



May, 2011 Volume 2: Issue 5

Difficult People: Life's #1 Source of Pain and Frustration

Quick Links to This Issue

[Announcing "Dear Sylvia"-NEW](#)

[Feature Article](#)

[Tip](#)

[Resources](#)

[About Sylvia](#)

a MESSAGE from SYLVIA

The Manager's Coach

Difficult people. We all know them. Given a certain set of circumstances, each of us can be one. Yes, you and I can be perceived as “difficult” by somebody else—and we probably are.

There is a difference, however, between being viewed as “difficult” occasionally and actually being difficult chronically. When people constantly derail work flow, create upset among individuals and/or groups, and hurt others, their behavior is unproductive and unacceptable.

Years ago I supervised a young woman who refused to value colleagues’ opinions, found reasons why nothing would work out, and criticized everybody’s else’s ideas. All of her nay saying, squashing, and negativity adversely impacted the staff. Eventually I realized that beneath this surface behavior was an insecure person who very much needed to be right at the expense of others.

After several conversations (over a period of three months) during which I explicitly told her what had to change, I clearly saw that she had no desire to alter her attitude or style when interacting with peers. Unfortunately, this left me no choice. I terminated her employment. I did it to show her I wouldn't tolerate her behavior, and I did to preserve my staff's morale.

Regardless of the circumstances, difficult people must be dealt with rather than ignored. We owe it to ourselves and our organizations. There are various strategies that can be used, and each one of them can be learned through practice. Firing someone, by the way, should always be a last resort.

Check out my feature article below which identifies many types of "difficult" people and offers real life strategies for improving troublesome, challenging situations. I guarantee that this article can help you.

Sylvia

FEATURE ARTICLE

Difficult people come in many different flavors. Some of these folks have one tough-to-take behavior or trait; others have several. Whatever the manifestation(s), difficult people became "difficult" as a result of childhood circumstances, personality tendencies, character defects, chronic illness, divorce, abuse, ineffective bosses, low self esteem, a feeling of powerlessness, dysfunctional systems, and/or major disappointment. While these are not excuses for unacceptable behaviors and traits, they do explain what is going on with the individuals we label "difficult".

Do you recognize any of these in your current workplace?

- Mr. Bully
- Miss Bossy
- Ms. Passive-Aggressive
- Mrs. Know-It-All
- Mrs. Hyper Critical
- Ms. Drama Queen
- Mr. Complainer
- Miss Back Stabber
- Mr. Cynic
- Miss Negative
- Mrs. Indecisive
- Mr. Yes-Man

- Mr. Controlling
- Miss Defensive
- Mrs. Perfectionist
- Ms. Twist the Truth
- Mr. Bored With Everything
- Miss Approval Seeker
- Ms. Mind Changer
- Mr. Self Aggrandizer
- Mrs. Failure to Deliver
- Miss Problem Creator
- Mr. Lazy
- Ms. Argumentative
- Mr. Less Than Truthful

It's one thing to recognize some of these people in your peers, supervisor, or direct reports; it's another thing to know how to deal with them. Take a look at the strategies below and implement a couple of them this week. Make a mental note of your successes.

- Express appreciation for a skill or talent you value in the person.
- Ask the person what he thinks can be done to ensure that a certain situation doesn't happen again.
- Remove yourself temporarily from the person's presence, if possible.
- Vent your frustration with a trusted, safe third party.
- Tell the person how you are feeling using "I" statements.
- Accept responsibility for your part in the problem.
- Apologize only when appropriate.
- Avoid criticizing the person; criticize the behavior, trait, or outcome.
- Manage the unacceptable behavior.
- Clearly state the behavior you want/need to see.
- Give the person the benefit of the doubt where possible.
- State the conditions you need in order to continue working with that person.
- Point out how different behavior could be beneficial to everyone involved. [Back to Ezine Top](#)

RESOURCES

Available on Amazon.com for ONLY \$0.99 per paperback copy, check out

the book entitled, *How to Deal With Difficult People*, by Paul Friedman. Published in 1989 and then again in 1994, every page of this skinny read is worth your investment of time and a few pennies. It's practical and easy to digest—filled with insights and strategies you can take with you into every frustrating situation. Don't be turned off by those publication dates, as human behavior hardly changes over just a decade or so.

Problematic Relationships in the Workplace by Janie Harden Fritz and Becky Omdahl, also available on Amazon.com for \$29.95, is a rather academic, intellectual experience. It explores workplace relationships and how people's mental health and job satisfaction are compromised by difficult employees' behavior. It also discusses how to manage challenging relationships emotionally as well as includes a piece on forgiveness and professional civility. Not an easy read, but well worth your effort.

[Back to Ezine Top](#)

TIP

List three people in your life who you consider to be difficult. Then identify the specific behaviors that make them difficult. Gain clarity around what you want each of those people to do differently. Finally, decide upon a strategy or strategies you could use to improve your relationship with them and get better results going forward.

[Back to Ezine Top](#)

Where in the World is SYLVIA?

On April 6, 2011 at Harrisburg University of Science and Technology Sylvia provided an hour-long Lunch Bytes presentation entitled: "Establishing Your Professional Image Using an E-Portfolio". Extremely well received by students, faculty, and community individuals, Sylvia may have the opportunity to do more intensive work around this subject for HU students in the Fall.

On April 26, 2011 Sylvia spoke to Mechanicsburg Chamber members during their "AM Strategies" session at Bethany Village. Topic: "Presenting Your Company to a Prospective Client". Content included the ten components of professional image, types of company information to

share, and strategies for making lasting connections with others.

On May 11, 2011 Sylvia will serve as the luncheon keynote speaker for Harrisburg Area Community College's annual Entrepreneurial Studies conference entitled The Entrepreneurial Edge. Her topic is emotional intelligence (EQ) and the ten ways entrepreneurs can benefit from developing and implementing high EQ.

Announcing "Dear Sylvia"

Do you have a question about business? Perhaps you are an executive, middle level manager, or a small business owner finding yourself in a rut? Maybe you are having difficulties with people on your team? Or maybe you're standing in your own way?

This new initiative from Launching Lives called "Dear Sylvia" will be a monthly column, featured [on her blog](#), which will answer a question sent to her during the month.

In typical newspaper advice style, all submissions will be considered. However, Sylvia will decide which questions to answer publicly. Those who submit questions are welcome to sign their full name, but in the interest of privacy only aliases will be used in the blog column.

As "The Manager's Coach", Sylvia's intention is to offer a solution to your business challenges in a way that others may benefit. Submit a question today, then [check regularly](#) to learn by this shared experience.

Do you have a business question? Send your question, in confidence, to "Dear Sylvia" [by email](#) or write to her at 4902 Carlisle, PMB 297, Mechanicsburg, Pa 17050.

[Hear Sylvia herself explain the initiative.](#)

A final note: The first 10 people to send a question to "Dear Sylvia" will be entered to win a free coaching session!

[Back to Ezine Top](#)

About This Ezine

This Ezine is 1) to provide readers with valuable FREE content which contributes to both personal and professional growth and 2) to invite them to take next steps toward working directly with Sylvia.

Back issues are [available here](#). Send email by [clicking here](#) to manage your free subscription. Sharing content with attribution is encouraged

Launching Lives Ezine is dedicated, above all, to “building people...building businesses.” ©2010, 2011

About SYLVIA

The Manager's Coach

Sylvia Hepler of Launching Lives is an executive coach based in South Central PA. Her mission is to support corporate and nonprofit executives and business owners as they solve problems, develop leadership skills, and increase balance in their lives. Her background includes: nonprofit executive management/leadership, public speaking, business and freelance writing, teaching, and retail sales.

A [certified executive coach](#) through The Rescue Institute in Colorado and a participant in extensive continuing education, Sylvia is a platinum level expert author on [ezinearticles.com](#). She has produced an audio CD entitled, “Making Change”, [two special reports](#) for persons in management positions, and an e-book entitled, No Surprises: A Business Guide for Starting Your Coaching Practice.

More information is available at her [Launching Lives Website](#)

[Click to contact Sylvia by Email](#)

Reach Sylvia by phone at 717-761-5457

[Back to Ezine Top](#)

Launching Lives SERVICES

Launching Lives is an executive coaching company located in South Central PA. Its mission is to support managers and executives to solve their most pressing problems, develop leadership skills, and increase balance in their lives utilizing a holistic approach. Launching Lives focuses on **BUILDING PEOPLE** through individual, private coaching, group coaching, specialized products, speeches, and retreats. Most coaching takes place by phone.

Often people don't really know **HOW** they might benefit from coaching. Quite simply, ask yourself these questions: "What can't I seem to resolve on my own? What is keeping me awake at night? What am I missing when I look at a certain situation? How can I get to the next professional level? How can I learn certain skills quickly? How can I narrow my professional gaps? How can I motivate my staff? How can I communicate more effectively so I serve myself and others better? How can I reduce my work-related frustration? How can I develop a viable plan of action for myself and/or my organization? How can I obtain greater job satisfaction? Coaching is the **SOLUTION** to any of these issues.

© Launching Lives Executive Coaching 2010, 2011 Forwarding and sharing content is permitted with attribution. Be sure to include LaunchingLives.biz in your list of safe senders to be certain that you receive each issue of this monthly ezine.

[Click here to Unsubscribe](#)