

WORKING MATTERS

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Dealing With Difficult People

It's a typical afternoon at the office and you're thinking about getting that cup of coffee to help you through the remainder of the day. You're almost done with your phone conversation when you hear loud voices coming from somewhere in the office. You hear bits and snatches of conversation. Two employees are going at it – arguing. Frustration is in the air. Tension is mounting. Then, *kaboom*, a major explosion! One of them yells and is now totally out of control. Someone steps in. Whispers. One of the frustrated employees leaves. Dead silence follows. There's a collective sigh. Everyone back to work – if you can after all that. This would be the best time to go get that cup of coffee.

Work is not always a walk in the park. There are goals and tasks at hand and yes, a lot of frustration on many different levels. Some deal with the frustration better than others do. Unfortunately, there are a handful (and I hope just a handful) of people who will resort to knee-jerk reactions when things start to get a little rough. They become extremely difficult. So, how does one cope?

Sometimes, just being able to recognize certain types of difficult people can help us cope and deal with them. A book by Rick Brinkman and Rick Kirschner called *Dealing with People You Can't Stand* lists the types of difficult people based on behavior. Here they are:

• **The Sherman Tank or Steamroller**

This is your office bully – hostile, aggressive and angry. The Sherman Tank will leave you feeling flattened if you happen to be a target or happen to just be in the way.

• **The Sniper**

The Sniper will use any or a combination of the following to make you feel and look foolish or inept: eye rolling, rude and stinging negative remarks, criticism, sarcasm and humor. The Sniper is also classified as hostile-aggressive.

• **The Exploder or Grenade**

Being with an Exploder is like sitting atop a volcano. One minute calm and composed and the next minute: *kaboom!* You've got a major, out-of-control explosion! You'll never know what hit you. Needless to say, this type is hostile-aggressive.

• **The Complainer or Whiner**

The Complainer is a miserable person who feels utterly helpless against a mean, cruel and

unjust world. This person whines to the wrong people, refuses to do anything to resolve any complaint(s) and only feel validated when others share in the misery.

• **The Clam/ Blank Wall / The Nothing**

Talking to this person would be like talking to a blank wall. You get nothing. No conversation. No emotion. No verbal signals. No non-verbal signals. Nothing!

• **The Negativist or The No Person**

This person personifies the Grim Reaper, spreading doom and gloom and darkness. Beware. The Negativist will sap your drive, energy and strength and will not stop until you are exhausted.

• **The Know-It-All or Expert**

This person can either be knowledgeable in his/her own wright or can be a phony expert. Whatever the case, the Know-It-All likes to lecture and wield great authority and knowledge, quoting facts and figures (true or otherwise). The Expert (at everything) must always be right and cannot stand to be corrected or contradicted. However, the Expert has no problem going out of his/her way to correct you.

• **The Super Agreeable or Yes Person**

Whatever the request is, the answer is a compulsive "yes" or "sure" or "no problem." This person is extremely nice and ever-so-eager to please. Unfortunately, the Super Agreeable can also take on much more than he/she can handle and so will most likely let you down simply because the load heaped on is more than this person can handle.

• **The Indecisive/Maybe Person**

Decisions are excruciating and painful for the Indecisive, who is too terrified to make a decision, lest the decision render someone with hurt feelings or, God forbid, be the wrong decision. Whatever the question is, the answer will be delayed and/or result in a "maybe."

I hope that identifying the types of difficult people we all have to put up with leaves us in a better position to cope with them. We all can react to frustration occasionally in one or more ways described above. The difference is that difficult people are defined through the consistency of their responses.

That being said, let's get back to work or go get that cup of coffee.



Performing Books for Youngsters

■ **Library's Performing Books series for kids continues.**

LIBRARY — Performing Books, a series of children's books performed by musicians, storytellers and other artists, continues its fourth season Saturday, Nov. 4, with *Belinda the Ballerina* and *Belinda in Paris*, by Amy Young.

The performance will feature Meghan Van Winkle, ballerina; Linda Zoolalian, pianist; and Pogo Saito, storyteller.

Book description: When Belinda auditions for the spring ballet recital, the snooty judges tell her that her feet are too big. Discouraged, she hangs up her tutu for good – but nothing can stop Belinda from dancing!

The series continues Saturday, Dec. 9, with *Opera Cat* by Tess Weaver. The performance will feature Heather Calvete, opera singer; Linda Zoolalian, pianist; and Peter Kors, storyteller.

Book description: Alma the cat loves opera and has an extraordinary singing voice. When opera diva Madame SoSo loses her voice, Alma steps in to save the day.

Admission is free.

Performances are held at 2 and 3 p.m. at the Los Angeles Central Library, Mark Taper Auditorium, 630 W. 5th St., Downtown Los Angeles.

Performing Books is intended for children ages 4 through 10.

For more information: www.lapl.org/kidspath



Performing Books



Admission Free!

Los Angeles Central Library, Mark Taper Auditorium
630 W. 5th Street, Downtown Los Angeles
For children ages 4 through 10
2006 Nov. 4, 2006 Dec. 9

Saturday, November 4, 2006

Belinda the Ballerina & Belinda in Paris by Amy Young
Storyteller: Pogo Saito • Pianist: Linda Zoolalian • Ballerina: Meghan Van Winkle
Belinda auditions for the spring ballet recital, but the snooty judges tell her that her feet are too big. Discouraged, she hangs up her tutu for good – but nothing can stop Belinda from dancing!

Saturday, December 9, 2006

Opera Cat by Tess Weaver
Storyteller: Peter Kors • Pianist: Linda Zoolalian • Opera Singer: Heather Calvete
Alma the cat loves opera and has an extraordinary singing voice. When opera diva Madame SoSo loses her voice, Alma steps in to save the day.

Saturday, January 6, 2007

David Gets His Dinner by David Almond • Storyteller: Pogo Saito
David "can't" get dinner. He's afraid of the kitchen. He's afraid of the stove. He's afraid of the sink. He's afraid of the refrigerator. He's afraid of the cupboard. He's afraid of the table. He's afraid of the chairs. He's afraid of the floor. He's afraid of the walls. He's afraid of the ceiling. He's afraid of the lights. He's afraid of the shadows. He's afraid of the silence. He's afraid of the noise. He's afraid of the world. He's afraid of the people. He's afraid of the things. He's afraid of the places. He's afraid of the time. He's afraid of the space. He's afraid of the love. He's afraid of the hate. He's afraid of the joy. He's afraid of the sorrow. He's afraid of the hope. He's afraid of the despair. He's afraid of the life. He's afraid of the death. He's afraid of the everything. He's afraid of the nothing.

