

Workshop D3
Finding a Way Through Conflict
1.30 – 2.15pm

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Hirstworks

Session Objectives

This Session explores conflict and offers some practical solutions to manage and resolve it.

- Learn about conflict and its effects
- Understand why and how people behave when in conflict
- Develop self-awareness and the ability to adapt our own conflict and communication styles

What are your conflict situations?

What is Conflict?

“Conflict is an **expressed struggle** between at least two **interdependent parties** who **perceive incompatible goals, scarce resources, and interference** from others in **achieving their goals**”

WILMOT, W. and HOCKER, J. 2011. *Interpersonal Conflict*. 8th ed. New York: McGraw-Hill, p.11

Exercise

Write down five words which come to mind when thinking about conflict

Some thoughts about Conflict

- Conflict is normal.
- There are two common reasons why people get into conflict:
 - they do not communicate clearly.
 - they have different needs or interests.

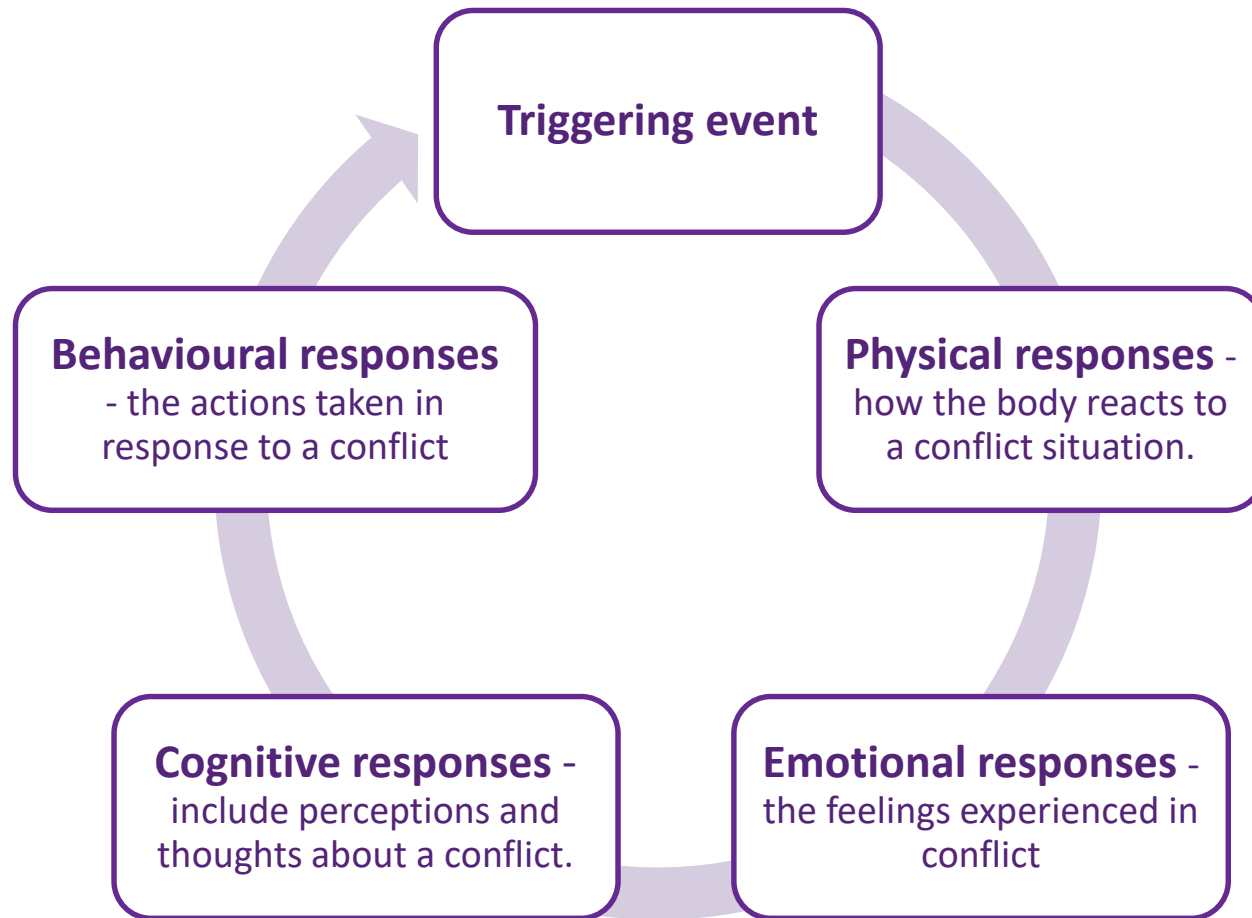
The most effective way to manage conflict is to manage your own response to conflict

Managing Yourself and Managing Others

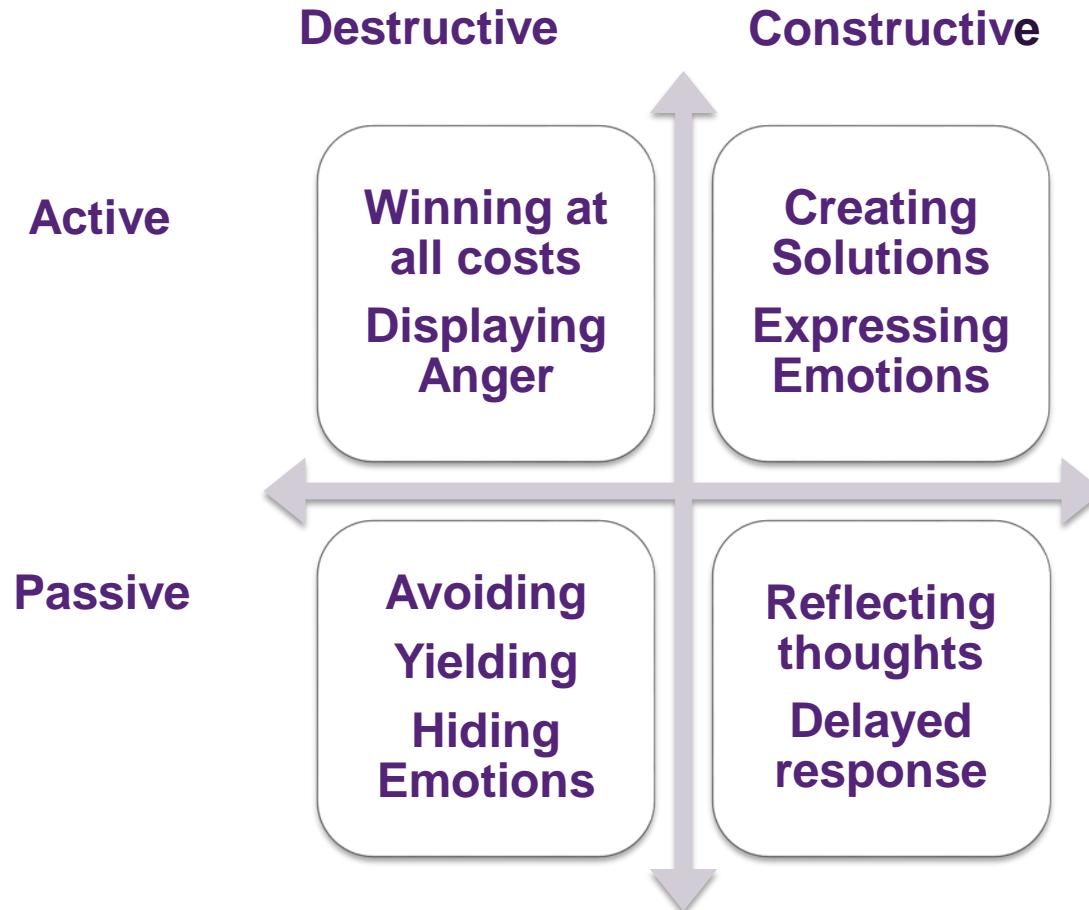
	Perception	Behaviour
Self	Self Awareness Understanding yourself and the impact you might have on others – includes emotional awareness and self-esteem	Self Management Includes self control, adaptability and resilience
Others	Social Awareness Includes empathy (the ability to put yourself in the position of another person and ‘see’ their point of view)	Relationship Management Includes having social skills relating to influence, communication and conflict management

Conflict

A Whole Body Experience



Conflict Behaviours



Conflict Emotions

If you blame yourself

If no-one is to blame (the problem is situational)

If you blame the other person

Generally feel the emotions of shame or guilt

Generally feel the emotions of distress or fear

Generally feel the emotions of anger, disgust or contempt

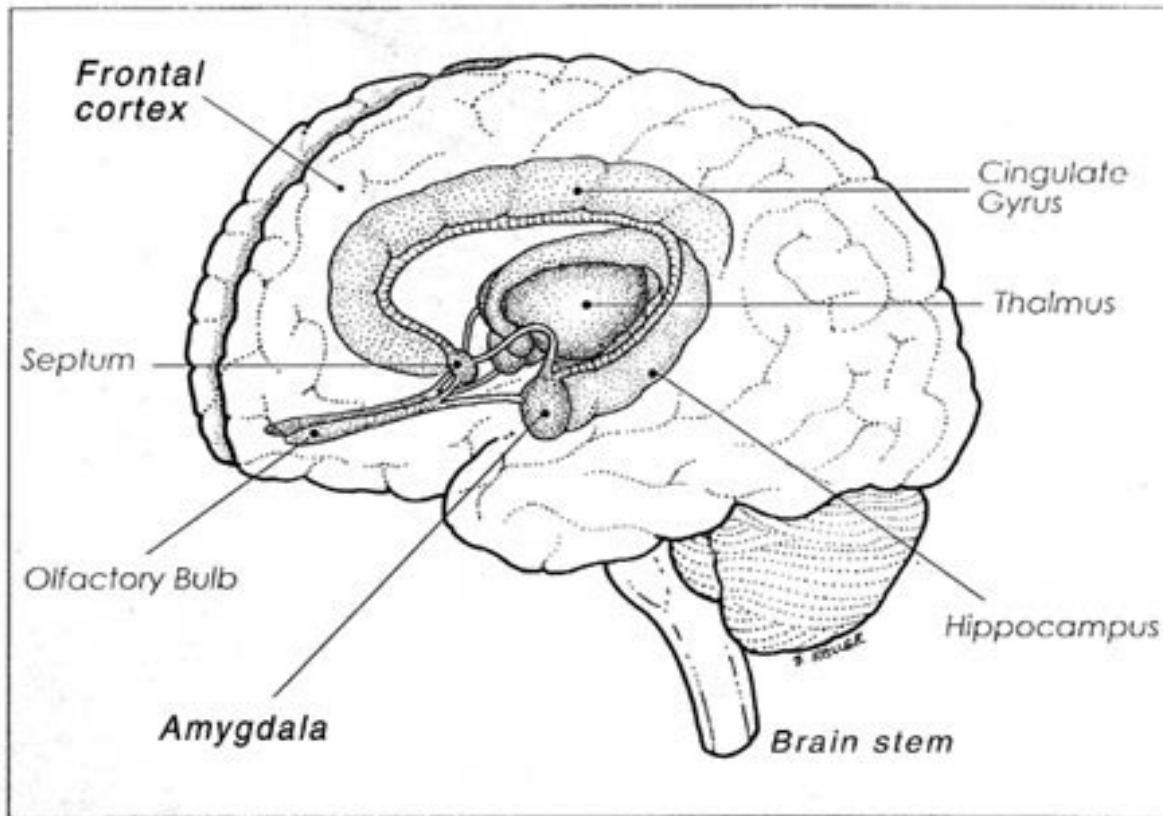
The Causes of Anger

Anger is a well-developed coping mechanism that we turn to when our goals are frustrated, or when we feel threat to ourselves or to people, things and ideas we care about. So the causes of anger can include:

- Frustration of our goals
- Hurt
- Harassment
- Personal attack (mental or physical) on ourselves
- Threats to people, things or ideas we hold dear

About Conflict

Amygdala Hijack



People cannot think straight when they are stressed or emotionally upset. This is because the intensity of their emotions overwhelms their ability to think rationally. It can help to understand what goes on when people are overwhelmed by emotion and go into a 'flight or flight' response

The architecture of the brain gives the amygdala a privileged position as the emotional sentinel, able to hijack the brain.

Understanding Anger

Five Phases

- The trigger
- The escalation phase
- The crisis phase
- The plateau or recovery
- The post crisis depression phase

Defusing Anger with CARP

- **C**ontrol
- **A**cknowledge
- **R**efocus
- **P**roblem solve

Fix the person, then fix the problem

Not playing the Bait Game

The purpose of angry behaviour?

- It can be to control and influence your behaviour.
- It can be to get you to respond in an emotional manner

- Recognise bait for what it is.
- Play the game and you will lose.
- If you do react emotionally, you hand over control.
- The trick is not to take the bait.
- Don't be defensive or counterattack
- **You can choose how to respond.**
- Acknowledge emotion, but don't explore bait remarks.

Challenging Behaviour

Using the DESC Sequence

Describe

- what you are experiencing and/or seeing

Explain

- the effect it is having on you

Show

- that you understand the behaviour

Communicate

- your preferred alternative behaviour

DESC Sequence Example

- **Describe** “When you shout at me”
- **Explain** “I find it hard to concentrate and understand what you are saying”
- **Show understanding** “I appreciate that you are angry and frustrated with the situation”
- **Communicate an alternative** “I want to understand, so can you lower your voice so that I can better understand what you are saying”

If the Behaviour Continues

- If the inappropriate behaviour continues, then you may need to set out the consequences using the “IfThen....” process.
- For example - “If you continue to shout at me, Then I will end this conversation”

What do Angry People Want?

They want what we all want:

- help and for someone to make a genuine effort of their part
- acknowledgement of their situation and feelings
- choices and alternatives

Developing Your Own Resources

Relationship Management

Empathy

- The ability to put yourself in the position of another person and 'see' their viewpoint

Language

- Becoming more consciously aware of language that might trigger/worsen conflict

Behaviour

- Awareness of your preferred conflict handling style

Seeing the Same Picture?



Seeing the Same Picture?

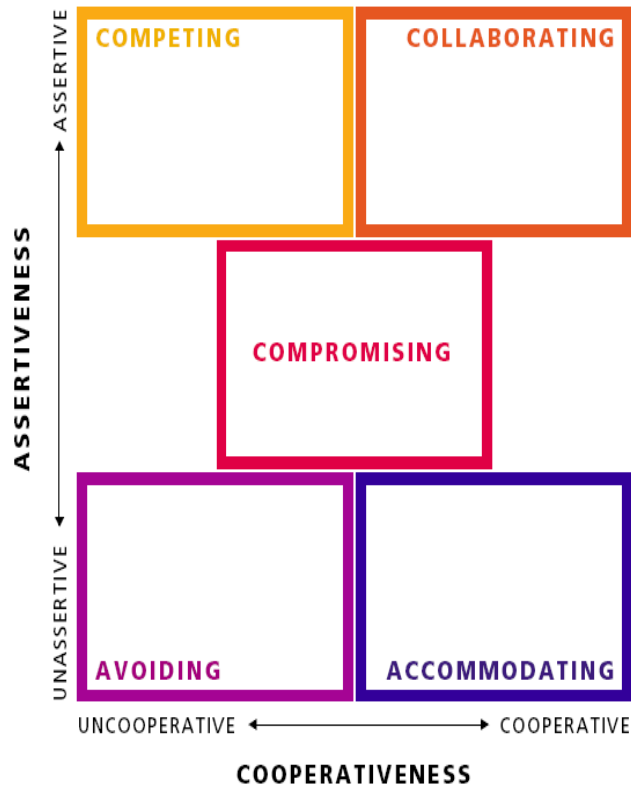


Adjusting Your Communication

- It can be helpful to have an awareness and understanding of the communication style of the person you are speaking to, so that you can adjust your own style accordingly.
- You may want to try emphasising *feelings and intuition* when you are dealing with *human* situations and emphasising *thinking and rationality* when you are dealing with *technical* situations.

Responding to Conflict

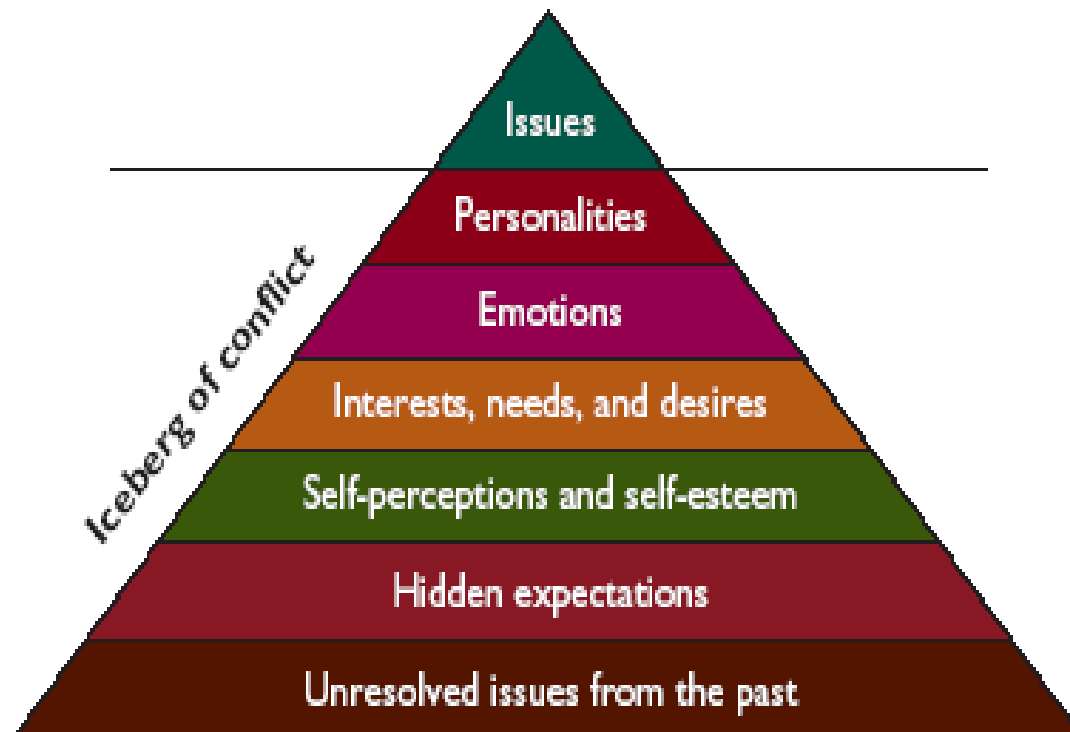
Knowing Your Own Conflict Style



Five basic ways of addressing conflict were identified by Thomas and Kilmann. We all have a 'default' conflict style.

Thomas, K.W., & Kilmann, R.H. 1974.
Conflict Mode Instrument.
New York: Tuxedo

The Conflict Triangle

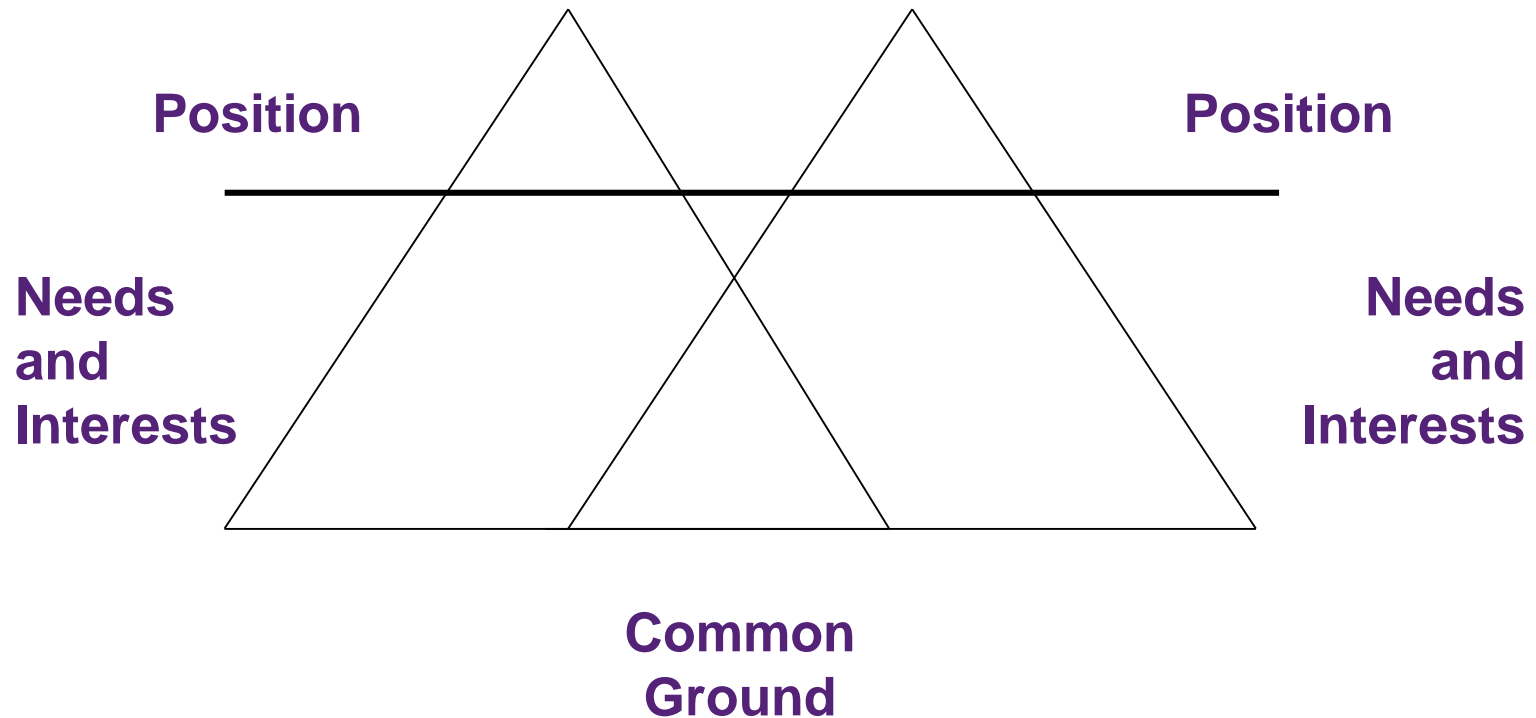


Awareness of Interconnection

(The potential to move above and beyond the conflict,
to have genuine empathy for others.)

A Mediation Approach

Finding Common Ground



Exploring Interests Behind Positions

Possible exploratory questions:

- What are you most upset about?
- What is important to you?
- How does that affect you?
- Can you say more about?
- What do you mean by?
- What concerns you about?

Your Approach and Attitude

Suggested Good Practice

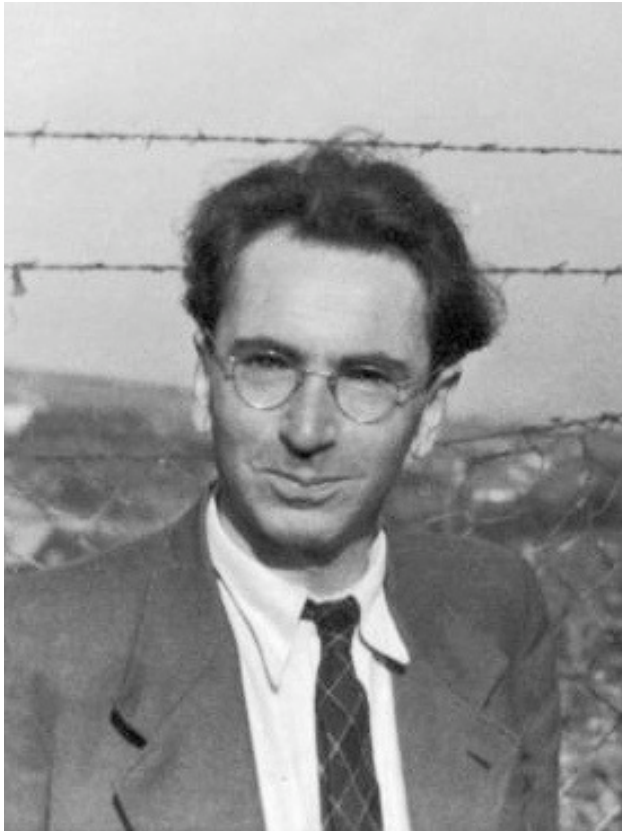
- Remain calm and respectful throughout.
- Try to see the situation from the other point of view.
- Listen - use good listening skills and give encouragement e.g. if face-to-face then nod, maintain eye contact, adopt open body language and in all cases show an interest in what is being said.
- Keep listening - allow the person to talk in their own words and express their dissatisfaction - don't intervene too quickly.
- Acknowledge the person's feelings and any anger (even if you feel that they are being unreasonable) - you can do this without making a comment on the issue itself e.g. *"I see that this situation is frustrating for you"*.

Your Approach and Attitude

Suggested Good Practice (cont.)

- Show that you have understood - paraphrase and summarise what the person has said by picking out key points and using key words to mirror those they have said.
- Don't debate the facts, especially if the person is angry.
- Listen for statements that you can agree with e.g. *"I agree, it would be frustrating to"*.
- Lead the person back to the point of their issue if they go off track e.g. *"So, you are saying that"*.
- Ask for clarification wherever necessary and make clear your understanding of the issue.
- Be clear and direct about what you can do, how long it will take and what it will involve – and do it!

And Finally ...



“Between stimulus and response there is a space. In that space is our power to choose our response. In our response lies our growth and our freedom.”

Viktor Frankl (1905 –1997)

Contact Details

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