

Working with Difficult People

– Interpersonal Problem Solving

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Agenda

1. Give attendees the list of sentences that transform and neutralize difficult people
2. Take questions

Wouldn't THAT be nice!

Quick Statistic

- 80% of Americans say they “Frequently” deal with difficult people at work
- 99% of Americans say that they themselves are difficult people either “Never “ or “Infrequently”

Who ARE these difficult people?

In the 90 days from 5/1/07 to 8/1/07 (272 companies; 9,561 respondents)

- 93% of people have avoided confronting a coworker about inappropriate behavior
- 81% of managers have avoided confronting a subordinate about inappropriate behavior
- 89% of people have avoided confronting their boss when he or she failed to fulfill an expectation or promise
- 77% of people say that when they speak up about sensitive topics, the other party gets angry or defensive
- 83% of people say that they occasionally or frequently withhold important information from bosses, coworkers and employees because they fear the conversation will end badly
- *37% of an employee's willingness to stay at their company is driven by their comfort with speaking the truth about these sensitive issues*

Even when a customer or the organization suffered as a result

Define “Acceptable Behavior”?

Acceptable Behavior is behavior that you accept.

When you no longer accept it, it becomes
“unacceptable behavior”

Approaches to Problem Solving

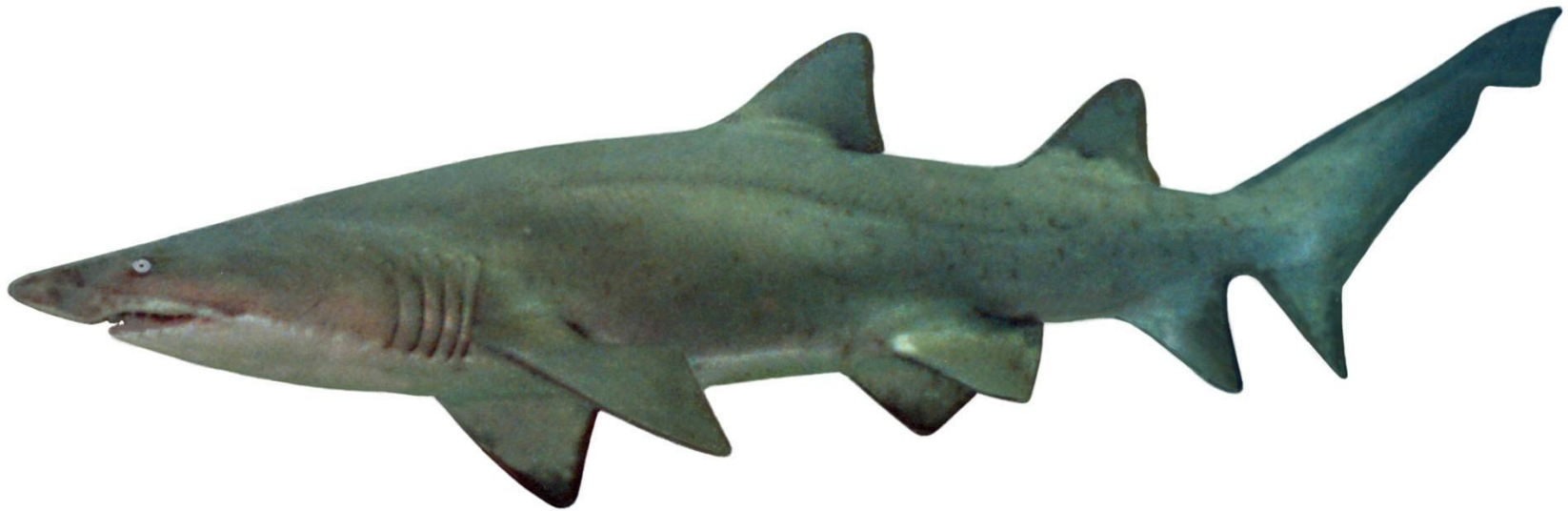
(Garvin & Roberto)

Characteristic	Advocacy	Inquiry
Concept of Decision Making	A contest	Collaborative problem solving
Purpose of discussion	Persuasion and lobbying	Testing and evaluating
Participant's role	Spokespeople	Critical thinkers
Patterns of behavior	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Strive to persuade others• Defend your position• Downplay weaknesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Present balanced arguments• Remain open to alternatives• Accept constructive criticism
Minority Views	Discouraged or dismissed	Cultivated and valued
Outcome	Winners and losers	Collective ownership

Correcting Dysfunction



Shark Story



Breaking Down the Problem

- The Shark Story
 - See or Hear something (facts)
 - Interpretation (assumptions / intentions)
 - Feel (reaction to the interpretation)
 - Act (accusation)
 - React (defense / accusation)
- The kindergarten model
 - Being right is good
 - Being right first is better
 - Being right at the expense of others is best
- Initiators Mistake – I tell you why you did it (or said it)
- Respondent's Mistake – If I persuade you that you're wrong about my intentions, then you are at fault

Initiating a Conversation

- Identify the most pressing issue
- Clarify the issue with as much detail as necessary
- Determine the current impact in as much detail as necessary
- Determine the future implications (what will happen if things don't change)
- Examine the contribution system for the issue
- Imagine the ideal outcome

- Presence
- Engagement
- Empathy
- Openness
- Curiosity
- Depth
- Safety
- Collaboration

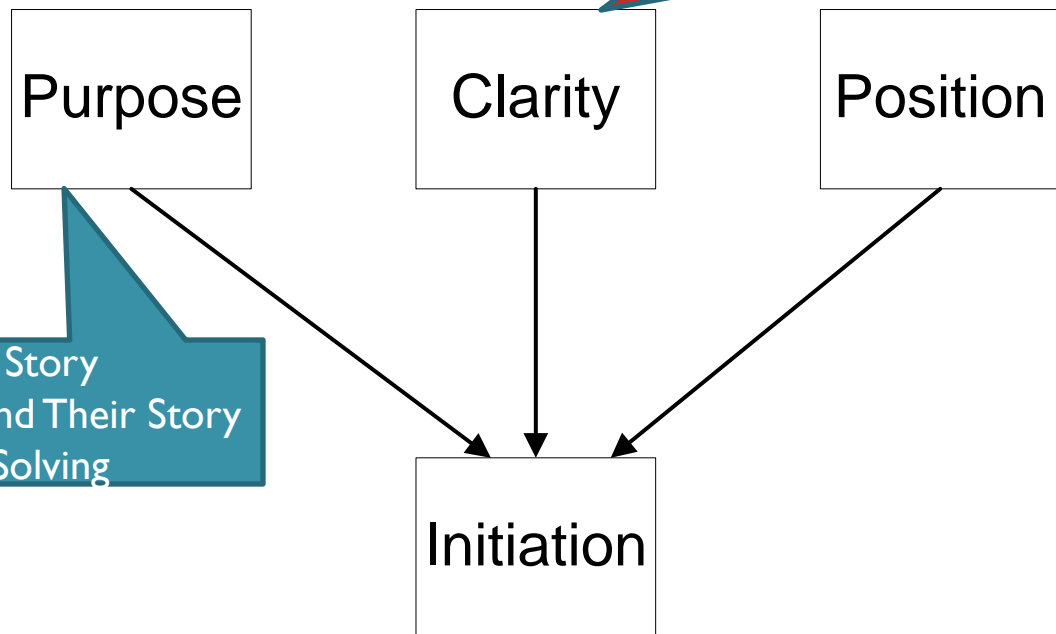
Purpose

Clarity

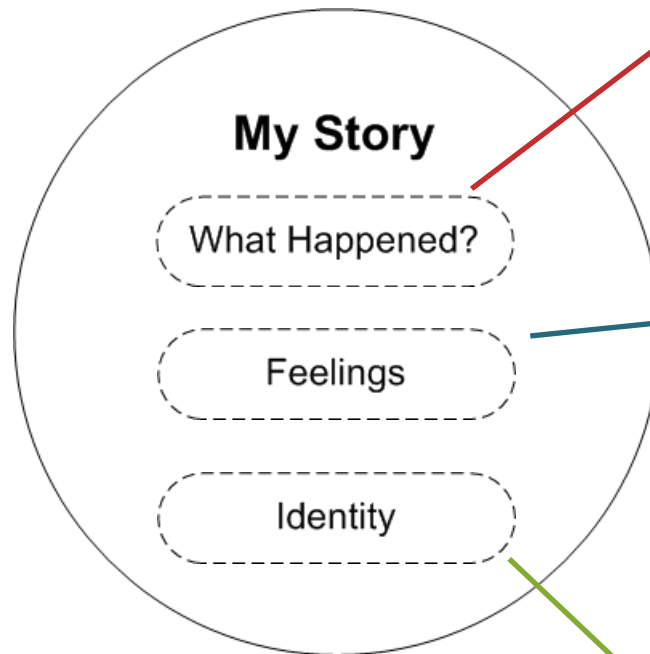
Position

- Share My Story
- Understand Their Story
- Problem Solving

Initiation



Model of My Story



Truth vs. Facts
Intentions vs. Impact
Blame vs. Contribution
Rules, Perceptions, Preference, & Style
Dilemma

Judgments, Attributions, Characterizations
Your feelings are as important as theirs
Unexpressed feelings make it difficult to listen
If feelings are part of the problem, frame them as part of the problem
Feelings can be contradictory
Feelings change slowly

Am I competent?
Am I a good person?
Am I worthy?
Bifurcation vs. Complexification
Balance vs. Gap b/w Hopes and Fears
You make mistakes
You contribute to the problem
Your intentions are complex

What Can the Fox Do?

- Persuade a decision maker
- Inspire a team
- Generate creative ideas from co-workers
- Diagnose operating problems
- Detect dishonesty in a supplier's rep
- Soothe an irate customer
- Successfully deliver constructive criticism
- Convince people of an idea's merits
- Facilitate an excellent group decision

Summary

- Hold a Collaborative Mindset
- Seek First to Understand
- Practice, Practice, Practice!



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Questions ?