

Dealing with Difficult People

PRESENTED BY

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Learning Objectives

- ❖ Understand the power of perceptions
- ❖ Realize the importance of your role
- ❖ Tips and tricks for dealing with difficult people





Dealing with Difficult People

Do you recognize these people?



The Know-It-Alls

They're arrogant and usually have an opinion on every issue. When they're wrong, they get defensive.



The Passives

These people never offer ideas or let you know where they stand.



The Dictators

They bully and intimidate. They're constantly demanding and brutally critical.



The "Yes" People

They agree to any commitment, yet rarely deliver. You can't trust them to follow through.



The "No" People

They are quick to point out why something won't work. What's worse, they're inflexible.



The Gripers

Is anything ever right with them? They prefer complaining to finding solutions.



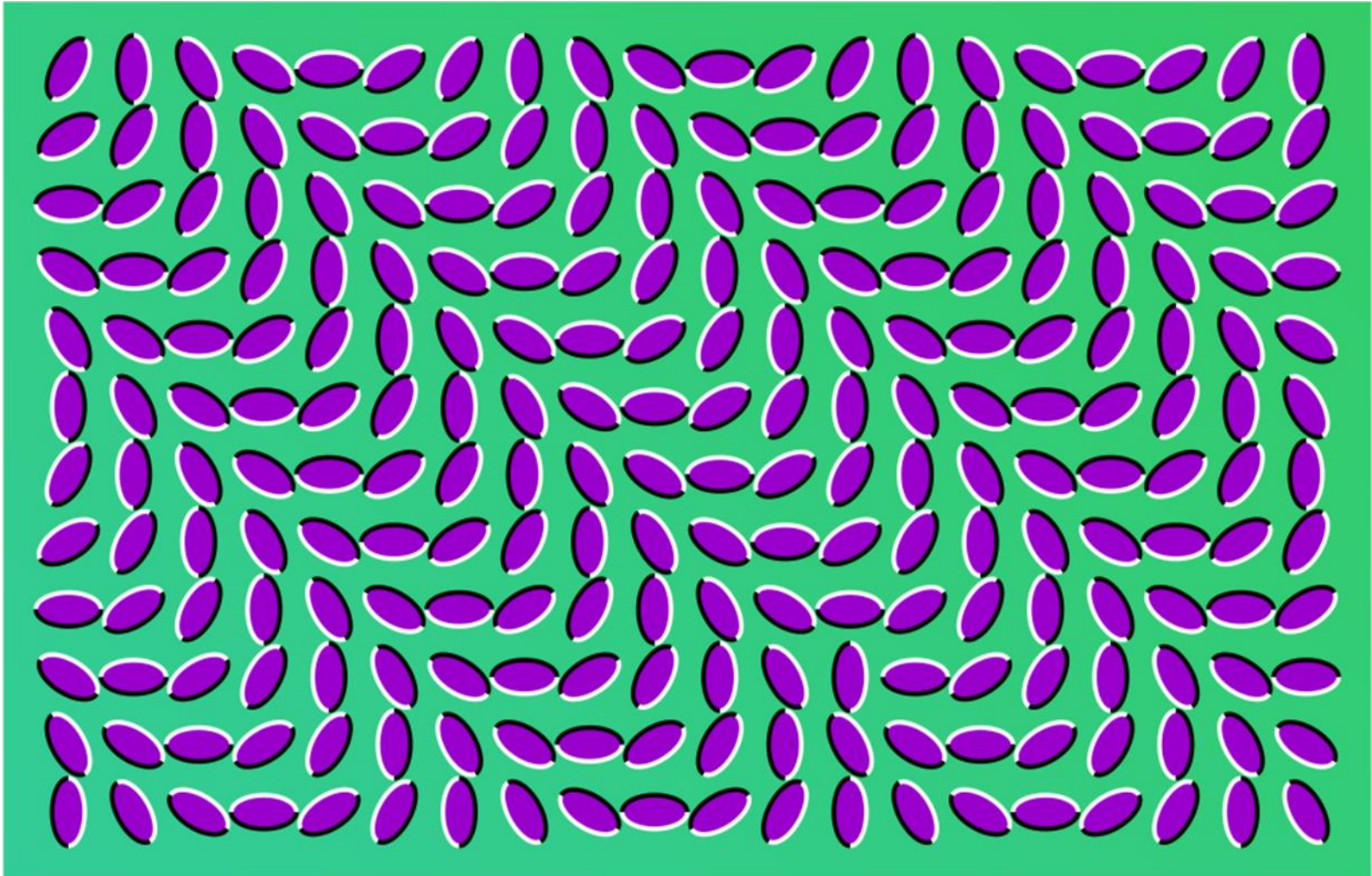


Perception



- ❖ **What makes a person “difficult”?**
 - They may not be aware they are “difficult”
- ❖ **The power of our perceptions and expectations**
- ❖ **Perceptions and written communications**
- ❖ **Combat negative perceptions**
 - ❖ Assume positive intentions!

What Do You See?



Can you see the Duck?



Perceptions – Duck??

Can you see the Rabbit?



Perceptions – Rabbit??

Duck or Rabbit?





Judgment

- ❖ Your brain's safety and survival mechanism.
- ❖ Judgement without critical thought can lead to implicit bias.
- ❖ Be aware of your thought process.
- ❖ Suspend judgement until you have all the facts.
- ❖ Stop labeling people





Suspend Judgement and Move Past Bias

- ❖ **Be Curious**
- ❖ **Observe**
- ❖ **Practice Empathy**





Focus on the Problem

- ❖ Focus on the problem, not the person
- ❖ Help by doing the job you were hired to do
- ❖ Try to avoid statements of defeat
 - “There’s nothing we can do”
 - “I don’t know what to tell you”
 - “I’m sorry but I can’t help you”
- ❖ **Stay Positive, Explain**
- ❖ **Focus on what CAN be done**
 - Provide some alternatives
 - They may or may not be receptive



Reactions

❖ DON'T

- Take it Personally
- Be Defensive
- Be Aggressive
- Be Abrupt
- Be Sarcastic
- Accuse
- Yell/Argue/Blame
- Make Excuses
- Discount What They are Saying
- Be Condescending or Judgmental
- Refuse to Help Because of Their Attitude or Verbiage
- Downplay the Problem
- Use “YOU ALWAYS” “YOU NEVER” “ BUT”
- Make Promises
- Don't Invent Problems



Reactions

❖ DO

- Remain Calm
- Control Your Voice
- Use Their Name
- Use “I” Statements
- Be Patient
- Use Empathy
- Focus on the Facts
- Take a Break
- Apologize
- Explain What You (or they) CAN Do



Telephone Techniques

- ❖ **Smile**
- ❖ **Answer quickly**
- ❖ **Be alert**
- ❖ **Use Active listening**





DOCUMENT





Remember?





What if You're the Difficult One?



- ❖ Acknowledge
- ❖ Ask Others
- ❖ Change your Approach



❖ REMEMBER

**RESPECT
IS A TWO WAY
STREET**



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Golden Rule

- ❖ Try to put yourself in their shoes.
- ❖ Have you had to deal with a difficult situation personally? How did you handle it?
- ❖ Remember how you were treated & how you **WANTED** to be treated.



There Are NO DO OVERS!!

❖ People may be “Difficult” for several reasons:

- Worried
- Afraid
- Apprehensive
- Confused
- Frustrated

❖ How you react can help determine how productive the meeting will be & help you manage your stress level.

❖ They want you to help them or they wouldn't have contacted you

- (even when they are abusive)





Belligerent or Uncooperative

- ❖ Remember to **Never Take it Personally!**
- ❖ Explain why you need the information.
- ❖ Use Repetitive Persistence
- ❖ Never argue or refuse to help just because of attitude/verbiage.
- ❖ Allow them to vent (short term), sometimes they just need to “get it off their chest”.
- ❖ Use Empathetic statements (without escalating the situation) “I can understand your frustration....” “I am sorry you feel that way, let me see what I can do....” etc





Magical Phrases

❖ That's Interesting...

Tell me More...

Why do you ask me that?

Why would you say that?

Why would you do that?"

❖ I need your help understanding why...

❖ So, what's your proposal?





Know Your Audience

- ❖ **Everyone has different communication needs**

- ❖ **Consider the communication style**
 - ❖ Expressive – enthusiastic, open, responsive
 - ❖ Amiable – slow down, listen, support
 - ❖ Driver – organized, fact focused, plan ahead
 - ❖ Analytical – organized, fact focused, systematic



Re-contact?

- ❖ **Depending on the situation, why not schedule a time to Re-contact an emotional person to allow them to compose themselves?**
- ❖ **Think of other possible solutions that would allow the person some time to gain control of themselves.**



Do Your Best

- ❖ **Do the best you can with what you have**
- ❖ **You cannot solve everyone's problems**
- ❖ **You cannot calm everyone down**
- ❖ **Remember your mission & why you took the job**
- ❖ **Accept there are things out of your control**
- ❖ **Don't take the job home with you**
 - If you have done your best, there should be little to no stress to take home with you!



And there are those that just enjoy being difficult because they can.





Suggestions

- ❖ **Avoid Extremes**
- ❖ **Engage**
- ❖ **Pick your battles**
- ❖ **Consider**
- ❖ **Intervene**
- ❖ **Do not accuse**
- ❖ **Avoid an aggressive approach**
- ❖ **Be kind**





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Reflection

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- ❖ **Realize the importance of your role**
- ❖ **Tips and tricks for dealing with difficult people**





Thank You

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