



Managing (or Working) With People Who Are NOT Like You – Part 2



Why is it that some who you work with or manage don't get you?
What is it that causes the same cyclical frustration over and over again?
How many times do you have to explain what works or doesn't work for you with those who rub you the wrong way?



On the other hand, what is it about those you work with who understand, create little to no frustration or simply put, get you?



Answer: It's the ability to understand and accept each other's temperaments and personalities, or not.



For example, there are distinct and specific ways each personality at work feels respected or disrespected based on how they are wired. The four personality types mentioned in my last newsletter, where I used the four distinguishing colors to describe each temperament, illustrate the differences. Following are some samplings.



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How Others Feel Respected

Reds- (Type A's)

Powerful—feel respected by compliance, the ability to pull your own weight at work, and striving for excellence at the job you were hired to do. However, they can feel disrespected by perceived laziness in others, when co-workers continue to whine or complain, or when their work ethic is questioned or not taken seriously.

Blues

Perfectionists—feel respected when they are appreciated for their high standards and quality work, when co-workers and management keep their word and follow through with tasks, and when they are treated as professional equals with others. However, they feel disrespected when they feel talked down to, when others are not treated fairly as team members, or when their work is criticized without input for improvement.

Greens

Peacemakers- feel respected when they are listened to carefully, when their quiet insights are appreciated and when staff and management get along. However, they feel disrespected when they are forced to resolve confrontation on the spot, when they are not given the time necessary to plan and process, or when their indecisiveness is seen as poor leadership rather than methodical thinking.

Yellows

Popular—feel respected when they are treated in professional friendly ways, when their creativity is believed in and sought, and when they are given the freedom to exercise their gifts and skill sets. However, they can feel disrespected when they are frequently criticized or seen as shallow, when negativity is used to motivate them, and when they are not trusted to eventually come through.



The key to unlock the door to others feeling respected by you is to respect them in the way that works for them. We usually treat others based on how we like to be treated, but that frequently doesn't scratch others where they professionally and emotionally itch.

Speaking Others Motivational Language

Another effective way to work with others that are not like you is to understand what makes them feel cared for and important. In his book *The 5 Love Languages*, author and psychologist Gary Chapman explains the five ways people feel important and valued. His whole theory is predicated on treating others the way they need to be treated rather than what is convenient for us.

He also suggests the way to determine how a co-worker or team member feels valued can be quickly seen in how they treat others they work with.

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The five languages are:

I. Words of Affirmation

Some people respond best to verbal encouragement. In other words, complimenting them on what they are doing right rather than focusing on what they are doing wrong. A little positive reinforcement goes a long way with these workers. When I think of the type of person that thrives on positive feedback I think of Mark Twain's classic line "I could live for two months on a good compliment." If you are one that needs affirmation, then this phrase resonates completely with you! You don't have to be a narcissist to hear again what you are good at. It can actually propel us to master our skill set at even a higher level.

Of course, what would sabotage this message of affirmation would be every shape and size of destructive criticism.

II. Quality Time

These individuals feel best reached and understood with one-on-one discussion and focused time spent on their questions, concerns or small talk if necessary. Frequently I meet employees who have never had a conversation with their immediate supervisor, much less have met their upper management staff that they break their back for every day.

I have a good friend who is a City Manager here in Southern Oregon. When he was promoted to this position he told me that he had a new degree. He said it was an MBWA and explained it was a Manage-By-Wandering-Around degree. He made it his practice to spend time every morning greeting staff from the top down. I recently spent a day with the entire staff and thought no wonder the employees respect the guy and the retention is so high.

The opposite of this would be poor communication channels from the top down.

III. Thoughtful Gifts

A good way to spot this person is to observe how generous they are with others. They rarely forget birthdays and are still the very few in our country that send thank you cards. As ones who excel in generosity they also experience great encouragement with the smallest tokens of expression that show appreciation for their work. On a practical level this can be something as small as a \$10.00 coffee card for a job well done or ordering lunch in for the team that successfully crossed the finish line with a complicated project that met deadline. Of course, kind and appreciative words are always nice, but a rare tangible expression on occasion goes a long way. Even a handwritten card for the amazing work they do can provide a quick second wind for the exhausted, loyal co-worker or employee.

The opposite of this would be no tangible incentives or practical expressions of appreciation or generosity at all.

IV. Acts of Service

These are the work horses of the staff. They actually will drop what they are doing to help another with their overdue project or workload. These are the ones who after-hours will help with another's garage sale or bring soup to a team member who has the flu. They actually do circles around others as they multitask and whistle while they work. However, what will turn their head is when they are overwhelmed and fall behind that you pick up the other end of the two by four to help lighten their load. Any time you can take up their slack and help with the responsibilities they cannot get to (which is rare) they will never forget it.

The opposite of this would be to take their help and assistance and never give back (not that that's what they are hoping for).

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V. Appropriate Physical Touch

Excuse the pun, but this unfortunately is the touchiest subject when we speak of the ways others feel valued because of the abusive ways people have showed affection in our culture. On a practical note, just because some feel appreciated or valued with an arm around their shoulder when they are down, or a friendly handshake when they are greeted, or a kind hug at their retirement dinner, it doesn't have to suggest they are narcissistic or perverted.

My wife and I visited Italy a few years back with a host family that our daughter had stayed with years prior. When we arrived we were greeted by the village Mayor and 14 other family members from ages 9 to 85. We were treated like royalty and were physically embraced and hugged by sincerely hospitable people. It was truly a throwback to the movie "My Big Fat Greek Wedding." I remember telling our new Italian family that night that "although I was Irish on the outside I was definitely Italian on the inside" because it resonated so perfectly with me.

The opposite would be a stiff arm or irritation without explanation with every sincere show of physical touch.

So whether working with those who are not like you means you understand their personality and approach them as such, or treat them in ways that make them feel appreciated or valued in the five different ways outlined above, you will find greater success in the workplace and the satisfaction of staff will increase exponentially!



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Bill formed TeamWorks in 2001 to help organizations achieve their goals for establishing high morale and client satisfaction. TeamWorks currently specializes in offering one-on-one surveys and evaluations for management and staff to assess the current culture's needs and recommended trainings going forward.

In addition to conducting a variety of workshops and in-services on workplace issues, Bill mediates conflict among partnerships and staff relationships, speaks at conventions, facilitates management retreats, and offers personal consultation and counseling for staff.

Bill's strengths are in public speaking, mediation, and understanding the complexities of relational dynamics in the workplace. He lives in Medford, Oregon, with his wife Jenny, and enjoys spending time with their five children and five granddaughters.