



# Handle Toxic Work Relationships Like A Pro: Keep Civil When Others Do Not



Uncivil and difficult behaviors take a toll on your work environment. They make coming to work and being at work stressful and unpleasant. Lost time, lost productivity, lost confidence in leadership, distress, distrust and stress: all are costs to our work life and our Mission focus.

Changing difficult behavior takes time, patience, and a willingness to change your own behavior first.



Remember:

- ★ You cannot change someone else. The other person has to make their own choice to change.
- ★ You can influence others by modeling behaviors, giving feedback, and engaging the person whose behaviors need to change.
- ★ You can change the pattern. You can break up an entrenched pattern by recognizing it, deciding on the new patterns you want to create, and modifying your own behavior.
- ★ Be kind to yourself. If your efforts do not go just as planned, give yourself a pat on the back, make adjustments, and TRY AGAIN.

## Take Action to Improve Difficult Behaviors and Relationships:

- ★ Make Sense of the Difficult Relationship
  - ✓ Recognize the patterns of behaviors, those repetitive actions that spark a reaction that keep the pattern going.
  - ✓ Discover the contributing factors: Are these behaviors or emotions? Unpleasant vs Unproductive?
  - ✓ Is the source the other person or you too?
  - ✓ What else? Personality, style, internal or external pressures?
- ★ Identify What Makes the Behavior Difficult: The Impact
  - ✓ Calculate the cost—What's not getting done or is getting missed?
  - ✓ Notice the emotional toll – On yourself and others.
  - ✓ Notice the time you spend.



- ★ Try these Strategies
  - ✓ Motivate yourself to act!
    - ~ Recognize disruptive behaviors that require action.
    - ~ Envision a different future and gain confidence in your actions.
  - ✓ Shift Your Focus and Approach
    - ~ Acknowledge your own and the other person's contributions.
    - ~ Clarify your expectations for your behavior and theirs.
  - ✓ Share Responsibility
    - ~ Offer observation of behaviors and impact on others.
    - ~ Offer observations of your own role and expected changes.
    - ~ Offer support to facilitate the expected changes.