

# 10 Tips for Dealing with Difficult People

## 1. *Communicate Well*

Ensure you listen well and let the other party do a lot of the talking. Ask open questions and allow lots of space (silences can be very effective). The space and/or silence is one you invite the difficult person to use wisely.

## 2. *Act Normally*

When working with a 'difficult person', those who do best, act normally. They don't avoid them, nor do they behave differently than they would with anyone else.

## 3. *Seek to Understand*

The best exponents of this skill appreciate the 'difficult person's' point of view. They recognise that issues are real to them and honour that.

## 4. *Behaviour is not personal*

Make sure that you treat a hostile issue as unacceptable behaviour, not that they are a 'bad' person. The 'difficult person' does not have a personal issue usually with those who deal with them, they are difficult with everyone!

## 5. *Understand Fear*

'Difficult people' behave the way they do usually out of some sort of fear. Through building a better relationship with that person it may allow you to understand why they present in this way and allow you to work towards a solution.

## 6. *Small Things*

Sometimes you may be able to find clues as to what is irritating the 'difficult person'. You may be able to sort out the problem without a great deal of effort - they are even sometimes to create a good relationship with the person.

## **7. Build Trust**

Those best at Dealing with Difficult People develop a sense of trust with their 'difficult person'. Often the behaviour of others will have tainted their experiences and cause serious mistrust.

## **8. Find a Solution**

When you are very capable of Dealing with Difficult People it is sometimes the simple acts which have the most effect. Just asking them what it is they want can often be an easy solution. It's just that no-one ever asked before!

## **9. Help Them**

Often all these difficult people want is to feel wanted, to be a part of the team again. It's a natural emotion which may work in your favour. They know that an emotional buy-in maybe a great way forward.

## **10. Recognise Qualities**

Every person can be a valuable asset, whatever they are like.

*Adapted from Martin Haworth, the founder of Coaching Businesses to Success*

## Keys to Open Communication

- ❖ Focus on the issue not the person
- ❖ Respond rather than react
- ❖ Develop the art of asking appropriate questions
- ❖ Identify early signs or clues of conflict
- ❖ Make appointments – avoid ambushes
- ❖ Be sensitive to, respect and value cultural differences
- ❖ Choose constructive not destructive outcomes

