

# DEALING EFFECTIVELY WITH DIFFICULT PEOPLE

## LifeChampion<sup>®</sup> Learner's Guide

*For Use with  
"Dealing Effectively with Difficult People"  
Audio Learning Program  
by LifeChampion<sup>®</sup> International, Inc.  
Available at [LifeChampion.com](http://LifeChampion.com)*

Presented by

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# Welcome!

In order to be successful in today's world you need to constantly be growing as an individual. Through continued growth and improvement we increase our value to our organization and society. Continued learning and continued development are critically important to your personal and professional success and happiness.

LifeChampion® International is committed to providing the highest quality personal and organizational development programs and resources available. We provide live seminars and motivational speeches, complete learning systems, customized audio, video and written training resources, and a myriad of development programs that combine multiple elements to ensure higher retention and implementation of skills.

We welcome you to this LifeChampion® Program and look forward to a long-term partnership with you. Please ask about our other development programs and learning systems which may benefit you or your organization, or visit our website at [www.LifeChampion.com](http://www.LifeChampion.com).

Best wishes,

***Tyler W. Eldred***  
***President and Founder***

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# LifeChampion<sup>®</sup> Learner's Guide

## “Dealing Effectively with Difficult People”

This program is intended to help you understand many of the reasons for difficulty in interacting with others and how you can personally become more effective in these situations. This program will help you better understand some of the differences between you and others, and provide you with insights and tools for expanded choices, and, thereby, greater effectiveness. This LifeChampion Learners Guide is designed to help you optimize your audio learning experience and can also be used as a discussion guide for group review of this material or to aid in mentoring, etc. This guide will also assist and focus you in creating a personal action plan for continued development and study. The audio program is also designed to be used as a stand-alone learning tool, so please use these resources in whatever way best suits your learning and development.

Learning to communicate and interact effectively with people – especially those you do not naturally get along with – is a critically important skill in all facets of your life. We hope this course proves to be a valuable tool for your personal and professional success.

This Learner's Guide is one tool to assist you in gaining the most from this program, as well as a great resource for later reference and a starting point for continued development. Use it to take notes, trigger ideas, and guide you to better learning results. You will find a “*My Keepers*” section on the back cover. Throughout the program, when a valuable idea, concept or statement hits you, flip the book over and jot it down. Those “ahas” form the basis for your action planning at the end of the day. There is an “*Additional Resources*” section near the end as well. Find this page and write down any books or resources you think of for future reference. A “*Personal Action Plan*” section is provided to summarize what you will do as a result of this course. You will also find a “*30-Day Personal Action Journal*” page at the end. This program is intended to generate action on your part. No action by you, little value from this day. So begin taking action on today's learning immediately and journal what you notice, what you do, and the results obtained (good or bad) on your Action Journal page. This simple act will dramatically accelerate your retention and personal development.

We commend you for investing in yourself by participating in this program. Effective leaders and effective individuals in today's organizational environment are learners. Make a commitment to yourself to continue the learning long after you have concluded this program. You are the one that will benefit most. We look forward to being a partner with you in developing this and other crucial skills today and beyond. We hope you will revisit this program often and wish you the best of luck in this course and in your journey for continued growth and self-improvement.

*Tyler W. Eldred, President  
LifeChampion<sup>®</sup> International, Inc.*

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# What is a “Difficult” Person

Draw a picture of a “Difficult” Person.

Who are “difficult” people?

What makes them “difficult” for you?

Are they always difficult? Or when do they become difficult?

Am I “difficult” from their perspective? Why, why not?

Who have you been a “difficult” person to/for? Why were you that way? What did you do?

## Key Concept:

*Most people we call “difficult” are not difficult  
– they are different...from us.*

### We need to...(Objectives of workshop)

- Understand that “Difficult” normally means “Different” – Different from us!
- Learn to appreciate and effectively utilize/leverage differences rather than be frustrated by them.
- Understand the role of differences in personality and perspectives that cause frustrations in the work environment
- Learn to adapt our behavior to work more effectively with “different” people and personalities.
- Learn to effectively cope with the few truly “difficult” people in our lives or make positive changes.
- Learn to effectively deal with difficult co-workers and customers.

# Understanding Personality Styles

## ... And how to effectively work with them

There has been, and continues to be, a great deal of research done to understand differences in people and their behavior. This is typically intended to help us understand people and be able to interact with them more effectively. Often times we try to utilize this research and these tools simply as a means of labeling people for our own ease of interaction with them. This mindset of labeling is rarely effective. We as people are very individualized and complex creatures.

However, it is important to understand that most of us are actually highly predictable. Why? Because we have developed certain perspectives and behavioral habits that drive most of our thoughts, decisions and actions. The difficulty comes when we try to predict other people's behaviors. This is because we try to overlay our filters, biases, perspectives and frameworks on them – and they don't fit.

Therefore, we are going to use a common and well documented Behavioral Assessment named the DESC Behavior Description as a means to begin to understand general differences in people and how this can help us better interact with others. This instrument, like many others was developed from the fundamental research done by William Marston in the early 1920s. It has been refined, utilized and tested significantly since then.

There are no right or wrong answers to this assessment. There are no better or worse behavioral styles. We all have strengths and we have limitations. This will be a fun, eye-opening exercise for us to participate in and learn from.

So please take and score the test on the following pages as instructed and then we will have a discussion of what this means and, most importantly, how we can use it to be more effective.

NOTE – The more you think about the answers, the more you deviate from your true self. Simply answer as honestly as you can about which you believe yourself to be most like, some like, least like. Many people answer how they would like to be rather than how they really are. This will only lessen the accuracy of your analysis.

# “DESC” - BEHAVIOR DESCRIPTION

*Instructions:* For each of the following groups of three terms, place a “3” by the term that describes you best, “1” by the term that least describes you, and a “2” by the remaining term.

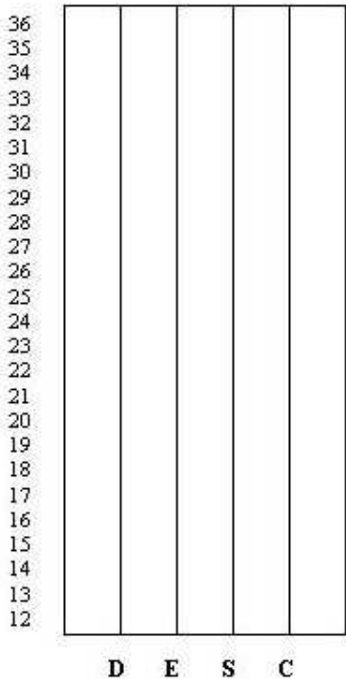
- |    |                 |       |     |                  |       |
|----|-----------------|-------|-----|------------------|-------|
| 1. | a. Adventurous  | _____ | 9.  | a. Competitive   | _____ |
|    | b. Polished     | _____ |     | b. Diplomatic    | _____ |
|    | c. Stable       | _____ |     | c. Accommodating | _____ |
| 2. | a. Receptive    | _____ | 10. | a. Careful       | _____ |
|    | b. Determined   | _____ |     | b. Decisive      | _____ |
|    | c. Enthusiastic | _____ |     | c. Popular       | _____ |
| 3. | a. Steady       | _____ | 11. | a. Dependable    | _____ |
|    | b. Exacting     | _____ |     | b. Accurate      | _____ |
|    | c. Original     | _____ |     | c. Inventive     | _____ |
| 4. | a. Poised       | _____ | 12. | a. Convincing    | _____ |
|    | b. Patient      | _____ |     | b. Consistent    | _____ |
|    | c. Orderly      | _____ |     | c. Open minded   | _____ |
| 5. | a. Forceful     | _____ | 13. | a. Positive      | _____ |
|    | b. Persuasive   | _____ |     | b. Cordial       | _____ |
|    | c. Settled      | _____ |     | c. Even tempered | _____ |
| 6. | a. Cautious     | _____ | 14. | a. Conservative  | _____ |
|    | b. Bold         | _____ |     | b. Eager         | _____ |
|    | c. Outgoing     | _____ |     | c. Entertaining  | _____ |
| 7. | a. Persistent   | _____ | 15. | a. Amiable       | _____ |
|    | b. Cooperative  | _____ |     | b. Systematic    | _____ |
|    | c. Brave        | _____ |     | c. Self-reliant  | _____ |
| 8. | a. Attractive   | _____ | 16. | a. Sociable      | _____ |
|    | b. Controlled   | _____ |     | b. Unhurried     | _____ |
|    | c. Correct      | _____ |     | c. Precise       | _____ |

# BEHAVIOR DESCRIPTION SCORING SHEET

*Instructions:* Enter your scores from the Behavior Description form in the spaces below. Then add the scores in each column and enter the total for the column in the space provided.

## BEHAVIOR

Dominance	Extroversion	Stability	Control
1a _____	1b _____	1c _____	2a _____
2b _____	2c _____	3a _____	3b _____
3c _____	4a _____	4b _____	4c _____
5a _____	5b _____	5c _____	6a _____
6b _____	6c _____	7a _____	7b _____
7c _____	8a _____	8b _____	8c _____
9a _____	9b _____	9c _____	10a _____
10b _____	10c _____	11a _____	11b _____
11c _____	12a _____	12b _____	12c _____
13a _____	13b _____	13c _____	14a _____
14b _____	14c _____	15a _____	15b _____
15c _____	16a _____	16b _____	16c _____
<i>Total</i> _____	<i>Total</i> _____	<i>Total</i> _____	<i>Total</i> _____



**Notes:**

1. Total the scores for each column - Dominance (D), Extroversion (E), Stability (S), Control (C).
2. Graph the total for each column on the corresponding line of the bar chart to the left.
3. Connect the dots between each letter.
4. This gives you a visual picture of which scores are higher in relation to each other.
5. Review the following pages to understand the potential insights from this instrument.

## High DOMINANCE Score

### Positive DOMINANCE Descriptions

Brave            Inventive  
 Bold            Forceful  
 Determined    Decisive  
 Eager           Adventurous  
 Original        Competitive  
 PositiveSelf-Reliant

### Negative DOMINANCE Descriptions

Reckless        Inflexible  
 Brash           Pushy  
 Stubborn        Overbearing  
 Overly Eager    Too Risky  
 Dissatisfied    Overly Competitive  
 Too Independent

DOMINANTS DO NOT describe themselves as...sociable, stable, patient, accurate, systematic, receptive, steady, accommodating, or cooperative. An individual scoring extremely high in dominance may be seen by others either as a forceful, dynamic leader or as a belligerent troublemaker, depending on the circumstances.

Positive adjectives that might be applied to a person SCORING RELATIVELY LOW ON THE DOMINANCE SCALE include... mild-mannered, conservative, peaceful, modest, nice, and cautious. Negative adjectives would include timid, hesitant, unsure, and fearful. An individual who scores extremely low on the dominance scale might be seen by others as a cooperative team player or as weak and self-deprecating, depending on the situation.

## High EXTROVERT Score

### Positive EXTROVERT Descriptions

Poised            Attractive  
 Persuasive      Popular  
 Polished        Convincing  
 Sociable        Diplomatic  
 Outgoing        Entertaining  
 Cordial          Enthusiastic

### Negative EXTROVERT Descriptions

Inattentive      Flashy  
 Too Talkative    Time Wasting  
 Too Slick        Inclined to Oversell  
 Flighty           Wordy  
 Superficial      Self-Centered  
 Unoriginal        Shallow

EXTROVERTS DO NOT describe themselves as being stable, persistent, accurate, systematic, receptive, consistent, controlled, careful, or cautious. An individual scoring extremely high in extroversion may be seen by others either as enthusiastic, popular, and influential or as superficial and nonproductive, depending on the situation.

Positive adjectives that might be applied to a person SCORING RELATIVELY LOW on the extroversion scale include logical, factual, probing, thoughtful, and incisive. Negative adjectives would include cold, aloof, blunt, shy, and skeptical. An individual who scores extremely low on the extroversion scale might be seen by others as either a thoughtful, quiet, logical problem solver or a non-communicative, blunt recluse, depending on the situation.

## High STABILITY Score

### Positive STABILITY Descriptions

Unhurried	Accommodating
Consistent	Patient
Amiable	Settled
Steady	Even Tempered
Controlled	Stable
Persistent	Dependable

### Negative STABILITY Descriptions

Slow	Non-competitive
Inflexible	Unmotivated
Unambitious	Too Easy Going
Resentful	Too Slow
Unemotional	Slow Starting
Dogged	Too Predictable

STABLES DO NOT describe themselves as being adventurous, original, bold, inventive, exacting, decisive, eager, determined, popular, entertaining, or correct. An individual scoring extremely high in stability may be seen by others either as a patient, persistent team player or as a stubborn roadblock to progress and change, depending on the situation.

Positive adjectives that might be applied to a PERSON SCORING RELATIVELY LOW on the stability scale include alert, self-starting, flexible, and responsive. Negative adjectives include impatient, impulsive, erratic, and explosive. An individual who scores extremely low on the stability scale might be seen by others as either an alert self-starter or an impulsive decision maker, depending on the situation.

## High CONTROL Score

### Positive CONTROL Descriptions

Correct	Cooperative
Exacting	Orderly
Cautious	Precise
Conservative	Open-minded
Systematic	Careful
Receptive	Accurate

### Negative CONTROL Descriptions

Perfectionistic	Easily Swayed
Inflexible	Too Neat
Sared	Picky
Old Fashioned	Wishy-Washy
Fearful	Bound by Procedure
Too Detailed	

CONTROLS DO NOT describe themselves as original, bold, persuasive, forceful, competitive, convincing, enthusiastic, outgoing, decisive, eager, self-reliant, popular, entertaining, or cordial. An individual scoring extremely high in control may be seen by others as a precise, systematic, cooperative worker or as an overly dependent, fearful person, depending on the situation.

Positive adjectives that might be applied to a PERSON SCORING RELATIVELY LOW on the control scale include independent, individualistic, strong, and firm. Negative adjectives include stubborn, unbending, arbitrary, and uncommunicative. An individual who scores extremely low on the control scale might be seen by others as either an independent individualist with high ideals or an obstinate, arbitrary rebel, depending on the situation.

# BEHAVIOR DESCRIPTION PATTERN-ASSOCIATION SHEET

If this score is high	And if this score is <u>low</u>	This trait is likely to be present	This will <u>probably not</u> be present
Dominance	Extroversion	Logical	Companionable
	Stability	Driving	Patient
	Control	Fighting	Giving
Extroversion	Dominance	Companionable	Logical
	Stability	Outgoing	Concentrative
	Control	Argumentative	Perfectionistic
Stability	Dominance	Patient	Driving
	Extroversion	Concentrative	Outgoing
	Control	Rigid	Empathic
Control	Dominance	Giving	Fighting
	Extroversion	Perfectionistic	Argumentative
	Stability	Empathic	Rigid

The greater the spread between the two scores, the greater the likelihood that the high-scoring trait will be exhibited and the lower the likelihood that the opposite trait will be exhibited.

# General Guidelines to Aid in Understanding “Different” People:

- People are different from us.
- We are all a blend of personalities.
- Labels are only partially correct.
- Our way is not always the only way, nor always the best way.
- People do the things they do for a reason.
- People are predictable when viewed from their frame of reference.
- People give us all the clues we need to interact more effectively with them.
- We do not notice most clues because we are singing our favorite song:
  - o “me, me, me, me, me...”
- People do not change unless they want to, choose to, and are aware of alternative options.
- The only person we can change is ourselves.
- When we try to pull someone into our world they normally resist.
- It is more effective for me to strive to get inside their world.
- I must be willing to do this.
- Our ego is the biggest deterrent to us interacting with others more effectively.

## Key Concept

*People Become Difficult When Their  
Needs are Not Being Met*

# APPLICATION

Based on these behavioral and personality insights, how can you improve your interactions with people? What can you do differently? What are you WILLING to do differently?

List three specific actions you can take to improve your interactions:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

What two things are you committed to doing (and willing to do) immediately?

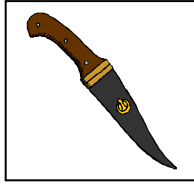
## Communication Techniques

Basic communication techniques are vital for effectively dealing with difficult people. The problem for most of us is that we get our ego hurt by someone and then we stop communicating and start trying to get even.

### Important Communication Concepts:

- Listening is easy when we like someone or agree with them
- Effective listening is exponentially harder when we disagree or dislike someone
- When we dislike someone or are expecting conflict we typically speak more aggressively or in a more guarded fashion with them.
- Our body language communicates the conflict and tension within us better than our words. (Don't worry, they get the message)
- Most negative conflict occurs when we stop trying to effectively solve situations and focus on being "right" and making them "wrong"

# Some Typical Difficult Personalities ... And How to Deal with Them



## The “Backstabber”

- Can be any personality
- Extremely cancerous to a team environment because it tears down trust.
- If you are one – STOP IMMEDIATELY!!!
  - o When people know you are a backstabber you lose all credibility except with other backstabbers.
- If you are a listener – YOU ARE PART OF THE PROBLEM!!!

### How to Protect Yourself:

- If a peer is backstabbing you, confront them:
  - o *“I understand you have something you would like to discuss with me. Please share it with me as I am glad to hear any concerns you have.”*
  - o You must then be willing to actually hear what they have to say and not get defensive about it. Listen with poise, patience and confidence. Do not get in a debate or spitting match. You will only look like a petty person.
  - o *“In the future, please come directly to me and we can work together to resolve the issue. You will do that, won’t you?”*
  - o Then be willing to work with them whole-heartedly and forget about any backstabbing. You must rise above it as a person and professional.

### How to Avoid Getting in the Middle:

- Most people realize that if you start listening, you will be dragged in. You must actively stop it. If you listen even occasionally to the garbage they will bring it all to you.
- When someone begins backstabbing another to you, quietly say, *“That doesn’t sound like Tom. Let’s go talk with him right now,”* and begin walking to where Tom is.
  - o They will rarely follow. They just want to talk behind Tom’s back. They rarely want to actually confront anyone or solve a problem.
  - o They quickly learn you are “no fun to play with” and stop bothering you.



## The “Gossip”

- Can be any personality, most commonly the Stable or Extrovert. They thrive on interpersonal contact and attention.
- They are often times very capable workers, but distract everyone around them.
- It is important to let the Gossip know that you do not want to participate. You can let them know your criteria:
  - o *Is it the verifiable truth?*
  - o *Is it positive?*

- *Does it help us do our work better?*
- *If know to any of these, you don't want to hear it.*
- Other phrases when then begin gossiping
  - *That surprises me.*
  - *Where did you hear this?*
  - *Let's go get this cleared up / verify this.*
  - *Can I use your name when I speak with them?*

## The “Defiant One”

- Most often the Dominant or the Control.
- Often comes across as the silent, stone wall.
- Let them know it doesn't bother you.
- Smile at them and remain silent for 15-20 seconds.
- Ask them, “*Are you willing to discuss this?*” or “*Did I do something to offend you?*”
- If not, “*Well I guess we're going nowhere with this. I guess I'll have to get help elsewhere.*”
  - Leave, interact with others, or go tell the project director, etc.



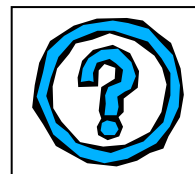
## The “Yes Man”

- Most commonly the Stable personality.
- Often caused by the need to avoid conflict and have people get along.
- Must strive to help them feel they can say “no” to you.
- Perhaps have a side conversation with them to help identify the real status.
- Be very clear about the consequences of saying yes and not following through.



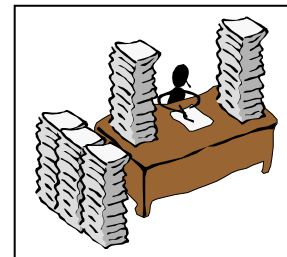
## The “Interrogator”

- Most commonly the Control personality.
- Often unaware of how they come across.
- Normally created by the need to have more information/data to feel comfortable.
- Can be hostile action to demonstrate their expertise over another.
- Often times can effectively diffuse by asking them to clarify their questions in writing so you can address more accurately.
- Perhaps consider having supplemental information ready for the interrogator. They will become engrossed in reading through all the detailed information.
- Be willing to say, “*I don't know.*”

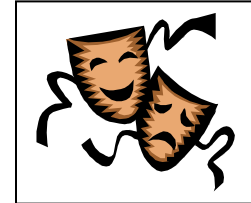


## The “Procrastinator”

- Can be any personality, each for different reasons.
  - Control due to perfectionistic tendencies
  - Extrovert because said they could do something and actually have no idea how to get it done.
  - Stable because they don't want to let people down.

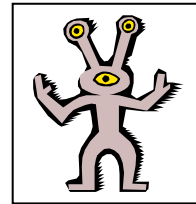


- The Dominant is more likely to at least take some type of action
- Tap into their needs as a means for support and movement toward action.
- Set clear milestones and expectations when working with a procrastinator.
- Provide adequate information and time to process tasks.
- Get help immediately if they are slowing down a project.



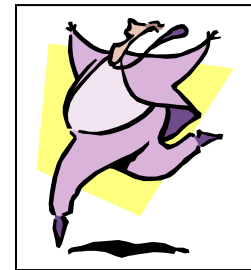
## The “Drama Queen”

- Most likely the Extrovert personality in order to achieve attention
- Do not get involved in their “play.”
- Be certain to have very clear goals and expectations if working on a project together.
- Have short meetings with a strict agenda.
- Give them lots of positive attention for action rather than talk.
- Be willing to listen at times, and still communicate that the talking stops when it is time to work.



## The “Two Face”

- Can be any personality based on different unmet needs.
- Call this behavior out in the open in a private meeting. Be specific about the differences between what you feel they are telling you versus others.
- Clarify agreements in writing at the time or with follow up memos.
- Uphold your end of the agreement. Others normally soon learn what is going on.



## The “Happy Hippy”

- Says “relax” to everything. Fails to share your sense of urgency.
- More commonly the Stable wanting to keep the peace over task achievement or the Extrovert who leaves many things unfinished anyway.
- Be certain to set clear, intermediate milestones on any project that you do together.
- Clarify expectations and consequences for not getting things done.
- Be certain to focus on your assignments rather than theirs. Do not do their work for them.
- Remember to evaluate what they are saying – perhaps we do need to relax.

# When All Else Fails – Simply Cope

1. Remember that the world does not revolve around us either. People do not need to alter their behavior just because we want them to.
2. You still have the ability to choose to be “you” even if someone else is trying to upset you. You are either a victim or a proactive person. These are mutually exclusive.
3. No one ever makes you do anything!
4. The person not on the defensive is in control.
5. Maintain your focus on productive activities.
6. You may even choose to simply avoid them or oblige them in order to move on.
7. Remember not to let their difficult behavior determine your agenda. If you become upset with them – they own you. Only you can **CHOOSE YOUR ATTITUDE!**

# Generational Tendencies

Personality styles are only one component of differences between people. Another area to be aware of in today's work environment is generational tendencies.

## **Veterans (Born prior to 1943)**

Duty / Authority:

Learning / Education:

Change / Chaos:

Technology:

## **Boomers (Born 1943-1960)**

Duty / Authority:

Learning / Education:

Change / Chaos:

Technology:

## **Xers (Born 1960- 1980)**

Duty / Authority:

Learning / Education:

Change / Chaos:

Technology:

## **Nexters (Born after 1980)**

Duty / Authority:

Learning / Education:

Change / Chaos:

Technology:



# Dealing with Difficult Customers



*Customers Become Difficult When Their Needs are Not Being Met*

The following “rules” can be helpful in dealing with both internal and external customers that are frustrated and difficult. People normally contact us to receive help in solving a problem. That problem may already be frustrating them and you may receive some undeserved anger created by their problem.

**Rule #1 - Most customers are frustrated when they call and want their feelings validated.**

1. When customers contact you they are normally frustrated by a problem.
2. They typically are first looking to have their frustration validated.
3. When we move straight to problem solving without validating their frustration we often aggravate them further.
4. Remember, once they become frustrated their needs extend beyond simply having the problem solved.

**Rule #2 – Begin with these simple, but powerful phrases:**

1. I’m sorry for your troubles.
2. I can understand why you are upset.
3. I apologize for your inconvenience.

**Rule #3 – Ask their permission to obtain information:**

1. May I ask a few questions to help me understand the situation and problem better?
2. If you just start asking questions, you have taken control away from them.

**Rule #4 – They don’t care what you can’t do:**

1. Talk with them in terms of what you can do, rather than can’t do.
2. Regardless of whether they are in another department, a merchant or other customer, they are seeking help and solutions from you.

**Rule #5 – Remember they are people just like you and me.**

1. Even though you may deal with this problem frequently, this is the first time they have had this problem.
2. They want to feel special and that you are happy to help them with their problem.
3. They want to know you recognize the importance of their role to the organization and/or that you appreciate their business and are trying to solidify this relationship through your efforts.

**Rule #6 – Remember why you are doing what you are doing.**

1. Hopefully it is to make a difference.
2. Hopefully you enjoy what you do.
3. Hopefully you are not being a difficult person on your end of this interaction.



# Continue Your Learning

Today was hopefully a good learning event. But what we actually gained today was information and insights. The true learning will occur as you apply key concepts from today's session that were meaningful to you. Please ensure you completed your keepers list and created an action plan. Here are a few other useful ideas to increase retention and optimize your learning experience:

- 1. Clarity:** It is better to have one very clear action item than lots of great ideas.
- 2. Action:** Action builds momentum. Take some action immediately, within the next 24 hours.
- 3. Review:** Review the key material and your progress in the following manner for maximum results. It is called "spaced repetition" and it works. Schedules these times immediately. One hour of cumulative review pays big dividends.
  - For 15 minutes within 24 hours
  - For 15 minutes one week from today
  - For 15 minutes one month from today
  - For 15 minutes three months from today.
- 4. Support:** Find at least one accountability partner who will follow up with you and hold you to taking action. If possible share your key learning points, goals and action plan with your supervisor. Get them involved and ask for their help.

## Additional Resources

(Make note of any additional resources you hear about during the training here)

# 30-Day Personal Action Journal

## Dealing With Difficult People

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# My Keepers

**LifeChampion<sup>®</sup> International, Inc.**

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