

## **Taming the Tough Ones**

Sometimes we have to deal with people we consider to be difficult. Usually, what makes them difficult, is that they want something we don't. How interesting! At any rate, here are some strategies for managing and handling some of these issues:

1. The person who wants to impose an opinion on everyone else. Patiently take control away from them with some phrase like, "That's a good point, Charlotte. Now let's have someone else's views on the matter."
2. The person who wants to argue every point. Say, "I don't have enough time to thrash this out right now. Can we discuss this later, James?" Be certain to honor this person's opinion respectfully before suggesting this alternative.
3. The person who wants to quibble, letting no point pass but insists on every trivial detail being explored. Ask yourself: What do they want? They want recognition from you and whoever else is around, or they want to demonstrate their knowledge or vent a gripe. To achieve this, they'll try to put you on the spot. Don't lose your cool or get caught up in a meaningless argument.

If you're faced with an arguer, give him or her some recognition, but don't get entangled in an argument. You could say something like, "You raise some very interesting ideas." Focus on the questioner for 5-6 seconds (long enough for the person to feel they have gotten proper recognition and attention). Then move your eye contact to someplace else. If you're faced with a loaded question, try a turnabout: "That's a very interesting question. What do you think about it?" Or try a phrase like, "Let's go into these points later, Michelangelo." Be certain to acknowledge the person's opinion respectfully.

4. The person whose sensitivities lend them to taking everything personally—who feels like you're telling them what to think and resents it. Emphasize that people have different ways of doing things and that individual situations lend themselves to different approaches. Emphasize the idea that there is no one "right" way to do anything.
5. The person who talks all the time. They might simply be a pleasant extrovert, so sometimes it's worth listening longer than you would ordinarily like. Be aware of how the rest of the people in the situation feel about this person's contributions too. Are you the only one who's annoyed? If you must curb their chatter, try using a statement like, "Sam has given us his ideas. How do you feel about this subject, Ngoan?" Sometimes it can be very difficult because

the person constantly interrupts and goes on endlessly. It may even be necessary to notice the breathing pattern of this person and hop in when they take a breath. Try changing the subject or moving the attention to someone else by saying, "That's a good point, Luigi. How do the rest of you feel about that?"

6. The shy person or the one who will take no part in discussions. Both the shy individual who chooses not to participate and the individual who appears bored or annoyed can disrupt a conversation. You might try to pull them in by referring a question or comment: "What do you think of that, Charlotte? I'd be interested in your opinion" or "We haven't hear from you, Alonzo. What are your experiences in dealing with this type of situation?" This technique is used to draw people out, engage them in the situation, or attempt to allay their boredom.

Whoever you might be dealing with, remember that honey calms more bears than screaming.