TURBO-CHARGE YOUR COACHING & LEADERSHIP SKILLS

HOW DISCERNING COMMUNICATION ACHIEVES SUCCESS WITH & THROUGH PEOPLE

TREVOR E S SMITH
SUCCESS WITH PEOPLE™ ACADEMY

Table of Contents

Introduction 3
What Is DISCerning Communication? Benefits, Best Practice, Misuse 5
How To Be More Discerning With Others 7
10 Ways To Communicate More Effectively With A Dominant Personality 14
Communicating In the Key of D-I-S-C: Coaching Listening 17
Using DISCerning Communication To Coach Conflict Avoidance & Resolution 29
Is Miscommunication Frustrating Your Growth? 32
How To Get Best Results From Dominance 36
Unravelling the Trump Spectacle 41
Pressure Cooker Relationships: Why Does The Lid Fly Off? 44
He Performs Well But He Is A Pain To Deal With 47
How To Coach Increased Assertiveness 50
Certified Behavioral Coach Award 52
3-D Team Leader Certification: Leading Difficult, Dominant, Diverse Personalities 55
Leadership Found Wanting Worldwide: Global Survey Results 57
About Us 59

Introduction

Coaching and leadership are about people. People are unique and to compound the situation they behave differently under varied circumstances.

So is it not an overstatement to suggest that there is a framework that can be applied to achieving greater success with people and through them?

I will answer with my standard mini-exercise.

Assume you are a recruiter. You are asked to identify a Field Commander for a hot war zone as well as a Guidance Counsellor for an all-girls high school.

Did your mind automatically paint different pictures as to who will fill the roles?

Intuitively, you recognize the differences but what are the factors that brought you to that conclusion? Also, what if the roles were not so far apart, could you intuitively distinguish among candidates?

That is role and the value of a reliable framework.

For decades, as a member of member of the Extended DISC™ network, I have been using an approach that I call **DISCerning Communication** to drive healthy interpersonal relations among a cross-section of groups. When people experience others communicating with them in a manner that is comfortable for them the opportunities for positive cooperation increases exponentially. Someone referred to it as communicating from inside the head of the other person.

Course after course, webinar after webinar, article after article I receive encouragement to present DISCerning Communication principles in a concise publication to a wider audience.

This is your invitation to join the mission and make a positive difference in how we communicate and relate to others.

You should also note that we transfer mastery of DISCerning Communication to you as a part of formal accredited courses including:

Certified Behavioral Coach Certification (CBC) which qualifies for International Coach Federation (ICF) Continuing Education Credits + Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) Professional Development Credits. The CBC process provides a one-stop solution to SHRM recertification.

3-D Team Leader Certification: Leading Difficult, Dominant and Diverse Personalities which offers SHRM Professional Development Credits.

Trevor E S Smith

E-mail: info@swpacademy.com

What Is DISCerning Communication? Benefits, Best Practice, Misuse

DISCerning Communication is a system for identifying the best way to relate to others at any point in time and under any circumstance.

Our choice in how we behave is very similar to our taste in clothes. We have the option to change colors (= actions) but we have a pattern of color (= behavioral) preferences.

Identifying preferences has many benefits and that is the value of DISCerning Communication.

When buying clothing gifts at Christmas it would make a positive difference if you knew the favorite color of each person.

It would increase the likelihood of giving a gift that will be truly appreciated.

You noticed that Suzie always wore either cream or sky blue. However, after buying her gift she attends a function in a canary yellow outfit with fire engine red accents.

Do you curse your luck over your poor selection? No need to. Something prodded Macy to step out of her comfort zone. She will still treasure the assurance and safety of your sensitive sky blue gift.

Identifying behavioral preferences provides us with the opportunity to gift others with interactions that are most pleasing to them. But how?

There is a revered framework that has been used by millions to classify behavior through the ages. It is still popular today because users find it useful in dealing with others.

The **D-I-S-C Framework** describes ***behavior.*** A non-confusing way to understand and use it effectively is to think in terms of tool-kits that we use to deal with life's unfolding experiences.

Karl Jung – the creator of the concept – suggests that we can separate the tools into four toolkits. These are not ***types of people!*** These are simply four approaches to navigating life:

Dominance, **I**nducement, **S**teadiness and **C**onscientiousness…. D-I-S-C.

We all have access to and use tools from the four toolkits, given different circumstances. However, a recording of your choices over time would reveal that you selected some tools more than others and that you displayed an aversion to the use of at least one.

That information helps you on introspection to better understand your approach to life and to reinforce or make adjustments as necessary. It is like doing an inventory of your wardrobe and reflecting on whether you are making the appropriate fashion statement.

In terms of DISCerning Communication, the D-I-S-C framework serves as a *universal language of behavior* that allows you to speak to each person in their favorite behavioral tongue. You modify words, tone and body language to create just the right vibes.

Applying DISCerning Communication 101

Step 1: Master the descriptors of the D-I-S-C framework such that you can distinguish among behavior (not people!).

Step 2: Learn how to get best results in relating to each style in the framework.

Step 3: Discern when each style is being displayed and *speak in their behavioral language*.

Step 4: Avoid relying on "He is D"; "You are I"; "I am C" use of the framework!

Inserting **using** makes all the difference. "S/He is using S" alerts me to *speak S*. I am also aware that s/he could shift to using D at any time and I am flexible enough to apply suitable D strategies.

Properly understood, the behavioral classifications are consistent. People are not. Focus on identifying behavior instead of trying to unravel the complexities of individuals. It is easier to navigate life's journey when you can discern behavior and learn how best to respond to them.

How To Be More Discerning With Others

DISCerning Communication enhances coaching and effective leadership. ***Read this chapter to get an essential distinction.***

The concept incorporates behavioral preferences. Questions about the value and validity of classifying behavioral styles are based on a critical misapplication of the concept.

I will demonstrate the pitfalls and beneficial use with the analogy of clothing preferences.

I have a preference for wearing blue. However, a pitfall would be to label me as a "blue-shirt man". I am not wed to blue and wear other colors.

Nevertheless, it is beneficial for the clothing store to know that there are people who have a preference for blue so as stock accessories and variations to satisfy us. At the same time, it would be an error to confine their discourse with me to only items of blue. I might be encouraged to diversify my wardrobe.

The fundamental principle is the need to separate the behavior from the person.

Appreciate my demonstrated blue shirt ***preference*** by showing things that go along with blue shirts. However, treat ***me*** with an open mind, not knowing what I might want ***this*** time. Once they indicate a preference then roll out the things that are best suited to that style.

This approach dramatically improves the capacity of the store to satisfy customers. They identify the cross-section of preferences that they will serve and work out how to best serve the needs of each preference. They do not need to be concerned that customers might have complex tastes. They focus on learning to discern when a classified preference is displayed and roll out their tested strategy for satisfying those specially identified needs.

Now, it could be that in a single encounter, the customer displays different – even conflicting – preferences. That is fine. Be clear about which preference is being addressed at any point in time and present the solution that meets those needs. Then move to the next.

Labelling

The challenge we have created with behavioral classifications comes from the need to affix labels on others. The store staff says here comes blue-preference Trevor and shuts down every other expectation of my behavior. Then when I am drawn to the flaming red turtleneck there is shock and their faith in the classification concept is dented.

Focus on behavior not on individuals!

If today, I am into RED….roll out your RED inventory.

Properly defined the behavioral classifications are consistent. People are not. Learn to identify behavior and how best to respond to or manage them and life's journey is a lot easier to navigate.

That is the real value of behavioral classifications – facilitating inter-personal relationships and enhancing communication. Stapling styles as labels on the foreheads of others is misuse.

However, the question remains: Is the store owner who invests in having customers fill out a questionnaire that highlights their preferences wasting time and money?

Not at all and here is why.

The store owner soon realizes that the range of preferences could be reduced to a manageable number of classifications. For simplicity here, she realizes that at its core her customers have a prevailing preference for variations of red, yellow, green, blue.

She uses that understanding to learn everything about relating to the nuances of each category (color) and meeting their needs. She figures that showing blue might attract my interest but the minute I signal I am into red today, she rolls out her red sales plan.

The beauty of behavior-based discernment is that the owner has the flexibility to deal effectively with both old and new customers. She discerns what's going on with each customer in this moment and acts accordingly.

DISCerning Communication works!

How To Use DISCerning Communication To Deal With Difficult People Challenges

Dealing with difficult people is a red hot topic. Here is a different strategy for relating to difficult people.

Firstly, appreciate that many difficult situation challenges are really *DISCerning Communication* issues. The difficulties are largely a clash of behavioral styles.

When we recognize that the difficulties are in essence a conflict of behavioral preferences we are able to apply proven strategies to resolve them. However, if we tie the difficult situation challenges to the **individual** then it is more challenging to find answers.

Practical Application of DISCerning Communication

Misunderstanding of Dominance

To get a better sense of how different behavioral perspectives can complicate communication we take a few examples from **Dominant Style** traits.

Other styles may interpret "Direct" as blunt, undiplomatic and insensitive.

"Decisive" gets translated as rash and reluctant to conduct proper analysis.

"Independent" is viewed as being selfish and not a team player.

Case Study: How DISCerning Communication improves interpersonal understanding

Let us use Don to represent **D**ominance and Susan to represent **S**teadiness and examine their perspective on "Direct".

Johnny (colleague) has a problem with body odor (BO). Don's approach is to place his arm around Johnny's shoulder and speak directly to the BO challenge advising that this brand of deodorant could solve the problem.

Susan reflects for a long time on how to get the message across to Johnny without hurting his feelings. Finally, she devices some subtle approach to give Johnny a hint.

Susan thinks Don's approach is insensitive. It will hurt Johnny's feeling.

Don thinks Susan's approach takes forever while she devises her diplomacy. In the end, Johnny might even miss the message.

Explaining their perspectives reduces their communication to a difference of approach rather than a personal issue. That makes a huge difference in terms of interpersonal relations and team cohesiveness.

We can disagree but it is on the grounds of approach not annoying personal flaws. It is not that Don is rude. He just sees a different path to achieving the objective that we both share.

That opens our minds to accept the possibility that there may be alternative points of view. There is a tendency to be less emotional in those circumstances and to avoid taking things personally.

Let us review an Inducement-Style case

Team members who have a preference for the I-style are often simultaneously the source of great pleasure and immense frustration.

Reliability can be an issue for others. "But you said you would……" might be in the conversation.

Here is a radically different perspective that might save you from pulling out more hair.

Solution

Our *DISCerning Communication* skills inform us that a feature of the I-Style is the desire to please while achieving challenging and innovative goals. They seek success with and through people.

Given the need to please others and to embrace new opportunities, there is a tendency to say "Yes" readily.

Let's use Irene as an example. You ask her to do you a favor and she says "Sure." What are Irene's realities?

She has a full time job, is President of his Citizens Association, Vice President with responsibilities for Member Issues at her Service Club, enrolled in evening classes……..

Honestly, where would Irene find the time to carry out your favor?

The bottom line is that people using the I-Style have a tendency to over-commit. Their desire to please and to connect makes them want to serve.

Some poke fun at Irene by noting that when she says "Consider it done", she instantly considers it as having been done.

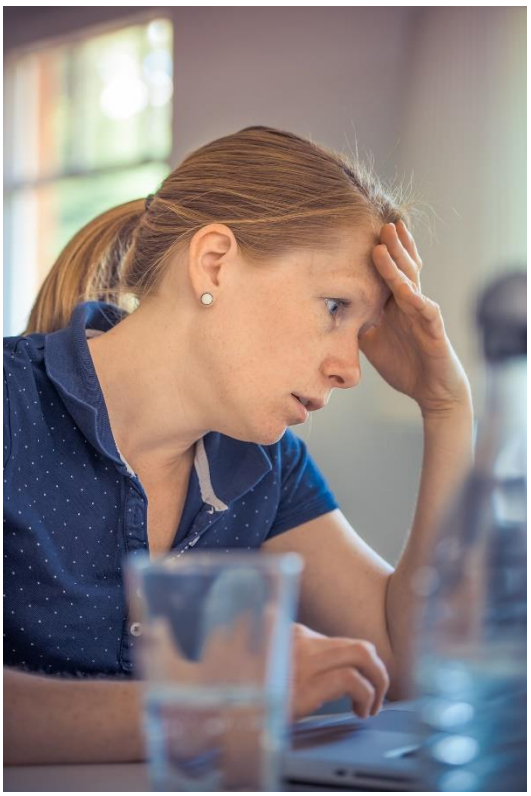
How does DISCerning Communication help?

1. Take care to have Irene clarify if her response is Yes (*meaning I would like to help*) or a genuine commitment to completing your task. Irene is a high achiever. If she is turned on to your task she will get it done.
2. Discuss implementation so that the issue is moved from the surface and becomes an action that needs to take place. Get Irene's buy-in and her adrenaline pumping for outstanding results.
3. Establish deadlines.
4. Put reminders in place.
5. Monitor progress.

DISCerning Communication makes a difference!

Why Can't People Understand Me?

Some people struggle with being misunderstood by their peers, colleagues and even family.



It can get to the point of exasperation. The situation might not solely the fault of the person being misunderstood. It might not be their fault at all, as others jump to conclusions or put up defenses that block effective and meaningful communication.

Today, I present a prototype (Pat) of a misunderstood individual and offer solutions to improve communication and relationships.

I. Identifying a fault

Pat recognizes that something is not right. Pat informs the responsible party. To Pat's amazement the conversation ends with Pat being blamed for something.

Introspection for Pat

- Are you careful to consider your role in situations (causing, influencing, preventing) before making complaints?
- Are you using the right tone, body language and communication style when making complaints?

Introspection for Others

- Are you listening in defense mode … protecting self, others, reputation, position?
- Are you distracted from the facts by other factors ….age; hierarchy; biases related to behavioral style, gender, race, culture?

II. Giving honest feedback

Pat thinks it would be helpful to draw a colleague's attention to an issue that is negatively impacting their performance.

Instead of gratitude, Pat is flooded with a stream of invectives.

Introspection for Pat

- Sometimes how things are said override what is said.
- Not everyone can accept "calling a spade a spade" when receiving feedback. Couching the feedback in delicate language and tone helps.
- Timing is critical in giving feedback. Wait for an appropriate teachable moment.

Introspection for Others

- Work on listening and appreciating the message and avoid being distracted by messenger issues.
- Continuing to pushback when receiving feedback might stem the inflow of well-meaning, useful advice. Be less sensitive.
- Shift your focus to the bigger picture.

III. Promoting faster action

Pat is impatient with the slow pace at which decisions are made and plans are implemented. Pat is a constant source of prodding.

It does not require a genius to pick up that the prods are not being well-received and any slip-up on Pat's part is celebrated and highlighted. "So, you too have performance gaps."

Introspection for Pat

- Your motive is to achieve outstanding results. The problem is that if you turn off your colleagues and fail to get their buy-in, it is going to be challenging to excel. Temper your observations and expectations. This is not a call to be complacent.
- Choose your battles. Save your persistent prodding for high impact, manageable initiatives. That way others may not be wearied by your incessant pushing.

Introspection for Others

- Truth be told, we often deliver less than we are capable of doing. Monitoring and prodding can produce the best in us – individually and collectively. Receive Pat's prods with that mind-set.
- You may be uncomfortable with how Pat is communicating with you. Have an honest discussion as to how you could respond better if the information was presented in a style that you describe to Pat.

IV. Imputed Motive

Another area of concern are the motives being ascribed to Pat. Pat is seen as being focused on results and achieving goals with little or no concern for "people" issues.

Introspection for Pat

- In many situations, perception actually trumps reality. While you recognize that success can only be achieved and sustained with and through people, you have to take the time to show it.
- Reach out in non-work-related manner more frequently. This might feel awkward for both sides initially, but will make a difference in the final analysis.

Introspection for Others

- Ascribing motives to others is a dangerous habit. We cannot tell what is going on in the mind of others.
- Relate to Pat in the way that you would like to see.

10 Ways To Communicate More Effectively With A Dominant Personality

In years of addressing interpersonal issues a constantly recurring problem is the challenge of communicating effectively with dominant personalities. There is frustration, anger, submission, despair, avoidance and separation.

Spend a few minutes to read this fun-learn guide for greater peace of mind. When interacting with Dominant behavior you will enhance your chances of success if you observe the 10 guidelines outlined below.

I. The first thing to recognize is that your perception has a lot to do with the challenges you are encountering. Also, bear in mind that the only person that you can change is you. So the recommendation is that you should focus on modifying your response in order to get better results from your encounters with dominant personalities.

   There is often a feeling of intimidation. But be aware this might be largely your perception.

II. Be quick. 'Thinking on your feet' will create a comfortable environment for the dominant personality. There is the added bonus that you may be considered *smart*, *brave* or both.... Qualities respected by dominant personalities.

III. Be specific. Beating around the bush is a definite no-no!!!

Bob is scheduled to re-pay **D**aisy money borrowed today. Bob approaches **D**aisy and comments on her dress. Discusses the weather and then on to the ball game.

Daisy is inattentive. Her only thought is ***show me the money!!!*** When **D**aisy learns that Bob has not brought the money, she lets him know that he has added the insult of wasting her time to the injury of not meeting the payment deadline.

IV. Speak in 'bullet points' and you are more likely to hold their attention. Patience is not one of the virtues that is embraced by dominant personalities.

V. Get to the point--bottom line.

David returns from the wedding and his wife asks "How was it?" **D**avid thought that "Successful" was an appropriate reply. Get to the core and get there quickly.

VI. Do NOT keep them waiting for your responses.

Poor **S**uzie lost her job because her dominant boss thought that she was guilty of insubordination for failing to respond quickly enough to his questions. **S**uzie was stunned by his accusations and needed time to process her response. Each time she got close to answering she was badgered by him and she finally retreated into total silence.

VII. Phrase your comments in the context of meeting THEIR objectives.

You achieve a greater level of buy-in if you operate from a position of addressing their needs. Remember the w-i-i-i-f-m factor. What is in it for me?

VIII. Let them lead the dialogue.

Finding out what their objectives are gives you an early indication of what they have in mind and gives you a head start in crafting your approach. Asking questions as against making statements is wise. "What do you think should be done?"

IX. Keep your agenda in mind but be careful about being too rigid.

John had rehearsed his sales presentation until he virtually knew it backwards. He kept his appointment with **D**amian and started down the familiar path. **D**amian pulled John's exhibits from his hand and asked questions that were not related to the point that John was making. John thought the presentation was a disaster. He still cannot explain how it produced the biggest sale that he had ever made.

X. Do not get upset if you are interrupted.

You might be thinking that the conversation should be like using a 2-way radio where one party hands over to the other when they have completed their comment. "Over"

Instead you might be faced with slipping in your comments while your counterpart reloads. Also, cutting you off in mid-sentence is driven more by a strong urge to get a point across than any intention of disrespect.

You must hold your ground against this tide or get swept away.

Watch my YouTube video **"Leading Dominant personalities"**

Master these and other DISCerning Communication techniques in our SHRM-accredited **3-D Team Leader Certification: Leading Difficult, Dominant, Diverse Personalities**.

Earn PDCs for the SHRM-CP or SHRM-SCP certifications. *E-mail: info@swpacademy.com*

Communicating In the Key of D-I-S-C: Coaching Listening

……. Communication that requires a balance between listening and talking

Objectives:

At the end of this section, (1) you should be able to identify the adjustment that you need to make if you are charged with communication that requires a balance between listening and talking.

(2) You should be able to identify effective strategies for coping with or coaching being engaged in communication that requires a balance between listening and talking.

Context:

The circumstances to be dealt with in this section relate to having the ability to achieve each of the following:

1. Active participation in keeping discussions alive.

2. Listening and understanding situations from the point of view of other communicators.

A. What styles are more challenged being engaged in communication that requires an emphasis on listening?

All styles are able to bring some energy to listening and well as talking in their communication.

However, It usually takes more energy for the right side of the Extended DISC Diamond™ (D and I styles) to place the emphasis on listening in communication.

D style

The D style likes to be in control of the communication process.

Their primary intent is usually to get their message across to others.

That tends to tip the scales in favor of *talking* as against *listening*.

It is not unusual for the D style to cut off incoming communication before the entire message has been received.

In pressure situations, it might be difficult for other persons to finish their sentences.

Case Study: "I got this!"

The Schools' Challenge Quiz televised on TVJ has a highly competitive 'buzzer' section towards the end of the quiz. In that section, the team that presses the buzzer first gets to answer the question that is posed. There is a bonus for correct answers and a penalty for wrong answers.

Teams sometimes try to get an edge by pressing the buzzer *before* the question is completed. That requires a dangerous level of assumption since the quiz master stops at the point of the interruption. In many instances, teams find themselves offering answers to questions that were not asked.

That is a risk that is present in D Style communication.

Have you ever encountered that? Are you aware of conversations in which one party is consistently saying "Let me finish"?

Tips for D style adjustment

1. The quiz situation highlights the dangers you face when you fail to listen carefully to *all* that is being communicated to you.

   You may miss important details that could be important for the overall outcome. Get sufficient information to ensure wise decision making.

2. Take time to notice the body language of the sender of the message and the conditions surrounding the communication. Paying attention to the other party enhances the communication process and gives you insights that you miss when you are solely focused on what you have to share.

3. Take note that people often get the uncomfortable feeling that you are only catching your breath or collecting your thoughts when it is *their* turn to speak.

   There is a feeling that you are not really listening to what they have to say and that what they are saying has little impact on your responses.

4. Get into the habit of thinking of your conversations as taking place over a two-way radio system. Each party has to pass the 'right to speak' over to the other *when they have finished what they want to say.*

   Get some signal that the other person is finished before you start.

   It will send a different kind of message to others and increase the effectiveness of your communication.

5. Recognize that in the circumstances being addressed here, *listening and understanding situations from the point of view of the other communicators* is important to achieving desired objectives.

   This requires the discipline to actually listen to what is being said and to try to understand the message.

   This is so even if you disagree with what is being communicated.

6. A key consideration to assist you in keeping your focus on listening is counting the cost. You need to evaluate the negative impact of not understanding the other party's point of view.

Case Study: Whose views?

The organization decided that it wanted to get feedback from its staff on the work environment and related issues.

Dave, the Special Projects Manager, was assigned the task of consulting one-on-one with the staff to record their views.

Dave put a lot of energy into the interview process and captured what people were saying even before they had fully expressed their thoughts. The study was completed quickly and the report submitted in short order.

During the presentation of the findings there were blank stares across the room. Finally, one hand went up to point out that a significant issue that they had raised was not reported. Then another hand, and another, and another…..

Dave had taken the responsibility to report on what he considered to be the key issues and had tuned out feedback that he thought was not important.

What went wrong here and why?

What coaching would be relevant in this scenario?

7. Combat your desire to move on without undue delay by placing a value on the information that you can glean from listening carefully for just a while longer.

   Missing some vital information could set you back so far that it could derail the entire process.

   That is not a winning strategy!

8. Stretch yourself into adopting a more S/C style posture in special circumstances:

   Listening with empathy; genuine interest in what the other person has to say; slow to speak; considerate; diplomatic.

9. Adopting the S/C posture is perhaps best achieved if you accept that the speed at which things go is not the most important factor in these cases.

   If you recognize that moving too quickly may actually cause you to lose a competitive edge it will help in getting you to muster the level of patience that you will require.

10. One key to your 'game strategy' in these circumstances is to use your capacity for *responding quickly* to build your arguments on the platform of what others say.

You wait until something is said. This gives you some insight into what the other party is thinking. You then make a response that seeks to move the discussion in the direction that you want.

You then await the next comment and follow the same strategy.

When it comes down to the bottom line, *effective listening* is a most powerful weapon.

You are going to achieve considerably more success as you improve your listening skills.

I style

The I Style challenges will primarily relate to the need for careful listening to exactly what is being said.

Closing out potential "distractions" is often an issue that deflects the conversation away from the core point being made by the other party.

Case Study: Gate prize winner?

Ivan was at the re-union and fund raising function. He was really in his element. He had so much to share with his colleagues.

In Ivan's background, the MC was announcing the number of the winning ticket for the gate prize. He repeated the number several times. He went on to draw another ticket for the prize.

Ivan's attention is finally drawn to what was taking place on stage. He finds his ticket. It is the original winning ticket – alas too late!

Tips for the I style

1. You are already conscious of the *listening* challenges that you face.

   You need to identify those times when it is absolutely critical that you focus on *just one thing.*

   Getting clear on when multi-tasking is undesirable is a big step forward.

2. Your adjustment with respect to doing multiple things at the same time can be helped by looking at what is at stake.

   If your very life depended on hearing the next few words, it would make sense for you to stop doing anything that could distract you from hearing those words.

   Some situations require you to give that same kind of undivided attention.

3. If you are not sure how critical the information that is being passed is, it is best to give it the 'life or death' treatment and focus all your attention on what is being communicated.

   Another thought is that if you "get it" the first time the information is sent, you then have more time to move on to add your comments.

4. As you are aware *timing* and *relevance* are key ingredients in making what you say interesting to others.

   If you can keep a close tab on what others are trying to communicate you have a great chance of being able to *say the right thing at the right time.*

   Feed off what others say and see if you do not receive a better response in your conversations.

5. Keep reminding yourself that communication is a two-way street.

   Focus on how interesting it is to learn what the other party is thinking. You already know what is in your mind.

6. Get into the habit of confirming what you 'hear' with the sender of the message.

   "Do I understand you to be saying that….?"

7. That approach helps you to gather your thoughts so that you can make just the right response.

   It also puts you in a situation where you become a far more effective listener.

8. Test the theory that in effective communication it is more important to be able to *receive messages* than to be able to *send messages.*

9. You have a natural gift in sending messages.

   Enhance your overall skills by paying more attention to incoming messages.

   Once you receive a message correctly and in good time, you will find the appropriate response.

10. Get some practice. Set up some listening games that will set you on the right track.

    One useful game is to draw lots. The person who wins gives 4 or so details about themselves. Each one adds their personal information and recounts *all* the details presented before.

    For example, the last person must recall the personal details of everyone who went before.

B. What styles are often challenged in situations in which taking responsibility for talking is the dominant factor in the communication process?

S Style

Patience in listening to others is one of the outstanding features of S Style behavior.

The S Style is also noted for dedication to spending time to craft messages that are diplomatic.

Strengths that are over-used may become weaknesses.

Over reliance on waiting for incoming communication and on taking time to craft responses sometimes leads to missed opportunities to share timely insights.

Case Study: Missed opportunity

Susan is part of a team that is being consulted on issues that are important to her department. The Consultant leads a highly interactive session. Susan listens as her colleagues give their input.

She has an important issue that has not been raised but she patiently waits to make her points. Others jump in as soon as the previous speaker ends their sentences.

Finally, the Consultant indicates that he has an appointment scheduled with another group and terminates the meeting.

Have you experienced a similar situation?

Has a Susan come to you after an event to share what she had in mind?

Tips for the S Style

1. Place a higher value on your input.

   It is not immodest to think that what you have to contribute is no less valuable than what others have to say.

   You are negatively impacting the common good when you deny others the benefit of your valuable insights.

2. Trust your ability to get your point across without extensive preparation. Speak from the heart ….that is greatly respected.

   Case Study: At the ready…

   A world famous author and motivational speaker shared at a high-priced workshop with hundreds from across the globe that he did not prepare for presentations like this in advance. He said that the information would come from the same place so why duplicate the effort.

   What are your thoughts about that?

3. Practice expressing your thoughts on the fly in game situations.

   Play with family and friends the equivalent of the beauty contest question time. Take turns being placed in situations in which you have to present a cogent response on random issues.

   Joining Toastmaster or a similar group would also help.

4. Be more assertive.

   This is not being arrogant or aggressive.

   This is to claim your well-deserved right to be heard and to offer the value-adding insights that you have.

5. Watch the extent to which you wrap yourself up in the speaker.

   Sometimes you get so firmly planted in their shoes that you lose your objectivity.

   That in turn shuts down your capacity to provide timely, critical feedback. Some objective detachment will improve the effectiveness of your communication.

C Style

The C Style is comfortable in the role of being a critical listener.

Attention is focused on evaluating incoming information.

The evaluation process is often so consuming as to put commenting on the back burner.

This is especially so when:

- The information is in new, unfamiliar territory.
- The discussion is dealing with controversial matters.
- There is an element of risk linked to communicating.

Case Study: Laser focus

Carvel is asked to represent the organization at a demonstration session for a new training course. Participants from other organizations engage the presenter and seek clarification on a number of issues.

Carvel dutifully takes notes adding his own nuances. Unlike some of the other participants he does not hang around to have further dialogue with the presenter. He leaves and submits a memo covering his take away from the session.

What are your thoughts about Carvel's approach?

C Style Tips

1. Empathy is an essential component of effective communication.

   This requires moderation the critical aspects of your listening. It even asks that you seek to put yourself in the other person's shoes:

   "What are the circumstances influencing their communication?"

   "What issues are likely to be distorting their expression?"

   "What are the filters through which your communication has to pass?"

2. Sometimes exposing your hand has benefits.

   Case Study: Premature disclosure

   Charlie was repeatedly concerned about how the CEO freely shared upcoming plans at meetings with third parties. He feared that risking the plans getting into the public domain was dangerous.

   The CEO rebutted that ideas are out there. Implementation is what makes the difference. Gradually, Charlie came to realize that there was invariably some angle that they had missed that was brought to the fore during these "risky disclosures".

   So, in the final analysis by showing his hand the CEO was actually enhancing the chances of success.

   Where do you stand on this?

   Are you supportive of the CEO's approach?

3. Is it *really that* risky to go on record with a comment?

   Caution is to be valued. The question is can it be over-valued?

   What are your views?

Using DISCerning Communication To Coach Conflict Avoidance & Resolution

Conflict is inevitable. Whenever there is an unmet need conflict arises. Some conflicts are hidden or suppressed while others actually produce positive results.

But what about those frustrating, energy sapping conflicts? Is there a way that we can avoid them?

There is a lot of work put into the issue of Conflict Resolution. What can be done to *prevent* conflicts versus resolving them?

A lot of conflicts arise from miscommunication.

The problem often starts with the sender. This can occur because what is sent does not fully and accurately represent what the sender has in mind.

Sender distortion is caused by many factors. One of the most prevalent ones is "engaging mouth before brain". Others include state of mind, haste and other distractions.

Sender distortion may also be impacted by the words used, expressions, the tone and the body language.

The message may not be received and interpreted as intended for similar reasons.

The receiver's mood may cause them to read into the message things that were not intended. A hasty reading might result in their missing key points.

Also, their knowledge and relationship with the sender might cloud how they receive the message. Add bias, assumptions, education, culture, past experience etc. to factors that lead to miscommunication.

These sender and receiver distortion factors are important in discussing the impact of communication in conflict resolution.

One major factor that is often missed in traditional conflict resolution training is the ***impact of behavioral styles in conflict management.***

Our behavioral style is how we choose to navigate through life and relate to others. It is displayed in our actions … the way we are. Our preferred style is a variation or combination of four primary approaches or mind sets – **D**ominance, **I**nducement, **S**teadiness and **C**onscientiousness (D-I-S-C).

We use the D-I-S-C Framework to create a universal *language of behavior.*

The messages that we send and how we send them are greatly influenced by our preferred behavioral language. If our preferred behavioral style is Dominance, our communication will tend to be more direct, seeking a decisive response that gives us what we want.

If the person receiving the message has Steadiness as their preferred behavioral style, they might feel uncomfortable with the tone of the message. They might deem it to be pushy. They might also spurn the request for a swift response because of their need to reflect on the issue and to consult with others.

The cycle then gets ratcheted up as the user of Dominance sends an even more pointed communication and is frustrated by the delay. This new communication is really disconcerting to the user of Steadiness. How anyone could be so rude and insensitive is beyond their imagination. There is now need to reconsider the entire relationship. If this is the type of behavior that is going to be presented on an ongoing basis then serious consideration must be given as to whether to continue the association.

This causes further delay and another round of escalation.

Behavioral style conflicts – hidden, suppressed and openly displayed – account for an unbelievably high percentage of inter-personal challenges. Communicating in your preferred behavioral language may result in inappropriately designed messages which are further distorted by a receiver using another behavioral style.

The solution is to master DISCerning Communication.

This involves understanding and applying the D-I-S-C Framework.

In our example, sender identifies Steadiness as the preferred behavioral language of the receiver and decides to be less direct and more patient in order to achieve the desired results.

Alternatively, the receiver learns to look beyond tone and style and to focus on core issues.

Using DISCerning Communication an appropriate message is sent and is welcomed by a reformed receiver.

Communication is impeded and conflicts arise when the parties in the conversation speak different behavioral languages. Learning and using D-I-S-C - the universal language of behavior - is a powerful way to avoid conflict.

Mutually satisfying results are achieved by modifying communication styles.

Is Miscommunication Frustrating Your Growth?

If your car is experiencing serious mechanical problems pressing on the accelerator is not the best solution. Yet that is precisely what is taking place in many organizations.

High performance is dependent on the presence of well-oiled teams. However, there is a tendency to ignore this fundamental principle and to try to accelerate with stretch targets and incentives.

Effective communication drives teamwork - the foundation of high performance. Issues like Giving and Receiving Instructions or the Exchange of Feedback can create conflicts that are masked. Undetected conflict undermines the cohesiveness of the team and negatively impacts productivity.

Organizations make significant investments in search of increased productivity while neglecting the human resources who are the critical factor in achieving their objectives.

Each role in an organization gets best results from a given behavioral style or blend of styles. Round pegs in square holes is a recurring problem. Role Fit is a solution and we help organizations to achieve it.

Two case studies highlight the issue

We were engaged by a family owned business. During the initial information gathering process, team members openly questioned why I was there as “the boss knows everything.”

Challenges in understanding and relating to D-style leadership abound and rob organizations of productivity while provoking morale problems.

D-style leadership is focused on improving results. The **D** represents dominance, being driven, direct, and potentially dogmatic and demanding. Decisiveness is a cornerstone of D-style leadership.

Some individuals have a real problem understanding and functioning effectively under D-style leadership. Many organizations fail to appreciate that they are experiencing what we term a *"followership crisis*".

Team members opt out of active participation in response to D-style leadership. They throw up their hands in the face of what they perceive as arrogance, stubbornness, a failure to listen and a sense of “My way or the highway.”

Case Study 2

Dawn represents another coaching intervention. She was promoted to lead the department.

Complaints filtered out that all was not well in the department. Management tried to resolve it before seeking our support. We got the team to complete Extended DISC™ Team behavioral diagnostics.

We immediately identified that effective communication was at the heart of the problem.

It was the equivalent of Dawn communicating in Swahili to her Russian and Greek speaking team mates.

Dawn thought Suzanne was lazy and lacked initiative. Suzanne got the message that Dawn wanted to call all the shots and that she (Suzanne) should act solely on Dawn's instructions.

Claudine was stunned that Dawn thought that the documentation and reporting that she labored over so diligently was a waste of productive time.

We resolved the issue successfully by introducing DISCerning Communication – the universal ***language of behavior.***

We reinforce the basic framework for applying DISCerning Communication:

Our preferred approach for going through life is placed into 4 basic categories. These approaches cover our outlook; how we react to developments; how we communicate – orally, in writing and through our body language; how we hear others; our strategies for achieving our objectives etc.

[This is **not** saying that there are 4 types of people. Rather, it is a method of classifying the strategies or tool-kits that we use to cope with life.]

Dawn has a preference for communicating using the D-style (Red). Action results, taking charge, making things happen, bottom-line vs details. She might come across as pushy and aggressive under pressure.

Suzanne operates from the opposite end of the spectrum S-Style (Green). She wants to operate in a calm, stable environment. She wants to ensure that she does not butt heads with Dawn.

Using DISCerning Communication principles we were able to diffuse the tension and to lay the groundwork for better understanding among the team members.

Decoding the messages being received by team members opened up a whole new approach to internal communication with marked improvement in team dynamics and productivity.

Team dynamics are an important component of any quest for improved productivity. Are your teams speaking the same behavioral language? Is miscommunication frustrating your growth?

Opt for a Team building intervention that is guided by DISCerning Communication concepts.

How To Get Best Results From Dominance

In the decades that I have worked with the Extended DISC ™ Framework and provided coaching and solutions to individuals and organizations, problems relating to DOMINANCE is one constant among the issues to be resolved. I have shared frequently on how to deal with dominant individuals.

We have gone as far as developing a Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM)-accredited certification program specifically to address this recurring challenge - ***"3-D Leader Certification: How to lead Difficult, Dominant and Diverse Personalities."***

Now, I want to place the focus on what dominant individuals can do to get better results. What adjustments can a dominant leader, manager, wife, husband, professional make to enhance relationships and improve performance?

I. Place greater value on teamwork

This is loaded because it touches many of the issues that others have in dealing with you. These three bullet points help:

- You may have the vision and clarity re the destination. However, some people need to know where they are going and the route to be taken before signing up and becoming fully engaged. Make the time to sell the vision and strategy on an ongoing basis.

- Resist the temptation to go-it-alone when others are not responding at the pace and in the manner that you want. A one-man-band is great but a group brings added benefits.

Place value on this added dimension and work to preserve it…despite frustrations and lost time.

- Time invested in empowering your support crew can have extraordinary returns on investment.

II. Be more sensitive

It is not immediately clear why some people are so thin-skinned. And some do need to grow up. However, until that changes, fix what you have under your control – YOU.

One of your redeeming features is that you are frank and willing to let others know where you stand.

That said, you get better results if you pause to state your views more diplomatically – being conscious that your audience might be sensitive.

Trust me on this: Body language, tone and facial expression are the killers.

I accept that you were merely emphasizing a point but got the push back that you were shouting. Adopt the S-Style and p-u-n-c-t-u-a-t-e sentences in quieter voice when upset. They actually reduce volume when they are mad.

Get this also: Not all moments are right for teaching and correcting! Postpone calling out the spade until later. BTW…some people sweat small stuff and get offended if you totally ignore them.

III. Listen even though....

I know. This is the third time that he has said "As I said before…"

I accept that you got it the first time and you are ready to move on. ***Listen to me***, if you shut him down he is going to complain that he can't get a chance to express himself and might clam up going forward. Sink your nails into your palms, maintain eye contact and appear attentive.

Hot tip: Summarize what you have heard to reduce the frequency of the *"You're not listening"* feedback.

IV. Spend more time in analysis

Your track record justifiably inspires the confidence you exhibit. However, history is replete with cases of failure arising from over-confidence. Stay true to doing the homework (or have it done for you).

While you are at it, **ask more – tell less**. Developing the capacity and willingness to use Powerful Questioning techniques is transformational.

V. Bypass triggers

Some things annoy you.

Work to calmly respond to them.

Others may deliberately use them to upset you.

VI. Allow more time for recharging

Batteries run down and are dysfunctional in that state. Manage your time so that you can function in peak state most of the time.

One solution is to bring laser-focus to how you allocate your time.

Make the decision to shed a low priority/low value adding project and channel that time into recharging your battery and upgrading your skills.

Spend some time in a useful learning & development program or commit to a coaching intervention.

Effective Listening For The Dominant Personality

Issues related to LISTENING is a constant feedback that we get about individuals who have a preference for Dominance (D Style) in navigating through life.

It usually takes more energy for those individuals to listen with empathy and patience and without interrupting.

Effective Listening - D style

Individuals who have a preference for the D style like to be in control of the communication process. The primary intent is usually to get their message across to others. That tends to tip the scales in favor of *talking* as against *listening*.

It is not unusual to for the D style to cut off incoming communication before the entire message has been received. In pressure situations, it might be difficult for other persons to finish their sentences.

10 Tips for D style adjustment

1. Listen carefully to *all* that is being communicated or you may miss important details that could be important for the overall outcome.

2. Take time to notice the body language of the sender of the message and the conditions surrounding the communication.

3. Note that people often get the uncomfortable feeling that you appear to be merely catching your breath or collecting your thoughts when it is *their* turn to speak. There is a feeling that you are not really listening to what they have to say and that what they are saying has little impact on your responses.

4. Think of your conversations as taking place over a two-way radio system. Each party has to pass the 'right to speak' over to the other *when they have finished what they want to say.* Wait to get some signal that the other person is finished before you start. It will send a different kind of message to others and increase the effectiveness of your communication.

5. Recognize that *listening and understanding situations from the point of view of the other communicators* is of equal importance to *getting your point across*. This requires the discipline to actually listen to what is being said and to try to understand the message. This is so even if you disagree with what is being communicated.

6. The first step in achieving this objective is counting the cost. Focus on the potential negative effects of not understanding the other party's point of view or missing key information.

7. Combat your desire to move on by placing greater value on incoming information. Missing some vital information could set you back so far that it could derail the entire process. *That* is not a winning strategy! Listen longer.

8. Stretch yourself into adopting a more (S/C style) posture: *Listening with empathy; showing genuine interest in what the other person has to say; being slow to speak; being considerate and diplomatic.*

9. Accept that the speed at which things go is not the most important factor in all cases. If you recognize that moving quickly may actually cause you to lose a competitive edge it will help in getting you to muster the level of patience that you will require.

10. One key to your 'game strategy' to listen more effectively is to use your capacity for *responding quickly* to build your arguments on the platform of what others say. You wait until something is said. This gives you some insight into what the other party is thinking. You then make a response that seeks to move the discussion in the direction that you want. You await the next comment and follow the same strategy.

When it comes down to the bottom line, *effective listening* is a most powerful weapon. You are going to achieve considerably more success as you improve your listening skills.

Unravelling the Trump Spectacle

Written pre-election

Donald Trump is a major talking point these days. His behaviour is puzzling to some, condemned by others and embraced by his enthusiastic followers.

I am an avid student of human behaviour and the amazing possibilities that our minds open for us.

I shed clothing and got into an ice hole. I did a fire walk on hot coals barefoot.

However, my mental conditioning goes out the window in the face of a strange dog. I am fully submissive in their presence. I have been intimidated out of my wits by dogs lying still in front of their gate.

The fact that I was willing to give up my right to walk on a public thoroughfare because of my perception of a threat gives us an important starting point in unravelling the Trump spectacle.

I share a 4-Step Plan for dealing with Dominance.

Step 1

An important starting point is to recognize that at its core Dominance feeds on Intimidation and Submission. What is not widely recognized is that domination can be self-inflicted!

That is an important take-away from my experience. I took it upon myself to be dominated by dogs who had no interest in harming me as I later realized when I finally developed the courage to walk past them.

Weeding out self-inflicted domination is the first step towards the capacity to deal effectively with dominant personalities.

The dog analogy is instructive.

Dominance is actually a style of behaviour and with it comes certain attitudes, mannerisms and actions.

One such mannerism is the equivalent of aggressive barking. That barking is not necessarily supported by a commitment or intention to bite. However, its intensity puts doubt in the mind of others and the barker protects its position. The barking demeanour creates a feeling of **intimidation** in others**.**

Individuals who like Donald Trump use Dominance as their preferred style of interacting with others may come across as aggressive, pushy and even threatening. It is now a part of their persona. “Why are you shouting?” is received with genuine surprise. “Shouting, me?”

They are in denial about their aggression. Recognizing that the barking may only be a manifestation of a trigger action makes it easier to avoid being intimidated by it.

Step 2

An important second step in dealing with dominant personalities is to make the distinction between bark, bite and intention to bite. We identified weeding out self-induced domination as the first step.

The second skill to develop is the capacity to identify when barking is not linked to biting or the intention to bite.

Yes…some barks are clear signals that biting is about to take place. Others are just a natural tendency to bark that appears intimidating but has no real intention to bite behind it.

The secret here is the need to look beyond tone and body language which complicate communication with dominant personalities. Work to distil the essence of what is taking place without the noise of demeanour.

This is a challenging but fundamental mechanism for dealing effectively with dominant personalities.

The voice may be raised and there is animation but what are we dealing with at the core here?

Is there blustering taking place to distract attention from the real issues at play?

Keeping your focus on the core issue helps you to avoid being distracted by the noise of tone and body language.

You need to take that foundation principle into dealing with dominant personalities like Trump.

Step 3

Strategic Approach

I am going to share a two-part strategy that has an impeccable track record of success.

However, before that it is important to deepen our understanding of Dominance as a behavioural style.

Mind sets linked to Dominance include a strong desire to WIN. Not just win but to make a notable contribution to winning.

There is also a need to have some influence over results. Sitting in the back seat away from the steering wheel is distinctly uncomfortable. In that situation, back-seat driving is a natural outlet.

That is the second-guessing and push back that leaders get from dominant team members. This is the equivalent of the challenges the GOP are having with the Trump challenge to their values and principles.

Part One: Strategic Approach

Satisfying their need for active and meaningful engagement points the way to the third step in leading dominant personalities more effectively.

Positive results will come from identifying ways to align their needs to core strategy and vision through negotiation.

Share where we are going and the route we are taking and why we have chosen that route. Actively take on board their feedback and explain what can be incorporated and what cannot be accommodated now and why.

The Carson endorsement must surely have come with some concession from Trump.

Part Two: Strategic Approach

A companion strategy is to make a concerted effort to show respect and being attentive to their contribution. This recognition can produce surprisingly positive results.

Whatever level the individual may be at, give them clarity about their contribution to bringing the vision to fruition and to successful completion of the mission.

The third step then in the quest to deal more effectively with dominant personalities is to negotiate ways to link their role to the vision, integrate them meaningfully and respect their contribution.

In the final analysis, however, further action may be required. This is especially true with individuals who want to advance their personal agenda and test their muscles.

The fact is that dominant personalities want to drive. They want to have their hands on the steering wheel. The closer you can get to allowing even an occasional side-steer, the more comfortable and cooperative they will be.

Devise strategies to move them from the THEY side of the WE | THEY divide to being associated with or being a part of the WE.

We recall our school days. The smart teachers placed the noisy trouble makers in charge of maintaining discipline. That role shift produced a transformation of the classroom dynamics.

The same principles may be applied when dealing with out of step personalities. Get the dominant individual member to see themselves in a different role and context. Do that effectively and you will experience less push back and greater levels of cooperation.

Step 4

Finally, a friendly suggestion.

Fighting fire with fire and head butting really produces no winners in the long run. Non-strategic confrontation is more likely to escalate resistance and may even provoke open hostility.

Follow the 4 steps outlined above for best results in dealing with dominant personalities.

These principles are incorporated in our SHRM-accredited **3-D Leader Certification: Leading Difficult, Dominant & Diverse Personalities**

Pressure Cooker Relationships: Why Does The Lid Fly Off?

"I just asked a simple question and he started ranting and raving about issues that have nothing to do with my question or even me?"

This situation is not unfamiliar to many of us. If we are perfectly honest, we might have found ourselves cast in the role of the pressure cooker.

Pressure cookers control the pressure inside by allowing the release of steam. The spewing of hot contents that results from careless opening of the lid is an ever present danger.

That very same principle applies to our inter-personal relationships.

Your supervisor is making your life miserable. You really need this job so you put on your best imitation of Job.

Up comes Angella. You recently had a difference of opinion on a matter. Dear Angie saunters up to you on your return from one of your "dental appointment" sessions with your supervisor.

What does sweet Angie want to talk about? Well my my, if it isn't that issue that we haggled about and agreed to disagree on!

Your Job-mask removed, you let fly all that hot stuff that has been waiting for release. Shock, hurt, confusion, anger, bewilderment ….are all written across Angella's face.

You allow yourself a few seconds to savor the release before setting about initiating damage control.

Why is this happening?

You usually manage your relationships well and a public demonstration of outrage is really not you. So, why this outburst with Angella.

The simple answer is **Unmet Need.**

Conflicts may be hidden or manifested. They can also involve others or just reside internally.

Conflicts arise when a need is not met. This is a fundamental principle that impacts our relationship with others but is so often ignored.

Take the real life case best friends Jerry and Madge. They are sitting a Maths exam. Madge has protractor. A few students ask to borrow it and Madge obliges. Jerry asks Madge and she refuses to lend it to him.

Jerry recounts that for years he did not speak to Madge. He only renewed the connection after her mother intervened. His argument was that Madge could lend Tom, Dick and Harry and when he - “best friend” - came she turned him down. That was not how he understood friendship.

Now consider Madge in the context of the pressure cooker.

She is in a challenging Maths exam grappling with concepts that are difficult for her. She is overwhelmed. Here comes someone to distract her to borrow her protractor.

“Why did Tom come without a protractor anyway? Back to Question 4. Here comes Dick….. and now Harry. This is getting on my nerves. If anybody else comes …..

Oh, no …not Jerry. I can’t do this anymore. If I don’t draw the line here I might as well just go around the room moving my protractor to the next person. Hopefully, Jerry understands that this is not about him.”

UNMET NEEDS have been the source of so many challenging situations in our relationships. When we fail to identify them in ourselves and in others they have the potential to blow the lid off and cause serious damage to our relationships.

The habit of asking questions and looking below the surface helps to unearth unmet needs. Also, work to create a climate of transparency and trust that invites openness and sharing. This releases pressure and precludes the lid being blown off.

Pressure Release Tips

- Add real meaning to "How are you?" Be sensitive to changes in moods.
- Share freely some of your unmet needs so that others feel safe and comfortable doing the same.
- Take an interest in the whole person … what makes them tick, ambitions, vision, goals, hurdles….
- Never ever betray a confidence and only share about others with their explicit permission.
- Keep focus on your needs and the needs of others. Recognizing and addressing needs is a key strategy for avoiding blown lids.

He Performs Well But He Is A Pain To Deal With

Regrettably people who get things done do not always come equipped with the most pleasing personalities.

A CEO of a major corporation suggested that I address this issue.

What can we do with the high performer who has no intention of competing for the "most popular award?"

I have been at pains to avoid focusing on fixing others and instead to work on how we can make adjustments to facilitate better inter-personal relations.

We will use a powerful questioning technique to address the issue.

What

What is it about High Performer (HP) that upsets you? List out each characteristic. Take the process a step further by recalling incidents in which the upsetting action was displayed. Noting frequency and intensity will help to establish the magnitude and gravity of the problem.

Why

Go through characteristic by characteristic and dig deep to find out why you find them upsetting.

Are you seeking to impose your will? Are you unnecessarily sensitive and nit picking? Is a given characteristic limited to HP or seen in others? If seen in others, how do you respond to them?

When

When does HP display the upsetting behaviors? Can you identify triggers that set them off? If so, what can you do to control the trigger events?

Review the operating environment and culture to see if it encourages HP's upsetting behavior.

Who

As objectively as you can muster, reflect on whether there is something about **your** actions that inspires HP's reaction.

Does HP display the same unacceptable behavior across the board? If not, who is able to command his respect and elicit appropriate actions? What can be learned from that individual?

Case Study

Consider the case of John of Operations. He is blunt, intolerant, aggressive and pushy. His colleagues find him to be abrasive and difficult to get along with.

Stepping back from the situation, you might recognize that the environment in which John works is a high pressure, unforgiving one.

There is a graphic history of people who held the job before him and bit the dust. John is not about to join that group. He sees every waking moment as a struggle for personal survival. He strives to be as unforgiving and unrelenting as he perceives his job to be. He is just mirroring his environment.

One way forward with John is to rethink the culture of the organization and how team leaders like John perceive their roles and responsibilities.

To the extent that latitude and understanding is a feature of the operating environment, to that extent John might consider being less intolerant, aggressive and abrasive.

Case Study II

We could also consider Ann, the Internal Auditor. She has a reputation of getting on everybody's last nerve. She communicates with a tone and body language of a police officer interrogating the prime suspect. She is adept of reading upside down and eavesdropping is practiced.

Wow! This is a tough one. However, with the right mind set and appropriate techniques, improved inter-personal relations is a distinct possibility.

Have a heart-to-heart talk with Ann. Explain that you want to be a part of the solution and not the problem. Find out from her what information she requires from you to get her job done, the format she needs it in and the schedule for its presentation.

Establish definitively that your compliance will make it unnecessary for her to seek to get information from or about you *through means that are the subject of much concern among your colleagues.*

Repeat or escalate the process as needed.

How To Coach Increased Assertiveness

The caterers made an equal amount of plain cake and fruit cake. Not surprisingly the fruit cake ran out leaving some unmet demand. I told my waitress that I **need** my fruit cake and that she should make sure that I got some. As we got up from the table, one of the participants in the 3-D Leader Certification program shared that he wanted to be able to do what I did. He wanted to be more assertive.

One default coaching for individuals with a preference for S-style (reserved/people-oriented) behavior is to assist them in being more assertive. Their willingness to give up their deserved position in deference to others or to submit rather than engage in confrontation is not appropriate for all situations and hence the call to be more assertive.

Pay-Off

When the waitress brought my fruit cake, I pointed to one key to being assertive: **The pay-off.**

Doing a cost/benefit analysis of taking assertive action provides a great incentive for modifying your behavior. I could have taken the route of passively accepting that there is no more fruit cake. By speaking up I got the pay-off of satisfying my needs.

This request for guidance into how to be more assertive or bold is frequent and cuts across gender, levels of education and culture. Placing greater value on the pay-off of being assertive is a useful intervention strategy.

Emotional Detachment

A second step also helps to increase assertiveness. Getting the fruit cake was not really important to me. I just felt like playing out the scene to see what would happen. I was not emotionally invested in actually getting the fruit cake. That produced two benefits.

I was relaxed and, critically, I did not have the urge to feel guilty about inconveniencing the caterers. It was all good-natured without any animosity. This is important for individuals whose natural tendency is to retreat and submit rather than upsetting others. They can be assertive without being confrontational or overbearing

Encourage them to put forward their requests instead of leaving their needs unmet. They should reflect on the fact that the alternative is being willing to walk away empty handed. Consequently, they are well positioned to calmly go through the process as they have nothing to lose.

Be Yourself

Another fundamental shift in mind-set is to appreciate that their use of assertiveness need not be a permanent modification of their behavior. They can selectively use assertiveness and return to their comfort zone. This is relevant because while they may see the value of being assertive in some situations they also dislike some of persistent aggression and pushiness that they encounter. They would hate being seen in that light. Urge them to be committed to stepping out only when the cost/benefit analysis indicates that it is expedient to be assertive. They can then swiftly return to their natural state.

Check your record

One factor that fuels a reluctance to be assertive is the apprehension about some negative fallout. What if the cost outweighs the perceived benefits? If I volunteer my thoughts on an issue what if others disagree or horror of horrors, what if they snicker? Should I run the risk of embarrassment?

To address this apprehension encourage them to check their track record.

Ask them: "When they listen to the discussion among colleagues are they expressing pearls of wisdom that are above your head or did you have unexpressed thoughts that could add value?"

Moving them to a place where they really know themselves and accepting that they are informed and able to make valid contributions will boost their self-confidence and allow them to be more assertive.

New shoes

Following these steps is going to be uncomfortable for a while. They will be increasingly comfortable with practice. Consequently, encourage them to go out of their way to seek out opportunities to be assertive.

For example, they could volunteer to share their expertise ("Yes – you have expertise") with a group. Suggest that they ask the guidance counsellor at their alma mater to allow them to address a small group of students.

Point out that they could opt to refuse to accept poor customer service. Also, gently encourage them to craft a script for approaching their supervisor about an issue that is impacting performance.

Suggest that they practice these steps intensively for 30 days and to review them weekly over the next three months.

If they implement these guidelines they will step out more boldly whenever they need to be more assertive.

Certified Behavioral Coach Award

Formal Certification for an In-demand Skill Set

This certification applies to the mastery of strategies that will help individuals to guide others into identifying *where they are, where they want to be and the best strategies for getting there.*

It relates to the application of tested methods for coaching behavior modification. The certification is designed to support leadership, coaching and mentoring, the enhancing of productivity and the creation of a positive environment in groups and organizations.

The crisis related to Employee Engagement is a major challenge internationally. Coaching at the functional levels is now an imperative for organizations who want to remain competitive. This is NOT an issue that can be simply left for HR to sort out.

Target groups include the Executive Corps, HR Professionals, Team Leaders, Middle Managers, Supervisory Personnel, Counsellors and Mentors.

The Modules: High impact skill sets

1. Apply a structured framework for achieving success with & through people

2. Use a behavioral framework to identify behavioral styles in daily interaction

3. Develop sustainable relationships with persons with diverse behavioral preferences

4. Settle disputes using style-directed approaches

5. Give and receive feedback without pushback

6. Give instructions that get it done the first time

7. Develop high performance teams and support team cohesiveness

8. Provide supervision and leadership to different styles and varied situations

9. Learn core principles in being an effective Coach &/or Mentor

10. Respond appropriately to different styles of leadership and supervision

International Coach Federation

Continuing Coach Education Credits

Core Competence: Communicating Effectively

11. A. Effective Listening

Ability to focus completely on what the client is saying and is not saying, to understand the meaning of what is said in the context of the client's desires, and to support client self-expression.

11. B. Powerful Questioning:

Ability to ask questions that reveal the information needed for maximum benefit to the coaching relationship and the client.

11. C. Direct Communication

Ability to communicate effectively during coaching sessions, and to use language that has the greatest positive impact on the client.

Optional:

Master the application and interpretation of Extended DISC/FinxS Solutions

Certification Awarding Entities:

Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) …. PDCs awarded for SHRM Certifications
International Coach Federation (ICF)
Extended DISC/FinxS International
Success with People™ Academy

Logistics:

- Live, interactive online sessions
- Ongoing e-mail support
- Access to Success with People online learning experience
- Pre-workshop assignment
- Extensive library of course materials

- Completion of your personal Coaching DNA behavioral assessment
- Formal award of International Coach Federation "Certified Behavioral Coach" designation
- International Coach Federation CCE credits.
- Optional: Application of Extended DISC/FinxS solutions in your environment

Support Mechanisms

- Certification Manuals
- e-Workbooks on Engagement, Coaching, Leadership, Conflict
- Course materials including PowerPoint presentations
- E-mail Consultation (hand holding)

Access the Certified Behavioral Coach Program here

3-D Team Leader Certification: Leading Difficult, Dominant, Diverse Personalities

3-D Leader is the first "difficult people" certification that is specifically developed for those charged with leading groups that include difficult, dominant and diverse personalities.

It goes beyond offering mere coping advice to providing concrete step-by-step strategies for leading diverse high performing teams.

Your need is not merely trying to get along. Your responsibility is to pull together a challenging group into a cohesive team that achieves stretch targets and meets its objectives.

You are called to extraordinary leadership, to function on another dimension. Your calling is to be a **3-D Leader**.

As a certified **3-D Team Leader** you will:

- Apply a breakthrough perspective on the concept of difficult people to immediately achieve new levels of understanding and harmony.
- Speak D-I-S-C fluently so that your diverse personalities hear your instructions and feedback in their preferred behavioral language.
- Use ready-to-go step-by-step strategies to lead effectively despite open and hidden challenges from team members.
- Develop the knack of being able to communicate as if you were *'inside the head'* of the other person.

"I have been involved in executive management for the better part of 20 years with more than my fair share of success. The D-I-S-C framework has changed my perspective on management, leadership, followership and human interaction; forever."

Livingstone Morrison, Deputy Governor – Bank of Jamaica (equivalent of the US Treasury)

Graduate of the Success with People Academy's "Certified Behavioral Coach" program.

Course Structure:

Module 1: Dealing With Difficult People – A Different Perspective

Module 2: Why You Must Learn To Speak D-I-S-C Fluently To Achieve Success

Module 3: Using DISCerning Communication to Lead Effectively

Module 4: Who Is In Charge Here Anyway? Leading Dominant Personalities

Module 5: How to Lead The 5 Most Difficult Characters

Module 6: How To Handle Conflict Using Different Techniques

Module 7: Developing High Performing Teams

Module 8: Followership and Low Employee Engagement: Problems & Solutions

Module 9: Giving & Receiving Feedback and Instructions Without Pushback

Module 10: **On-the-job Assignment**

Participants are required to conduct a coaching session with key members of their team in which they pass on **3** of the most beneficial concepts that they covered in the **3 D Leader** experience.

3-D Leader: Leading Difficult, Dominant & Diverse Personalities *is a program of the Success with People™ Academy which is authorized by the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) to offer Professional Development Credits (PDCs) for the SHRM-CPS or SHRM-SCPS Certifications.*

The course is delivered online as a live facilitator-led, interactive sessions. Subscribers are required to actively participate in a minimum of 6 of the 8 2-hour sessions that will be provided. There will be an online assessment.

The process is supported by:

- 12-month's access to online courseware
- One year of e-mail consultation
- Access to an exclusive community on Facebook PLUS
- Optional participation in 4 quarterly interactive group webinars.

Move up to the next dimension. Become a **SHRM accredited** **3-D Leader and lead difficult, dominant and diverse personalities.**

Contact us now for more information: info[at]swpacademy.com

Leadership Found Wanting Worldwide: Global Survey Results

The Deloitte Global Human Capital Trends 2015 provides a wake-up call for those tasked with HR and Leadership responsibilities.

Here are some of the alarm bells:

- The gap is widening between what business leaders want and what HR is delivering.
- Engagement and culture skyrocketed to the no. 1 issue around the world, with 87 percent of companies rating it important or very important vs. 79 percent last year.
- Half the respondents rated their leadership shortfalls as "very important," while only 31 percent believe their leadership pipeline is “ready.”
- Learning and development issues exploded, rising from the no. 8 to the no. 3 most important talent challenge in this year’s study, yet despite this demand, capabilities in learning dropped significantly.
- The capability gap for building great leaders has widened in every region of the world.

The report paints a picture of HR and Learning & Development (L & D) professionals scrambling under the goading of their CEO’s and internal clients to find solutions to this widening leadership gap.

There is the stark image of under-prepared leaders having to meet the challenges of low employee engagement and a workforce that is seemingly more willing to confront them.

Down-sized and under-resourced HR and L & D departments are already taxed with transactional demands and are their wits end as to how to address this ever increasing challenge.

Is there is feasible solution that can be implemented under existing circumstances?

Another question is whether the Report will prompt a rethinking about the role of HR in organizations.

Here is a step-by-step 7-point Action Plan that addresses the issue:

1. Avoid re-inventing what is already in place. Instead of taking on the added burden of designing leadership programs seek out accredited courses that meet your needs.
2. Look for options that are scalable while not placing additional demands on your human resources.
3. Focus on solutions that can be rolled out to large numbers of team members without time and place impediments.
4. Avoid band-aid solutions that touch the surface and reach large numbers but fail to incorporate the critical follow-up, handholding and accountability elements that are essential to sustained success.
5. Time is of the essence. Opt for solutions that can be implemented quickly and easily. There is growing impatience with the situation and you need to demonstrate palpable results quickly.
6. Low employee engagement is taken into participation in learning and development initiatives. Selecting programs that offer participants certification is proven to make a huge difference in levels of take-up and completion.
7. Avoid simply going along with traditional leadership programs. They are clearly not meeting the emerging needs or that leadership gap would not be widening. Look for niche programs that specifically addresses issues being encountered by your leadership cadre.

One example of an area of great concern that is not specifically addressed is the issue of **leading difficult employees**. There is little question that employees are now somewhat more assertive and more willing to challenge their team leaders. “Difficult people challenges” is consistently among the top 3 issues that team leaders raise as areas of personal struggle.

The **3-D Leader Certification: Leading Difficult, Dominant & Diverse Personalities** is only The Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) accredited leadership program that deals specifically with equipping leaders at all levels to effectively lead their dominant, difficult and diverse team members.

3-D Leader offers internationally recognized SHRM Professional Development Credits which enhance resumes. That prompts higher levels of interest and completion of training programmes. At the same time, the critical follow-up and handholding components are included in twelve months access to e-mail consultation and to online courseware and e-content.

Ask about special corporate packages and develop a cadre of leaders who are trained and certified to address the vexed issue of leading teams with dominant, difficult and diverse members.

About Us

Trevor E S Smith is a Director of the Success with People™ Academy.

The Success with People Academy develops high performing teams and offers SHRM accredited certification and PDCs to leader-coaches. The Success with People Academy supports the revolutionary FinxS ™ Platform from Extended DISC™.

The FinxS™ Platform and linked solutions support:

- Competency-based Candidate Screening to achieve Hire Smart objectives
- Electronics Employee Satisfaction Surveys
- 360 Performance Evaluations
- Personal Behavioral Analysis incorporating a large competency library
- Multi-person Comparative Reports
- Team Analysis incorporating a variety of Team Maps

The Success with People™ Academy is accredited by the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) to offer Professional Development Credits for its SHRM-CP and SHRM-SCP certifications.

The "Certified Behavioral Coach" is accredited by the International Coach Federation for the award of ICF Continuing Education Credits as well as by SHRM.

The "3 D Leader Certification: Leading Difficult, Dominant and Diverse Personalities" is accredited by SHRM for the award of Professional Development Credits.

Contact

Trevor E S Smith
E-mail: info@swpacademy.com

Website