breaks and Time Off

- Normalise stepping away
- Discourage “always on” culture and after-hours emails.

Lead by Example

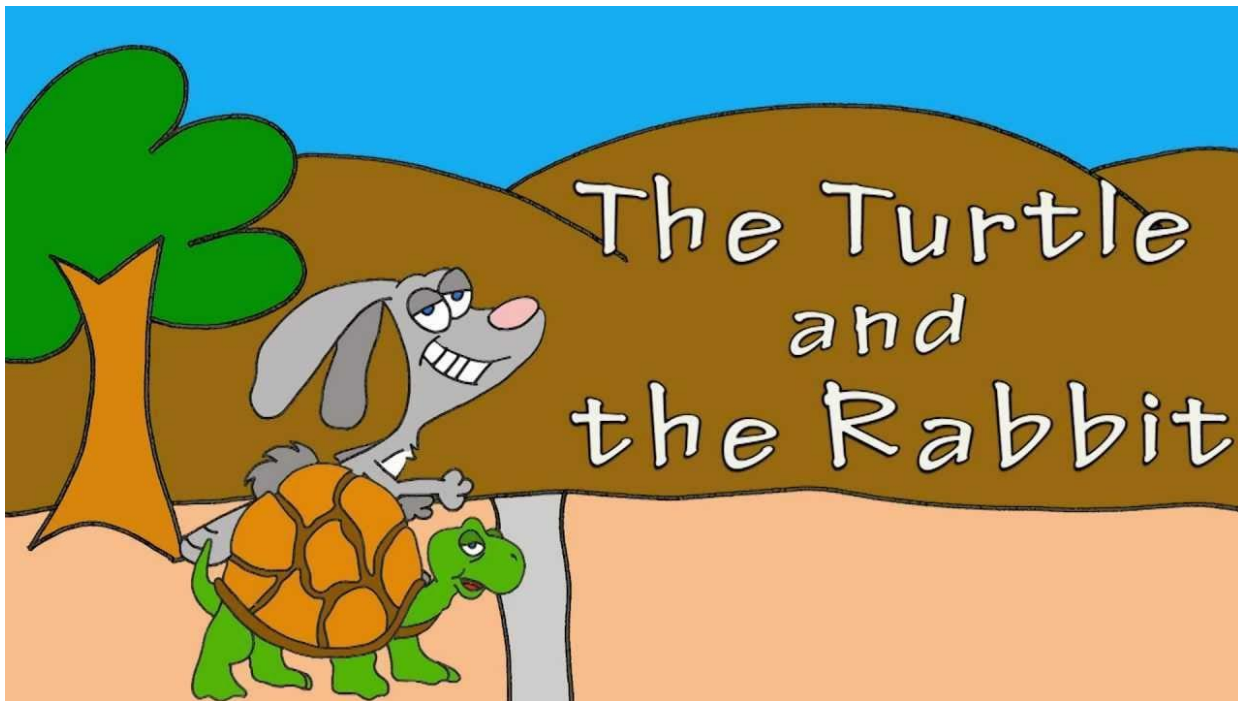
- Managers should model healthy boundaries and self-care.
- Demonstrate emotional intelligence and empathy



Who's with you...and who is not!



- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tkBzvv9F_Q4





CMG Training

Thank you &
Feedback



Sonya Meekel

sonya.meekel@tudublin.ie

087-2315039

