



Working with Difficult People

Here's What We'll Do Today . . .

1. Increase our understanding of difficult people and our reactions to them.
2. Understand the 'Intent' behind poor behavior
3. Control our own emotions—responding vs. reacting
4. Learn strategies for responding to difficult behavior
5. Learn to calm them down, motivate them and lead them



Who Are the “Difficult” People?

WHO
is the person?

WHAT
is their need?

HOW
do you respond
to their poor
behavior?

AND
not get knocked
off your horse

Here are some characteristic behaviors people can label as ‘difficult’:

- They whine
- They are intimidating and controlling
- They are rude
- They are overly critical
- They won’t listen
- They will not stop talking
- They won’t make a decision
- They are manipulative
- They are excessively detailed and analytical

Give a detailed description of the behavior of someone you feel is ‘difficult’ to deal with:

| |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| DIFFs are difficult because . . . What do they do? What do they say? What are their actions? |
| |



Reality Check—What Can We Do?

| Behavior | What Can You Control? | What Can't You Control? | What Can You Influence? |
|----------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| Think about their behavior | | | |

1. Start by examining yourself

- Check your attitude about them first, then adjust your behavior toward them
- Remember . . . Attitudes are mental habits (positive or negative)
- How can you learn to see them differently?

A Big Thought . . .

Thoughts → Feelings → Action → Results

2. Examine the behavior

Think about these questions . . .

1. What's the behavior -
passive . . . assertive . . . aggressive . . . passive aggressive?
2. What might lie behind that behavior?
3. Could I be adding to the problem?
What might be their perception?
Could I be overreacting?

A Big Thought . . .

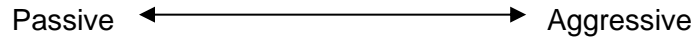
Manage your attitude . . . so your attitude doesn't manage you.



Understand People's Behavior

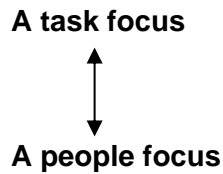
1. Here's how people respond to different situations:

- Their **assertive level**

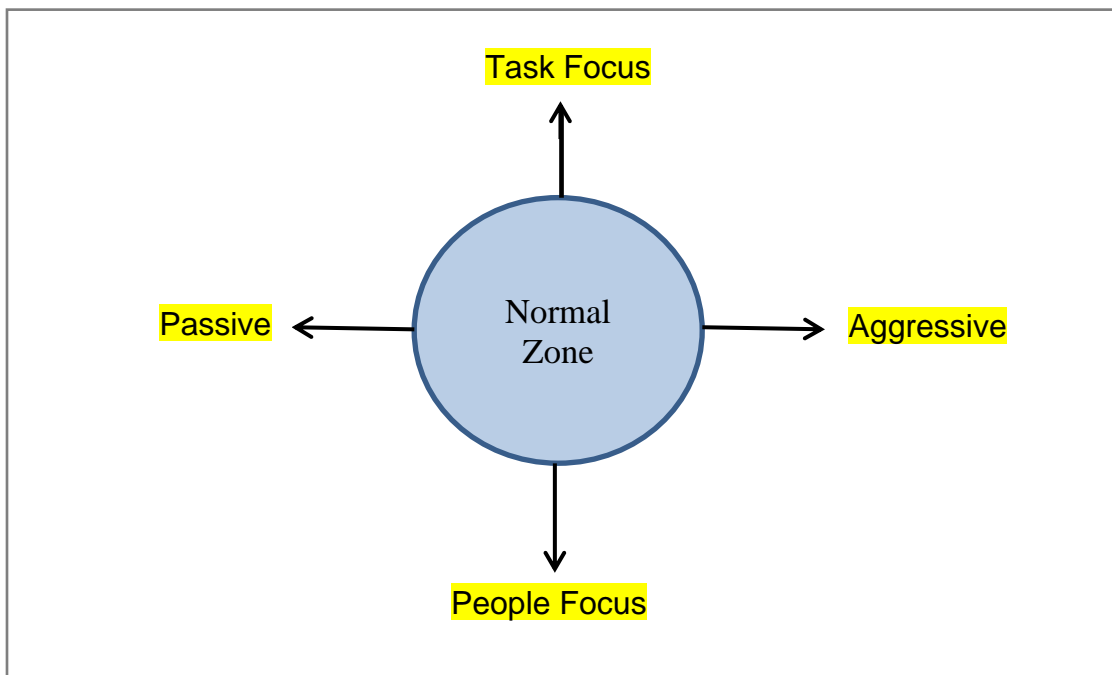
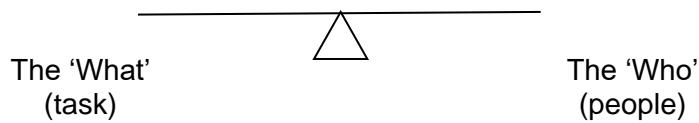


Assertiveness levels are often influenced by the situation. During times of challenge, difficulty, or stress, people tend to move out of their normal 'comfort zone' and become either more passive or more aggressive.

- Their **focus of attention**



2. In stressful or difficult times, people will **focus** more on:



Understand Their *Intent* (Their *Need*)

1. People engage in behaviors based on their intent and what seems most important in the moment.

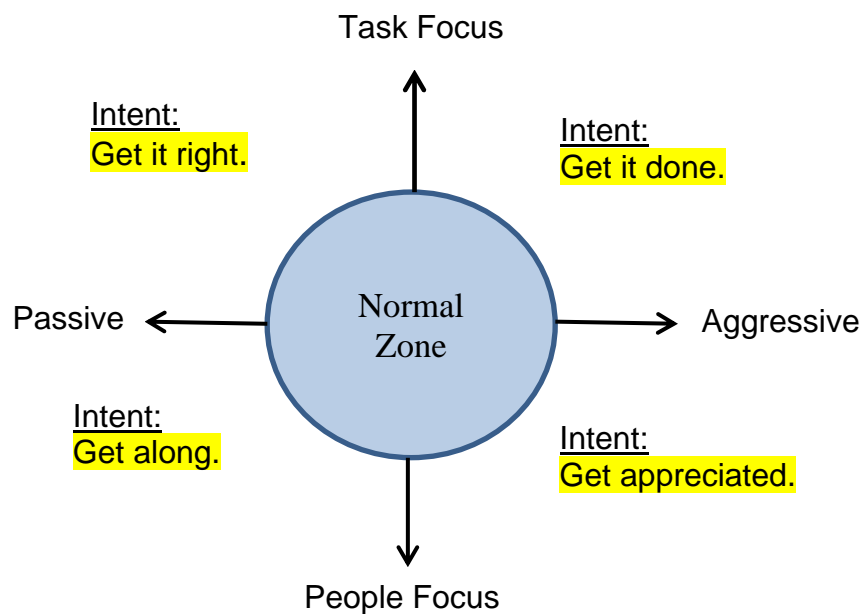
Here are the four general *Intents* that determine how people will react in any situation:

1. Get the task done.
2. Get the task right.
3. Get along with people.
4. Get appreciation from people.

When peoples' *Intents* are threatened or frustrated, their behaviors can be pushed to the extreme—and they become our 'difficult people.'

2. Here's how the four *Intents* (needs) relate to the four behaviors.

If their behavior is . . .



Characteristics of Each *Intent*

Get it Done

Get it Right

Get Along

Get Appreciated



Understand Their *Intent*

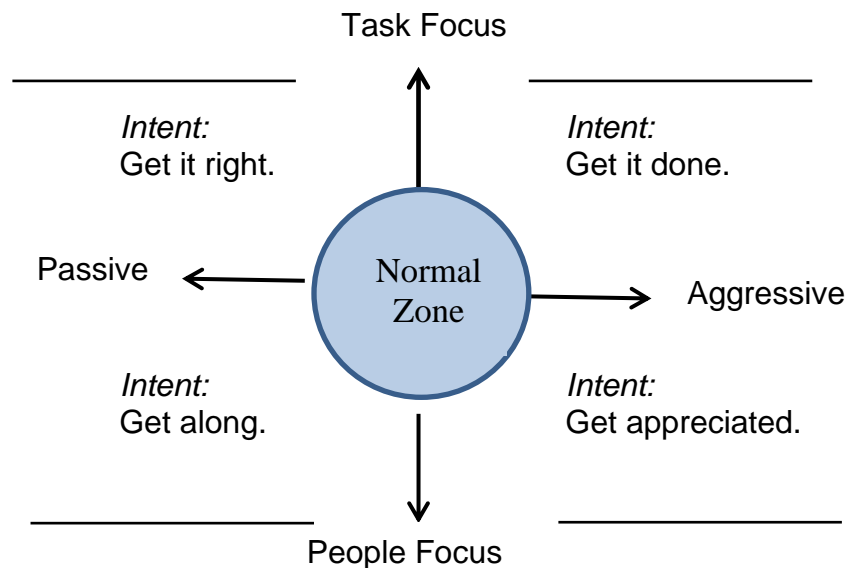
A Big Thought . . .

Their *Intent (Need)* = Their Behavior

1. When *their Intents* are threatened, here's what happens . . .

- When a person's *Intent* is to **get it done**, but fears that it's not getting done, their behavior becomes more controlling.
- When a person's *Intent* is to **get it done right**, but fears that it will be done wrong or not up to their standards, their behavior becomes more perfectionistic.
- When a person's *Intent* is to **get along**, but fears that they will be left out or make someone unhappy with them, their behavior becomes more approval seeking.
- When a person's *Intent* is to **get appreciation**, but feels that they aren't getting it, their behavior becomes more attention getting.

2. Fill in the blanks . . .



A Big Thought . . .

Be alert to signs that someone's behavior is going beyond the 'normal zone'



Go from Conflict to Cooperation

1. Reducing differences is essential when working with people who drive you crazy.

Here are two essential communication skills to help you reduce differences:

Step 1: _____

Step 2: _____

2. It's natural to *blend* with people we like or with whom we share a common objective. Examples of blending include:

➤ *We nod.*

➤ _____

➤ _____

➤ _____

3. It's also natural *not to blend* with people we perceive as 'difficult.'

➤ But . . . failing to blend has serious consequences. What are some possible consequences if we don't 'blend'?

○ _____

○ _____

○ _____

➤ Without blending, the differences between two people become the basis for

_____.

How can you blend with each behavior?

Get it done _____

Get it right _____

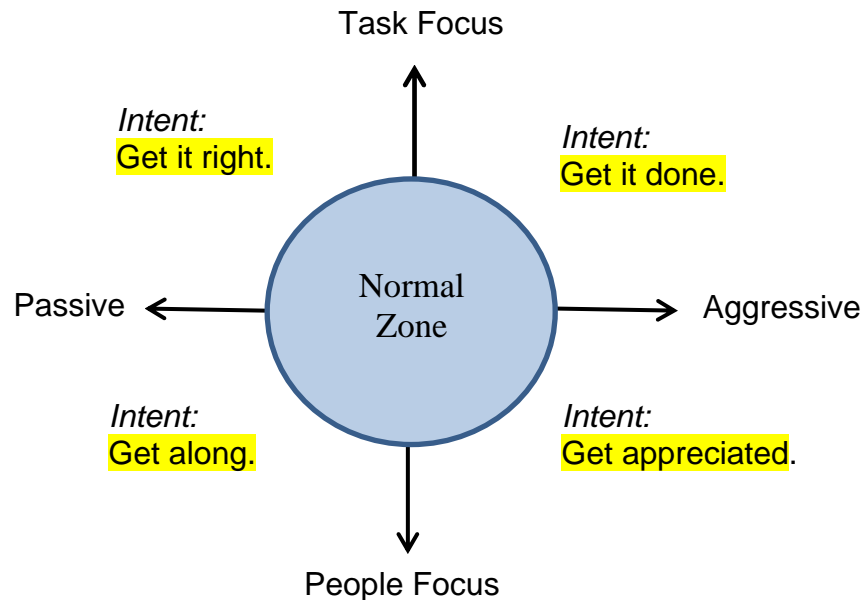
Get along _____

Get appreciated _____



Develop a Strategy

- 1. Remember the Four Intents?** It is crucial to ask yourself which *Intent* lies behind your DIFF's behavior or communication.
- 2. When a discussion starts to go 'south' into conflict . . .**
 - Try to figure out why your DIFF is for or against something.
 - Listen for understanding
 - Look for an idea or solution to the problem that blends with their natural *Intent*.
 - Don't trip their 'threat trigger'



What To Expect From Your DIFF's Behavior

Bring Out the Best in the Tank

(Get it done)

- If you are under attack, you've been targeted as *part of the problem*.
- They try to push you to their course or eliminate the obstacle you represent.
- Tanks require assertive reactions and responses (you are strong and capable).

Your goal: To command respect (Tanks don't attack people they respect).

Bring Out the Best in the No Person

(Get it right)

- The *No Person* is task-focused. They are motivated by the intent to get it right by avoiding mistakes.
- The *No Person* can be perfectionistic. When shortcomings get in the way, he or she feels anxious and finds negatives in everyone and everything.
- Your goal: To move from fault finding toward problem solving

Bring Out the Best in the Yes/Maybe Person

(Get along)

- Yes People have a strong people focus and a weak task focus.
- They are disorganized and often overcommit themselves, trying to run their lives based on what other people want them to do.
- They say 'yes' without thinking things through. They overcommit until they have no time for themselves—then they become resentful.
- Yes People feel terrible when they don't deliver, but they don't feel responsible because something or someone else actually caused the problem.
- Your goal: To get commitments you can count on.

Bring Out the Best in the Grenade

(Get appreciated)

- After a brief period of calm, the Grenade explodes into ranting and raving about things that have nothing to do with the present circumstances.
- Losing emotional control is a defense strategy against the feeling of unimportance.
- Your goal: To figure out what *pulls their grenade pin*—and then don't pull it!



Redirect

A Big Thought . . .

We have to *blend* before we can *redirect*.

Figure Out a Strategy to Redirect each *DIFF*

To Bring Out the Best in the Tank . . .

(Get it done)

- _____
- _____
- _____

To Bring Out the Best in the No Person . . .

(Get it right)

- _____
- _____
- _____

To Bring Out the Best in the Yes/Maybe Person . . .

(Get along)

- _____
- _____
- _____

To Bring Out the Best in the Grenade . . .

(Get appreciated)

- _____
- _____
- _____



Redirect (More Strategies)

Get it Done (The Tank)

- Cut to the chase (find out what they want)
- Stop, look, calmly backtrack their remark
- Keep their eyes
- Searchlight Questions
 - *What are you really saying?*
 - *What does that have to do with this?*
 - Neutral tone—*innocent* look
- Appreciate their candor

Get it Right (The 'No' Person)

- Use them as a resource (they may make you stronger)
- Stay out of the “weeds” (their sarcasm)
- Leave the door open
 - They need more time to think
 - If you rush them, it will slow them down more
- Acknowledge their good intent

Get Along (The 'Yes' Person)

- Make it safe to be honest.
- Listen without contradicting or jumping to conclusions
- Help them plan
- Ensure their commitment (write down deadlines)
- Thank them for being open

Get Appreciated (The Grenade)

- Match their energy (but not their emotion)
- Get their attention
 - The one time you may need to speak louder than they do—but not aggressively
 - Repeat their name (your tone is ‘interested’, not angry)
- Aim for their heart
 - Genuine concern—what do they need to hear?
- Reduce the intensity
 - When they start to respond, reduce your volume and intensity
- Don't *pull their pin*—You can talk them down
 - what can we do?



Essential Communication Skills

Listen to Them

1. Figure out how they need to feel

- **Remember . . . All people want two things from you:**
 - Fix what you can fix . . . do what you can do
 - People want to be heard and understood

2. Really Listen To Them

- We have to let our *DIFFs* know . . .
 - I hear you (where are your eyes?)
 - I understand (all your signals)
 - I care (that's why I'm here)
- Here's how:
 - Verbal Listening Signals . . .

 - Non-Verbal Listening Signals:

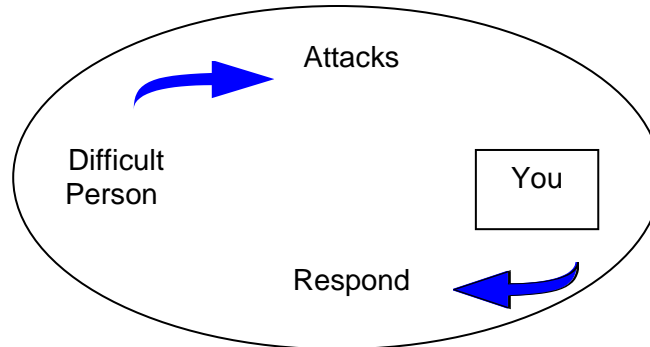
“The most basic of all human needs is the need to be understand and be understood. The best way to understand people is to listen to them.”

-Ralph Nichols



Calm Them Down

1. Respond vs. Reacting ('Rational' vs. 'In the Weeds')



A Big Thought . . .

You can't control how you _____,
but you can control how you _____

2. Use a Calm, Consistent Approach

Really Listen

(To their thoughts, their emotions, their reactions)

- Apologize (if you messed up)
- Ask questions (to clarify)

Empathy--Validate

- Their situation . . . their emotion
- Let them know we "get it"

Action, Answer, Suggestion



Motivate Them

A Big Thought About Motivation . . .

What we want to accomplish = that's all about us.

How we motivate them to do that = it's all about them.

WII-FM Focus (What's in it for me)

- You want the person to take a particular action (or view a situation differently).

How do you want them to feel? How can you tell them what's in it for them?

Tune into Body Language

- Your body language can be even more powerful than what you say.

Are you open to interact?

How interested are you in what they have to say?

- You can diffuse anger in others by:
 - Modeling behavior you want them to exhibit
 - Sitting down
 - Leaning forward
 - Holding an open stance
 - Matching their tone, pace, volume
 - Making eye contact

What else?



Your Taking Action Plan - Think about a DIFF person

1. What do you think your *DIFF's* need is? What's their Intent? _____

- **Get it Done** (The Tank)
- **Get it Right** (The 'No' Person)
- **Get Along** (The 'Yes' Person)
- **Get Appreciated** (The Grenade)

2. Your strategy for Redirecting their behavior:

- _____
- _____
- _____

3. Extra things you will purposefully remember to do—or not do with your DIFF:

- _____
- _____



Keep Yourself Out Of “*The Weeds*”

1. Stay *centered*
2. Manage your emotion
 - Validate their situation or feeling, but don't be a *sponge* for their emotion.
3. Manage your reaction
 - Don't engage—or it's hard to Redirect.
 - Because . . . Once you are engaged emotionally, your problem-solving ability suffers greatly
4. Name their behavior/intents . . . then adapt to their behavior
5. Train your brain
 - Focus on the rational
 - Respond . . . Don't React

THE MOMENT OF TRUTH . . .

To BE understanding and rational (even when they weren't)

You can't change your Diff's behavior. You can _____,

You can't control your _____ but you can control your _____.

Ultimately, your application of this learning, and your commitment and perseverance will lead you to success in dealing with difficult people.



Corporate Membership

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Compliance

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HR Consulting

Training

Leadership Development



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