

**Managing  
Difficult  
Performance Discussions**



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## 10 Strategies For Managing Difficult Performance Discussions

### 1. STRATEGY: CONFRONTING BEHAVIOR: DESCRIBING EXACTLY WHAT BOTHERS YOU.

- Is it the length of visit
- Is it the timing
- Is it where they say it
- Is it how they say it

“I don’t question your right to go to the restroom. I just request that you inform me when you do so that I can have someone replace you to assist our customers.”

### 2. STRATEGY: “BROKEN RECORD” TECHNIQUES: REPEATING WHAT YOU WANT OR DON’T WANT OVER AND OVER UNTIL IT GETS THROUGH TO THE PERSON.

“I need you to be at work by 8:00 a.m.”

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### 3. STRATEGY: FOCUS ON “COMMON GOAL”: ORGANIZATIONAL GOAL, PERSONAL GOAL, PROFESSIONAL GOAL.

“I know you want to improve the quality of our services as much as I do.”

### 4. STRATEGY: TAKING TIME OUT: POSTPONING GIVING ANSWERS OR RESPONSES.

“I don’t have an answer for you right now. I’d like to take some time to think about this and get back with you tomorrow.”

**5. STRATEGY: USE FOGGING: A TWO STEP PROCESS WHERE YOU ACKNOWLEDGE WHAT THE OTHER PERSON HAS SAID TO YOU, MAY OR MAY NOT BE TRUE.**

“Maybe you’ve got gripes with me too. And I’m willing to talk about them. Right now I want to talk with you about the problem I’m having with what you did.”

**6. STRATEGY: DESCRIBE THE SYMPTOM BY STATING OUT LOUD YOUR CONCERN OR YOUR EXPECTATION ABOUT HOW THE OTHER PERSON WILL REACT OR RESPOND.**

“I want to make sure you don’t misunderstand this. My disagreement is with the issue and not with you personally.”

**7. STRATEGY: STATE YOUR POSITIVE INTENTIONS BY SETTING THE STAGE AND ORIENT THE SITUATION IN A POSITIVE WAY. IT LET’S PEOPLE KNOW YOUR POSITIVE MOTIVES.**

“I want to avoid this kind of misunderstanding in the future.”

**8. STRATEGY: STATING WHAT YOU’RE NOT INTENDING BY SETTING THE STAGE TO ENSURE THE OTHER PERSON THAT YOUR INTENTIONS ARE NOT NEGATIVE.**

“I’m *not* meaning this to be critical of you...”

**9. STRATEGY: DESCRIBING HOW MUCH YOU FEEL THIS WAY.**

“It’s *very important* to me that we discuss this situation.”

**10. STRATEGY: DESCRIBING/QUESTIONING OTHER’S BEHAVIOR WITHOUT EVALUATING:**

“I see you have a frown on your face, does that mean you disagree?”

“I noticed you hesitated, do you have some reservations about doing this?”

## Formulas For Initiating And Furthering Difficult Performance Discussions

### Initiating “DIFFICULT” Discussions

#### A. OPENING: Clarify purpose of Discussion

- Greeting
- Acknowledgement for participating

#### B. EXPLAIN: Describe what you want or what you both want

- Positive Intent
- What you are Not Intending
- Common Goal
- Others...

#### C. TRANSITIONAL PHRASE:

- State the facts
- Describe the current situation

#### D. MOVEMENT TO REASON FOR DISCUSSION:

- Describe what you want, need, request to happen

### Furthering and Responding During “DIFFICULT” Discussions

#### APPROACH 1:

1. STATE OTHER PERSON'S POSITION
2. STATE WHAT YOU CAN AGREE WITH
3. ASK FOR AGREEMENT

#### APPROACH 2:

1. STATE OTHER PERSON'S POSITION
2. STATE WHAT YOU CAN AGREE WITH
3. STATE WHAT YOU DISAGREE WITH
4. ASK FOR AGREEMENT ON WHAT YOU AGREE WITH

#### APPROACH 3:

1. STATE OTHER PERSON'S POSITION
2. STATE WHAT YOU CAN AGREE WITH
3. STATE WHAT YOU DISAGREE WITH
4. OFFER OPTIONS FOR A WIN-WIN POSITION
5. ASK FOR AGREEMENT