

**Dealing With Difficult People –**  
Especially When You Know They Are Dead Wrong




**CHRISTINE CORELL & ASSOCIATES, INC.** Driving Business Growth.  
Fueling High Performance.

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**If Only It Were This Simple**

Confucius Say...



**“Be Sincere and True In Your Word, Serious and Careful in your Actions, and You’ll Get Along”.**

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**Dealing With Difficult People The Right Way**  
**and the Best Way is Essential**  
**For the Sake Of \_\_\_\_\_.**

Your Sanity!!!

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**YOU are Expected to Solve Peoples’ Problems**

**PERFECT**



Zero Tolerance



**Problem Solved**

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### Who Are Some People You Encounter That Can Be Difficult?

- Board members
- Tenants
- Employees and public service professionals
- Disputing tenants
- Difficult personality types
- People who harass you



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### People Who Have High Expectations

#### Expectations

- AWESOME!
- Excellent
- Very Good
- Satisfactory
- Marginal

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### Challenges

- People you deal with that have a lack of urgency to serve!
- Morale problems
- Shortage Housing
- Lack of financial resources to fix problems for difficult people
- Rules/Regulations/Procedures you can't change

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The toll inflicted by the pandemic has manifested itself in a myriad of ways — physically, economically, psychologically. The problems of those we serve have simply compounded that toll.



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## The People You Serve and Work for You are Likely



- Under a great deal of stress
- Impatient
- Unhappy/ concerned about their future
- Having financial problems
- What else?

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## What We Will Address:

- Warm up
- Seven steps to deal with difficult people
- How to handle irate and out of control people
- What to do when you can't help someone
- Real world case studies / situations
- Dealing with difficult employees
- Dealing with difficult bosses

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**When It Comes to  
What Most People are  
Experiencing Living and Working  
in Today's World Even The Most  
Mild Mannered Person Can  
Become Difficult or Upset**



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## Causes of Complaints-Any Business

- Did not meet expectations
- Bad or indifferent attitude from employee
- On-hold too long
- Has received misinformation
- Lack of display of urgency to serve
- Lack of empathy



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### Difficult Personalities

|   |                                     |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| <p><b>1. "I'm right"</b></p> <p><b>My Rules:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. I am always right.</li> <li>2. Just in case I am wrong see rule number 1.</li> </ol> | <p><b>2. The "Hot-Head"</b></p>     |
| <p><b>3. Unreasonable</b></p> <p>unreasonable</p>   | <p><b>4. Chronic Complainer</b></p> |

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### Difficult Personalities

|                            |  |
|----------------------------|--|
| <p><b>Manipulative</b></p> | <p><b>Callous</b></p> <p>callous adjective</p> <p>• showing or having an insensitive and cruel disregard for others</p> <p><i>a callous comment</i></p> <p>Synonyms: heartless, uncaring, indifferent</p> <p>www.thesaurus.com</p> |
| <p><b>Aggressive</b></p>   | <p><b>Suspicious</b></p>   |

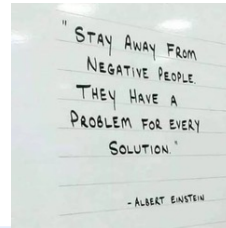
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## Difficult Personalities



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## Difficult Personality: Negaholic!!



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## Difficult Personality Types Might Want

- To have their ego fed
- To vent and make sure you listen to them
- To throw their weight around to cover up for their own inadequacies
- To see if they can cause you to shake in your boots
- Conflict: They thrive on it
- To take personal frustrations out on you
- To see how much they can get away with
- To do what they've always done the way they want to do it


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**SITUATION**

A Board Commissioner feels he is entitled to more than what his role entails. Your job is to oversee day-to-day operations. His job is to oversee the setting of policy and the finances, etc., but not day-to-day operations.

He tells you what to do. When he doesn't get what he wants, he objects, complains, causes problems, and makes your life hell. He is dead wrong. If you do what he wants, YOU have to deal with the consequences!

Should you be assertive? Or back down?



**What would YOU do?**

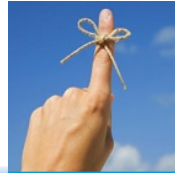
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## 5 Difficult Situations You Must Handle



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Being **ABLE TO** obtain immediate results in every difficult situation would be ideal, **BUT** There's no fixed formula. However...



THERE ARE STEPS YOU CAN TAKE, AS WELL AS SKILLS AND TECHNIQUES YOU CAN APPLY THAT CAN HELP

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## Seven Steps to Take When Dealing With a Difficult Person or Situation



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Already Do/Say These Things. How Well Do I Do These Things? How Can I Do Them Better?

**FOOD FOR  
THOUGHT**



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**step** #1 - Manage your state of mind.



Immediately shift into the "stay-calm, I can handle this mindset."

**KEEP CALM AND BREATHE**

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**The Mindset That Will Best Serve Us**

- If someone has a viable complaint, they have a right to complain
- Keep things in proper perspective - Realize - you would have to deal with difficult personalities, complaints, and irate customers in any job
- Difficult people come with the territory

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You can't always control or avoid difficult people or situations



**BUT YOU CAN CONTROL HOW YOU REACT**

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**Do**

*just be cool*

**Don't**

**FREAK OUT AND LOSE CONTROL**

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## step # 2 – Listen

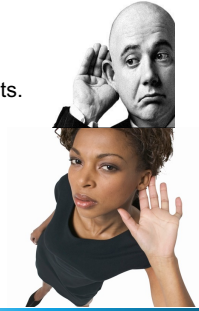
Listen Not only to  
Words But To  
Emotions



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## Keys to Effective Listening

- Stay focused. Tune out all other thoughts.
- Concentrate
- Don't interrupt



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## Demonstrate That You are Listening



- “Yes, tell me more.”  
(If appropriate)

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## What to Do if Someone Won't Stop Talking



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 **step # 3 – Admit if you are wrong.**

“I made a mistake. I’m so sorry.”

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 **step # 4 - Respond with verbal cushions.**

|                             |  |
|-----------------------------|--|
| “Okay”                      | “I can see that.”                                |
| “I’m sorry.”                | “I don’t blame you for being upset.”             |
| “I hear you.”               | “Thank you for bringing this to my attention.”   |
| “I know.”                   | “Sorry I know you are disappointed.”             |
| “I fully understand.”       | “I know you are unhappy. Tell me what happened.” |
| “Please accept my apology.” |  |

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**More Verbal Cushions**

“I’m sorry to tell you that you’ve been given misinformation.”  
“If that happened to me, I’d be unhappy too.”  
“You are right.”  
“I’m going to do my best to help you.”

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**It’s Not Always What You Say, It’s How You Say It**  
**Your Tone of Voice Must Reflect Empathy And Confidence**

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### The People You Serve: Two Needs

1. Answering their question or solving the problem.
2. The emotional need.

When an individual is displaying strong emotions, describing a problem or situation, be sensitive. Show empathy through your words, tone of voice and appropriate verbal cushions.

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### Apply Verbal Cushions With Empathy



**Empathy** is having the ability to understand and feel what another person is experiencing and having the capacity to place oneself in another's position.

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### Watch your tone of voice



IT'S NOT ALWAYS  
WHAT YOU SAY  
BUT HOW YOU SAY  
IT

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Individual has a lack of urgency to get you what you need, holding up your work, and causing you to Have a great deal of frustration.

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**step # 5 – Paraphrase or keep asking questions**

“If I understand you correctly...”  
 “I want to be sure I have all the correct information.”



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**step # 6 – State intentions, handle**

- “I’ll look into this this immediately.”
- “Here’s what we’ll do...”
- “It’s right on my desk in front of me.”


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**Real World**

You get a call from an irate tenant. He is complaining that...

**What would YOU DO**



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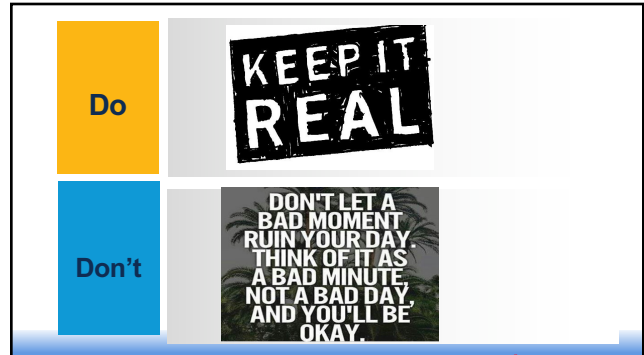
|              |   |
|--------------|---|
| <b>Do</b>    | Be congenial, confident, non-combative<br>Be patient<br>Say “happy to help.”<br>Show you respect and care about the customer.<br>Attend to the customer; demonstrate concern. |
| <b>Don’t</b> | Get defensive or blame someone<br>Say, “It’s not our policy.”<br>Judge or correct the customer  |

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## No Can Do?

- “I would like to do that for you. Unfortunately I can’t.
- “I understand your frustration. I’m sorry I can’t do that for you. Here’s what I **can** do...”

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## Dealing With An Unreasonable or Angry Customer

### Know What an Angry Customer Wants

- Number One: to VENT!
- To know you are concerned and care about them, their feelings / situation
- To be taken seriously, to feel you are competent, and caring
- Fast action



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## An Angry Person Wants

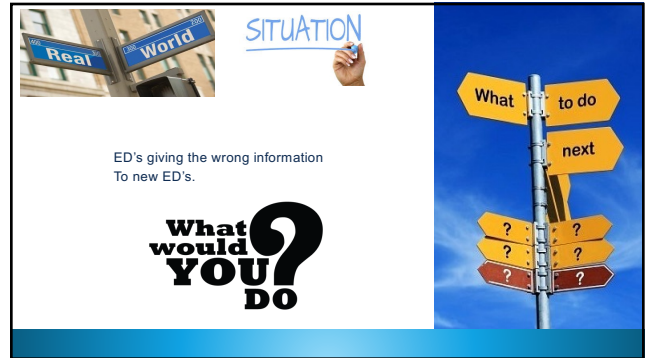


- To be treated with respect
- To be made to feel you are on THEIR side
- To feel they are important to you, and hear words that communicate empathy

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### Three Ways Anger is Expressed

1. **Passive**
  - Passive
  - Sadness
  - Apologetic about complaining



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### Three Ways Anger is Expressed

2. **Problem - Solver**
  - Lets you know about it
  - Nags and expects immediate resolution
  - Is persistent
  - Offers solutions – “Why don't you...!”
  - You people don't know what you're doing!”



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### Three Ways Anger is Expressed

#### 3. Aggressive



- Accuses
- Threatens
- Yells
- Swears

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### Verbal Cushions (When appropriate to Apply When Encountering an *Irate Person*)

- “I hear you. I hear you. I hear you.”
- “I’m on your side. I can only do what is permitted.”
- “This should never have happened.”

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### Verbal Cushions to Apply When an *Irate Customer* is Using Profanity

“Sir / Mam’ “I haven’t said or done anything to disrespect you. May I ask the same of you?”

“I’m sorry, I won’t keep talking to you if you speak in this manner.”

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### Verbal Cushions to Apply When an *Irate Customer* is Using Profanity

“Jane, I won’t tolerate you speaking to me in this manner.”

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Always use an **INDIVIDUAL'S** name




IT MAKES A DIFFERENCE  
IN HOW PEOPLE REACT  
TO YOU

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**Verbal Cushions to Apply When an *Irate* Person is Threatening You**

Walk away or hang up.  
File a police report.  
"You have every right to call a lawyer."

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 **step # 7 – Solve the problem. Thank them for their patience**




**THANK YOU!**

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**Do** Be empathetic.


**Don't** Rush Allow your emotions to get out of control.

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### Situation

An individual is lying and you know it.  
How do you respond, yet come across as professional?



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### Dealing With Difficult Employees




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### SITUATION

An employee is unproductive, unmotivated and slacks off on the job.

**What would YOU DO?**



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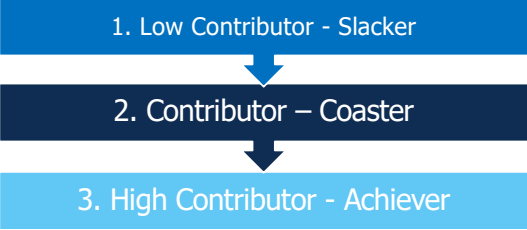


**ONE Correction to an Offense**

When would this not apply?

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### 3 Types Employees



1. Low Contributor - Slacker
2. Contributor - Coaster
3. High Contributor - Achiever

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**Strive to make the difficult behavior impersonal. Address the behavior, not the person. Find out ... why?**

Address problems not by teaching or preaching. But by asking questions.

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### What's the Right Approach to Take?

If you handle the difficult employee in a negative, harsh manner, however right you are, you can damage your relationship with the employee permanently as well as your ability to help them to change. So while you may get the improvement you want, the cost can come high—a breakdown in your management/employee relationship. And if your employee feels threatened and leaves, finding someone to replace them can be a challenge.

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## What Motivates Employees


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## What Motivates Most People

### YOU


- Appreciate / Thank
- Show you care about them on a personal level as well as professional
- Encourage

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**Situation**

Employee is high-performer but constantly complains to everyone.



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## Dealing With Difficult Bosses



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Address...

How it is affecting your performance



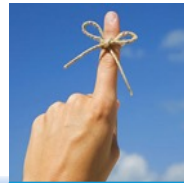
How it may affect clients



How it's affecting the company

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A POSITIVE ATTITUDE MAY  
NOT RESOLVE EVERY PROBLEM in  
every situation ...



BUT IT SURE MAKES FOR A  
MORE PLEASANT  
EXPERIENCE

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THANK YOU!

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