

# Avoiding a Sinking Ship: how to Build Effective and Influential Relationships with Difficult and Challenging People

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# Introduction

- Difficult employees are made, not born
- Difficult employees are difficult selectively
- You can't change a difficult employee's personality
- You can get a difficult employee to change their behavior
- Change usually doesn't happen overnight...for you or for the difficult employee

# Assess: Is it worth it?

- Is the difficult behavior truly unacceptable?
- Do you feel anxious every time you are going to see this employee?
- Do you find yourself waiting for the employee to be difficult?
- Does the way the employee treats you affect the way other people see or treat you?
- Is the difficult behavior impacting others or the work that needs to be done?

# Key Steps

- Clarify goals with the difficult employee
  - Your goals
  - Their goals
- Separate feelings
- Adjust expectations
- Control behavior
- Develop a plan

# Understand Difficult Personalities

- Doer
- Thinker
- See'er
- Feeler

# Listen Effectively to Difficult Employees

## Paraphrase

*It will help to:*

- **Make people appreciate that you've heard them**
- **Stop escalating anger**
- **Stop miscommunication**
- **Remember what was said**
- **Focus**

## Listen with empathy

*Ask yourself:*

- **What need is the message coming from? (anger...)**
- **What danger is the person experiencing?**
- **What is he/she asking for?**

## Listen with openness

- **Don't judge**
- **Lean slightly forward**
- **Maintain eye contact**

## Listen with awareness

*Do this by:*

- **Checking for congruence (verbal and nonverbal)**
- **Asking questions and quick checking**
- **Resisting distractions**

*Make sure that your body language reflects your listening.*

# Remember to:

- Be an observer
- Think strategy
- Practice to be ready
- Choose your time
- Choose your place
- Say less, ask and listen more

# And, remember to...

- L
- A
- U
- G
- H