



Strategies For Dealing With Difficult Co-workers

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OBJECTIVES

- Fish facts
- Be able to recognize different characteristics of coworkers, **particularly difficult coworkers**.
- Discuss approaches to conflict/crucial conversations
- Discuss strategies for dealing with difficult coworkers
- Do you have Emotional Intelligence?













**I HAVE NO
IDEA HOW
I DO IT ALL,
EITHER**





A scenic view of a lake at sunset. The sky is a mix of orange, yellow, and blue. The water is calm and reflects the sky. In the foreground, there are several small, rounded sandbars or islands. A tree branch with green leaves is visible in the upper left corner. The overall mood is peaceful and serene.

**REMEMBER
WHY WE ARE
HERE**





THE WORK PLACE

- People in the workplace are like fish in the sea- we all have to “swim” in the same environment
- People come from varying backgrounds and cultures
- People hold diverse values and needs
- Toxic and negative environments can be easily created by difficult coworkers
- Conflict must be resolved for teamwork to occur



ATTITUDES

Combination of individual's:

PERSONALITY

BELIEFS

VALUES

MOTIVATIONS

POSITIVE COWORKERS

Friendly
Happy
Helpful



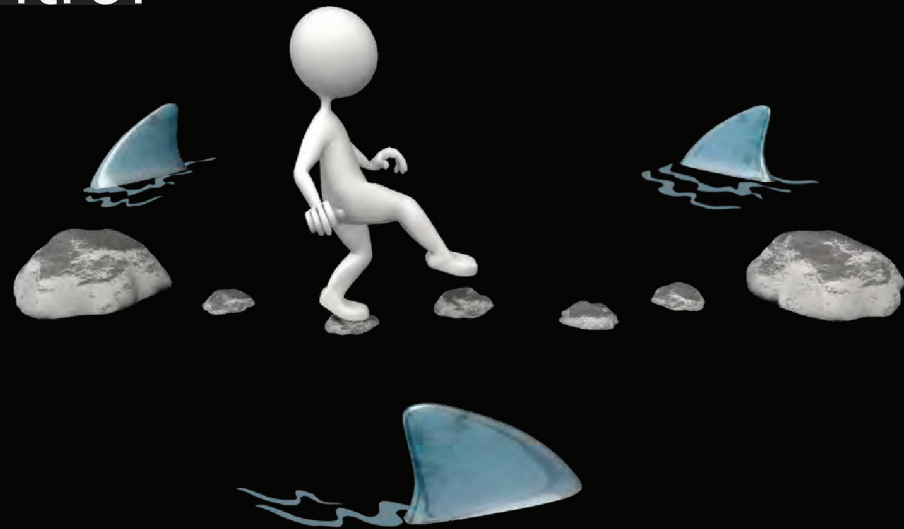
SHARK

- Powerful jaws and sharp teeth
- Scavenger
- Opportunistic feeder
- Can maneuver quickly while swimming fast



COWORKER: SHARK

- Takes any available opportunity to attack others
- New and young are often targets, however, attacks are not limited to certain people
- Need for control





- Has large mouth that reaches behind the eyes
- Can get very large in size

COWORKER: BIG MOUTH

- Mouth always open
- Conversation is sarcastic
- “Smarty pants”
- Most of time spent “sharing news and views” about others



ICE FISH

- Live in freezing waters
- No red blood cells in body.
White-blooded fish
- Strong hearts that pump large volumes of blood at low pressures



COWORKER: ICE COLD

- Very distant
- Prefer little or no people contact
- Can be attentive perfectionists
- Rigid and overly detailed
- Intimidating personality



FLOUNDER

- Eye migrates over to one side early in life
- Bottom dweller
- Feeds on small fish



COWORKER: BIG “EYE”

- One big eye focused solely on self
- “It’s all about me”
- Completely unaware of other’s needs
- Always have a better story, a bigger win or more impressive development



SWORDFISH



- Sword-like upper jaw
- Have widest temperature tolerance of any billfish
- Opportunistic predator
- Sword used in obtaining prey

COWORKER:BLAMER

- Points finger at others
- Takes advantage of any opportunity to cast blame on anyone
- Tongue is sword
- Fails to function as team player



GRUNT

- Audible grunting continuously
- Grinding of teeth with air bladders acting as amplifier makes grunting loud noise that is quite annoying.



COWORKER: GROANER

- Continually views glass as half-empty
- “Poor me” excuses
- Constant groaning, whining, moaning and complaining
- Viewed by others as incapable of handling stress or challenges



BLOWFISH



- Also known as puffer fish
- Inflates to scare away enemies by rapidly pumping water into their stomach
- Appears much larger than really is

COWORKER: “HOT AIR”

- All talk and no action
- Tries to appear to be more than meets the eye
- Less substance and more fluff to conversation
- Lack of follow up with what is promised
- Multiple excuses when challenged



BARRACUDA

- “Tiger of the Sea”
- One moment drifting lazily in sea and next moment rocketing toward prey
- Cold-blooded killer
- Needs to eat to survive



COWORKER: BULLY

- Most difficult behavior to deal with
- Internal terrorist in the workplace
- Desire to be “king/queen” of the workplace
- Seeks own survival and attention by destroying others
- Creates hostile environment
- Passive-Aggressive behavior



TROUT

- Capitalizes on turbulence
- Swim against current
- Uses water's energy to propel themselves forward
- Swim in schools for greatest benefit from turbulence



COWORKER: POT STIRRER

- Influences others in workplace
- Keeps negative undercurrent going
- Gossiper
- Unwilling to address anyone or anything directly
- Hates confrontation
- Anonymous



Clown Fish



- Funny
- Very devoted to their clan
- Beautiful and fun to watch
- Hide in coral and anemones



COWORKER: JOKSTER

- Life of the party
- Brings sense of humor into the workplace
- People enjoy being around this person



EEL

- Snake-like appearance
- Produces tremendous amounts of slime when captured
- Usually caught when fishing for something else



COWORKER: SNAKE

- Works in background
- Sneaky
- Extremely negative
- Stays out of sight to avoid getting caught



CAT FISH

- Wants to be left alone
- Has territorial tendencies
- Hides in shallow water
- Gatherer of things
- Does not look like a cat!



COWORKER: SPACE PROTECTOR/HOARDER

- Constant conflict with OR nurses
- If possible would wrap police tape around area
- Comes in at 5AM to get all the “good” equipment
- Measures space between bed, anesthesia machine and anesthesia cart before leaving the room



ANCHOVIES

- Always, ALWAYS travel in schools
- Could SMELL them a mile away



COWORKER: THE CLIQUE

- Always, ALWAYS travel in schools
- Could SEE them a mile away.





SELECTIVE ATTENTION





DIFFICULT BEHAVIORS FACTS

- You can't change people's behaviors
- You can change your own reaction to the behavior
- People either don't know how their behavior affects others or they have need to do what they do
- “If you are going into snake country—WEAR BOOTS” Know thy unit!!



Realistic Goals

A difficult co-worker may always be difficult – your best behavior may never change them

Your best behavior can change how you feel and make interactions less difficult for you

Create realistic/appropriate goals for yourself:

--I will not become passive or aggressive (which means I will have conversations and strategies that are assertive)

--I will work to make the situation the best I can make it but not set myself up for emotional failure by expecting more than that



APPROACHES TO CONFLICT/CRUCIAL CONVERSATIONS

- Pursuing own goals and standing own ground
- Always have a third party present for crucial conversations
- Pointing out factors everyone agrees on and not dwelling on points of disagreement
- Keep goals realistic with these folks- If your goal is to be really nice..... NOT!!
- Goal should be to maintain integrity, credibility, and keep your job



STRATEGIES FOR DEALING WITH DIFFICULT COWORKERS

- Increase self-awareness/decrease bias
- Control emotional responses/stress management
- Use of management hierarchy
- Get documentation of behavior
- Address issues courageously and tactfully
- Focus on the 95% of “good fish”




**Everything begins with
the words that you
choose**







POWER OF APPRECIATION

- Everyone wants to be appreciated and recognized
- People will seek attention in different ways
- Remember that people, for the most part, are doing the best they can- this includes you
- Say “good morning”!

- 
- Don't bite back what came at you
 - Settle the boat down
 - PAUSE- get the boat stable
 - Predict – Prepare-Practice
 - Be ready emotionally
 - Don't pick up the other end of the rope!!

A scenic view of a lake at sunset. The sky is a mix of orange, yellow, and blue. The water is calm and reflects the sky. There are some rocks in the water. A tree branch with green leaves is in the top left corner. The overall mood is peaceful and serene.

**SOMETIMES
YOU NEED TO
PUSH THEM
OFF THE BOAT**

A scenic view of a lake at sunset. The sky is a mix of orange, yellow, and blue. The water is calm and reflects the colors of the sky. In the foreground, there are some green reeds or grasses. A tree branch with green leaves is visible in the upper left corner.

**Give yourself a chance —
difficult co-workers can drain
you physically, emotionally,
spiritually and mentally. Try to
replenish**

**“What doesn’t kill you makes
you stronger”????**



“What doesn’t kill you makes you stronger.”

Should read:

“If you managed to survive, and were fortunate enough to spend time recovering and reflecting within a robust support structure, you may, despite your weakened state, glean some helpful insights.

Whosoever calls that ‘stronger’ is an asshole.”



THE NO ASSHOLE RULE

*Building a Civilized Workplace
and Surviving One That Isn't*



ROBERT I. SUTTON, PHD



“The difference between how a person treats the powerless versus the powerful is as good a measure of human character as I know.”
—Bob Sutton



ASSHOLE

Now we know what one looks like.



Clarification of term use:

Temporary Asshole: having a bad day or a bad moment

Certified Asshole: persistently nasty and destructive jerks that meet two criteria:

- 1) consistently leaves others feeling oppressed, humiliated, de-energized, or belittled
- 2) aims venom at people who are less powerful rather than those who are more powerful



Why are demeaning acts so devastating?

30% of interactions with coworkers are positive
10% of interactions with coworkers are negative
Negative interactions had 5X stronger effect on mood than positive interactions

Nasty people pack a lot more wallop than their more civilized counterparts

Miner, A. G., Glomb, T. M., & Hulin, C. L. (2005). Experience sampling mood and its correlates at work. *Journal of Organizational and Occupational Psychology*, 78, 171-193.

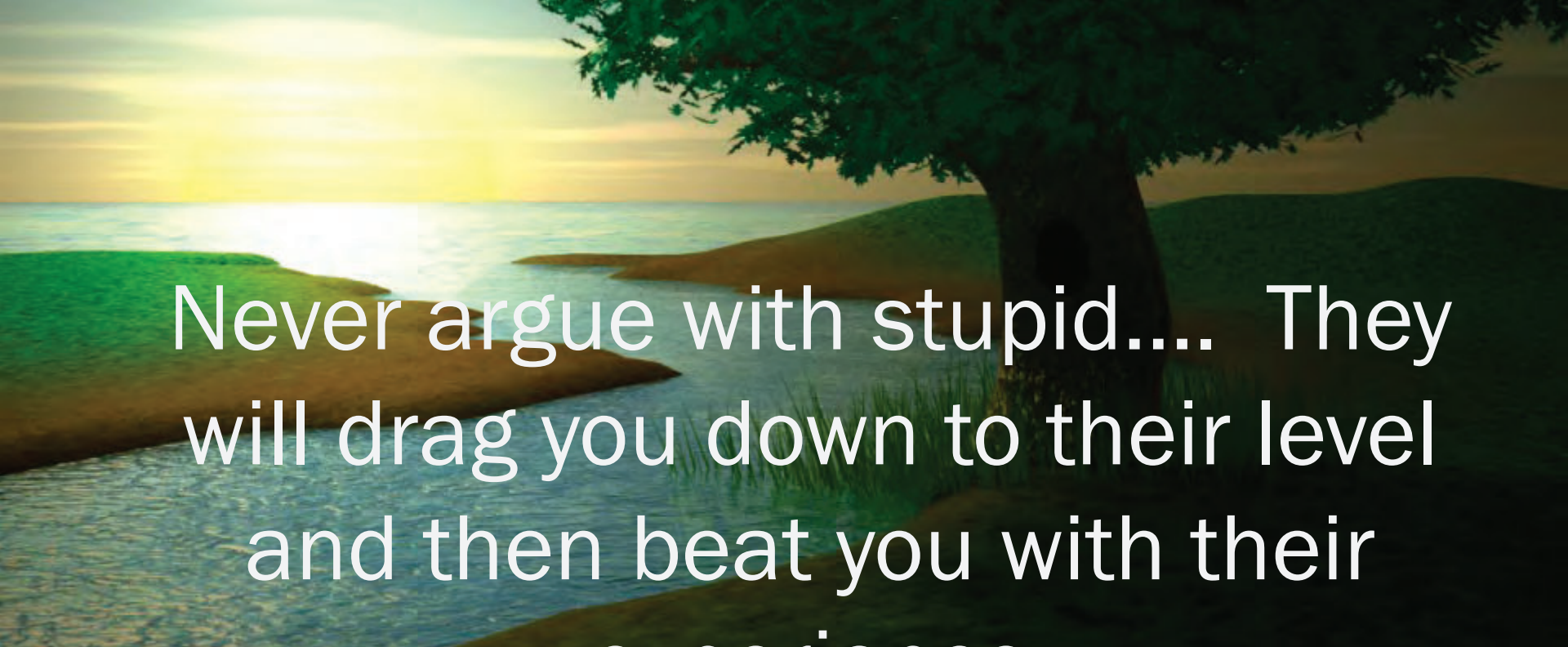


How do you de-asshole an asshole
(assholectomy?)

YOU CAN'T

How can you spot an asshole (assholeometer?)

YOU CAN'T



Never argue with stupid.... They
will drag you down to their level
and then beat you with their
experience

-Mark Twain



**“ IF YOU ARE GOING THROUGH
HELL — KEEP GOING”**

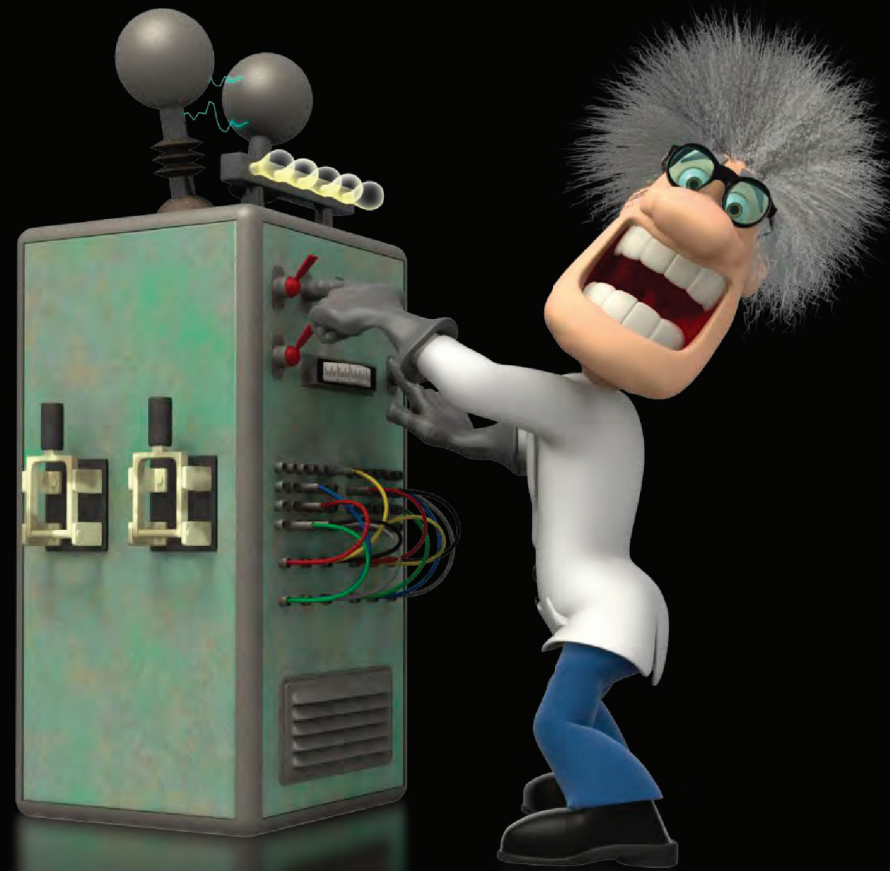
-Winston Churchill



IN SUMMARY:

- Look at your self first**
- Use all you resources for dealing with difficult behaviors**
- Take a moment to think about what might be happening in others lives**
- pay attention to the monkey!!**

GIVE PEOPLE THE BENEFIT OF THE DOUBT



LOOK FOR THE GOOD



SEEK FIRST TO UNDERSTAND



WHAT KIND OF FISH
ARE SWIMMING IN
YOUR OCEAN?
YOUR OCEAN?

