Accelerator

Managing Difficult Situations

LEARNING JOURNAL

NAME

Accelerator Solutions helps organisations achieve positive business results through customer service leadership.

We do this through a range of solutions focused on Training & Development, Research & Consultancy.

Our Research team provides insight into changes that will have a positive impact. Our Training & Development team helps build attitudes, skills and behaviours that make the service difference.

We're friendly, flexible, and hands on working to make sure that our input has a direct and lasting impact.

We help bring pace to change and take pride in delivering on our promises.

Produced by Accelerator Solutions Limited

T +44(0)845 260 6886

E info@acceleratorsolutions.com

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Managing Difficult Situations

How We Define Great Leadership

Great leaders are high performers, they have direction; deliver measurable results; are proud of their work; stretch themselves and others; and are adaptable to ensure sustainability.

Authentic leaders are recognised by their integrity so inspire trust. They know and live their values; they challenge and empower others to be the best they can be.

Visionary leaders are forward looking so spot and create opportunities; they understand the process of change and inspire others to co-create the future.

Great leaders take responsibility for their own actions and interactions, they use initiative; are decisive; solve problems; continually learn and are known for their reliability.

Collaborative leaders know about relationships and networking, they work effectively with others; they involve; motivate and engage colleagues; they make great colleagues; and manage difference.

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Managing Performance Model

I. DIAGNOSE → **II. PRESCRIBE** → **III. FOLLOW UP**

A. EXAMINE THE SITUATION

1. Stand back and size up the situation, be task specific.
(What is? Vs. What should be)

2. Is there an impact on productivity, outcomes or the team?

NO → 2. Ignore

YES ↓

B. EXAMINE YOURSELF (AS THE MANAGER)

(Ask yourself the following questions. If you answer NO to any of the questions, prescribe the response to that question)

1. Have I set SMART performance objectives for the person?
   - NO → 1. Set and agree upon performance goals with the performer
   - YES ↓
2. Have I described standards and expectations? What success looks like?
   - NO → 2. Be specific with the person on the performance outcomes
   - YES ↓
3. Have I given specific work direction and training?
   - NO → 3. Provide the How, What, Why and When of the job/task
   - YES ↓
4. Have I given the person all the resources necessary for performance (e.g. materials, equipment etc?)
   - NO → 4. Provide what s missing
   - YES ↓
5. Have I given support (listened with understanding, praised their performance and encouraged them to perform?)
   - NO → 5. Listen, praise or encourage
   - YES ↓
6. Have I given the person specific and timely feedback (SBI)?
   - NO → 6. Provide feedback (positive or corrective)
   - YES ↓

(If you have answered YES to all of the questions under B, proceed to C)

C. EXAMINE THE PERFORMER

1. Have you seen the person perform (the task/job/standard) in the past?
   - NO → **Development Issue**
     1. Keep providing training and coaching
   - YES ↓
2. Does the person have positive motivation and engagement?
   - NO → **Performance Issue**
     2. Give SBI feedback. Challenge can but won t behaviour. Find out why motivation/ engagement is low.

ALWAYS...

- Check for and listen with understanding
- Monitor the person's performance
- Re diagnose if performer has not improved to an acceptable level

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Amazon Warriors

One day on Paradise Island, the home of the Amazon Warriors, the General spoke to her troops. She was letting them know that whilst she was away on the mainland for the next 10 days, they were not to leave the camp under any circumstances or they would be severely punished.

Before leaving, the General reminded them of their Oath of Allegiance that they swore to uphold - Loyalty, Honour, Friendship and Trust to each other as Amazonian Warriors.

Two days after the General left, Warrior 1 and Warrior 2 were talking about sneaking out and visiting their lovers…

They didn't realise that they were overheard by Warrior 3..!

Not realising that they had been overheard, Warrior 1 & 2 sneaked out and visited their lovers at the local lagoon…

In the meantime, Warrior 3 told the General's trusted Sentinel what Warrior 1 & 2 were up to…

A few hours later, the Warriors tried to sneak back to camp, and were caught by the General's Sentinel. The Sentinel said to the Warriors: "Don't try to enter! On the General's orders, if you cross the border I'll have to execute you!"

The Warriors were now stuck, what could they do, how could they sneak back in?

And they wondered... how did the Sentinel know they had left?

Warrior 2 said to Warrior 1: "This is all your fault, if you hadn't convinced me to go with you, we wouldn't be punished for this!" Warrior 1 was surprised and said: "We agreed to go together, we're friends, why are you blaming me?"

A little while later, Warrior 1 suggested that maybe their lovers could help them.

They went back to the Lagoon to see their lovers and tell them what happened.

The lovers both said the same thing: "This was just a bit of afternoon fun and nothing serious, we won't help you. You shouldn't have sneaked out, you should have listened to the General."

The Warriors turned on each other in anger blaming the other for what happened…

As night drew in, Warrior 2 said to Warrior 1: "We must try and get back to the camp, it's dangerous to stay out on the Island at night."

As the Warriors attempted to sneak back in, they were caught by Warrior 3 who was waiting for them and she took them to the Sentinel.

As a result, The Sentinel executed all 3 Warriors! Warrior 1 and Warrior 2 because they had disobeyed the General's orders and had not upheld the Amazon oath of Trust, Loyalty and Honour; Warrior 3 because she had had not upheld the Amazon oath of Trust, Loyalty, Friendship and Honour to her fellow Warriors!

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Amazon Warriors

Please rank the order that you feel that each individual is at fault.

The General	
Warrior 1	
Warrior 2	
Warrior 3	
The Sentinel	
The Lovers	

Now, as a group please rank the order that you feel each individual is at fault.

You must all agree the ranking.

The General	
Warrior 1	
Warrior 2	
Warrior 3	
The Sentinel	
The Lovers	

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Activity Review

Please complete the table below		
	I NOTICED IN ME	I NOTICED IN OTHERS
THOUGHTS		
FEELINGS/EMOTIONS		
BEHAVIOURS		

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KASH Model

There are four different kinds of factors that may be said to determine the quality of performance for an individual in any given situation and context.

K – Knowledge

A – Attitude

S – Skills

H - Habits

As previously mentioned, we are emotionally intelligent to the degree that we are able to integrate our thoughts and feelings and consciously choose our behaviour. Our attitudes and habits create automatic behaviour (or "procedures" in psychological terms) and so these may need to be examined if positive changes are to be made.

What is an *attitude*?

An attitude is an evaluative position (positive or negative) that we hold towards a certain **target**: a thing, a person, an idea, or perhaps even an organisation.

Because it is evaluative, it is feelings based, not just cognitive (thinking based).

Attitude—directed as a "target"

Adapted from Applied EI – The importance of Attitudes in Developing Emotional Intelligence (Tim Sparrow & Amanda Knight, 2006)

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Negotiating to Gain Agreement

Negotiating with internal or external customers

Reaching an agreement through negotiation with customers can be most uncomfortable, but in any one day a number of opportunities to negotiate might arise. You might be able to relate to some of these examples:

'I really need that information within the next hour'…..when you already have 5 other queries to deal with

'I have been paying XXX with another company, I assume you can do it for the same'….when actually you are charging 5 % more

'I need it by 8 am on Friday'…..when everybody else has similar demands

What other situations are you faced with?

It would be so easy to respond with a *'Yes'* to these situations and hope for a miracle, or even easier might be to just say *'No'* and damage the relationship (even lose the customer!)

A third alternative would be to negotiate to **reach an agreement.**

When trying to gain agreement there are a number of potential outcomes for both sides:

Win-Win: positive for you and the customer
Win- Lose: positive for you but not the customer
Lose-Win: positive for the customer but not for you
Lose-Lose: negative for the customer and for you

This is best shown in the diagram below (next page), where any agreement reached in the shaded zone is a WIN-WIN for both you and the customer.

Before trying to gain agreement you should always aim to:

1. Understand the minimum-win position for your organisation in terms of sales and profitability
2. Anticipate the aspects of the transaction that the customer values: gaining agreement is not just about price or cost (think of timing; payment terms; quality upgrades etc.)

When attempting to gain agreement try using the following format:

If you were able to agree to…, then I may be able to agree to…

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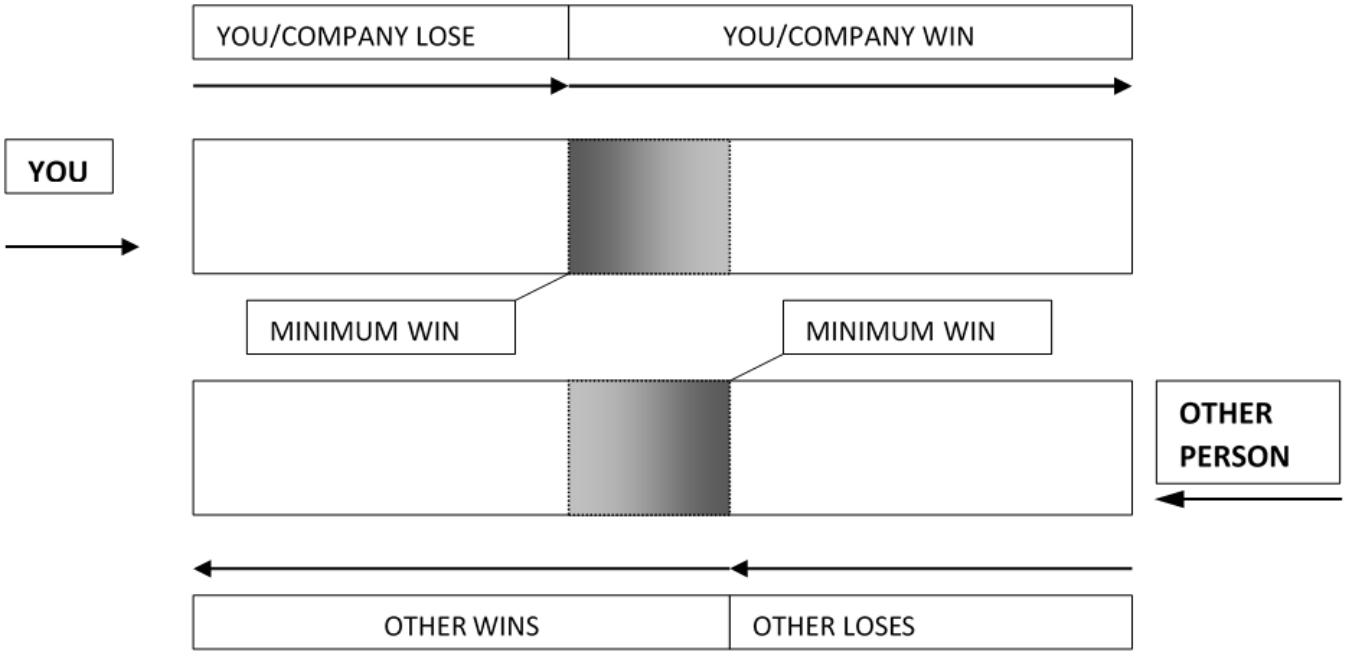
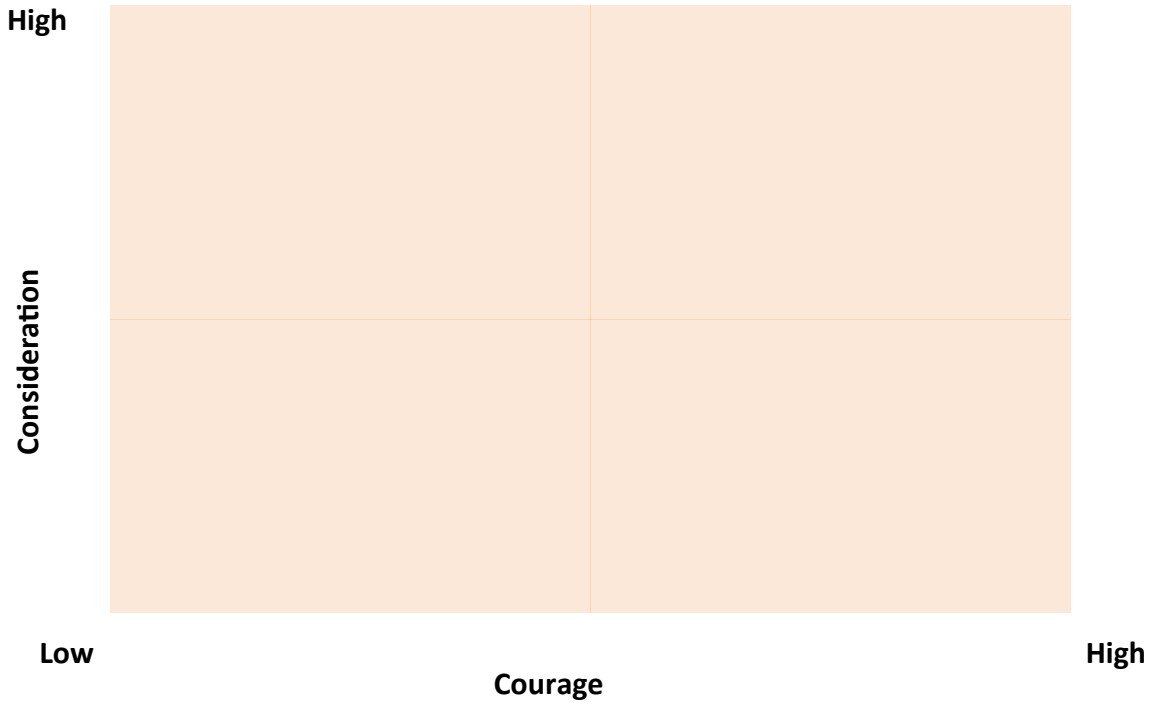
The Negotiation Zone



Balancing Courage and Consideration



Courage: Being assertive

An assertive person demonstrates being in control by...

Assertiveness in these terms is really the ability to speak confidently about what you want, and handle the inevitable conflict that results from different opinions and perceptions without being too passive or too aggressive.

- If your tendency is to be too **passive** in conflict situations you may deny that the conflict exists at all or avoid being honest about what you want. There are many techniques you can use when you feel unhappy with a situation – the starting point is to practice standing up for yourself and speaking out on small issues and gradually building up to the bigger issues you want to influence
- If your tendency is to be too **aggressive** the other person may well feel under attack and this will undermine your relationship with them: ultimately they may find a way of paying you back! The secret is to develop impulse control, treat others respectfully, and try to avoid seeing it as a battle where the other person has to lose.

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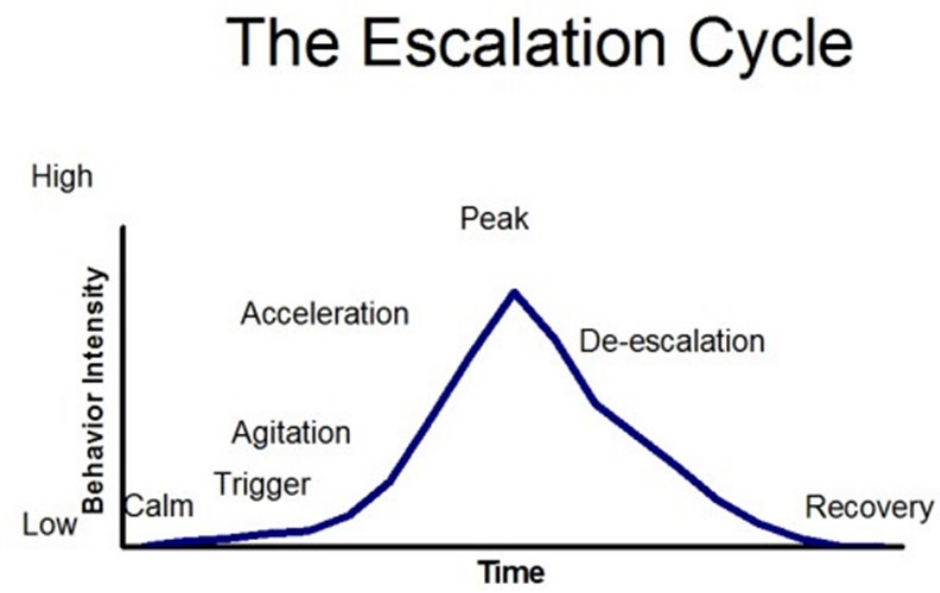
Adapting Your Emotional Response



Usually emotions develop slowly, rather than being instant. The above chart shows that there is normally a slow-building process of emotional disturbance that peaks, and then calms down.

It is very difficult to control our emotions at the peak – so our aim should be to notice the escalation of our emotional state and find approaches that calm us down before we feel **out of control**.

A suggested approach to adapting and de-escalating our emotional responses:

Slow everything down: **freeze** emotions (use the **6 second** rule)

1. Recognise your current emotions, and give them value
2. Make a real effort to shift your focus away from the disturbing thoughts or feelings
3. Grab thinking time: about the situation & desired outcome
4. Choose your response – your words & behaviour

Behave authentically... Or else act "as if"

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Challenging Situations: Holding Statements

When faced with challenging situations, especially where you may find yourself experiencing increased emotional reactions it can be useful to have some prepared words or phrases that allow you to remain assertive and give you time to compose yourself.

We call these **Holding Statements**.

For example:

When someone is really pushing you to agree to something you are not sure about or feel you need to say **No** to then you could try:

"I can understand your point of view but it's not something I can agree with right now"

OR

"I can tell this is important to you – I need a little time to see if it is something I can help you with".

You need to make the **Holding Statements** personal to you, using words/phrases that can come to feel natural or even automatic: you are trying to create a new **habit** in how you deal with the situations where you feel most challenged, so you will need to practice, practice… and practice!

Use this table to create some examples that could work for you:

Situation where I want to be more assertive	My holding statement

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Consideration for Others

You show **consideration** for the other person by limiting pre-judgement and bias, and through **active listening, showing empathy** and **asking questions** to clarify their position.

What specific behaviours demonstrate **active listening**?

What **questions** could you use when in conflict to show consideration for the other person?

Remember: with conflict the focus should move away from me against you…

and move to us against the problem
Often, defining the problem in a way you both can agree is the catalyst for resolving long-standing conflict

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Practice Session

ACTION: Prepare this template and then discuss with your colleague before the role-play so they can also prepare to play the role of the colleague.

Situation I want to focus on	
How I will prepare (self + resources e.g. feedback)	
Behaviours I want to practice	

Practice Session: Review

Have a de-brief discussion with your colleague in order to gain feedback on:
a) how well you demonstrated the behaviours you wanted to practice
b) ideas to further improve your approach in this situation

Notes from role-play debrief discussion

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Challenging Situations Worksheet

DESCRIPTION: CHALLENGING SITUATION	PERSONAL ANALYSIS	PREPARATION	SKILLS PRACTICE
The situation I find challenging (+ challenging behaviour of other person, if relevant)	- My thoughts - My feelings - How this can impact on my behaviour	- My plan of the approach and tactics I want to adopt when faced with the situation	- The specific behaviours I want to practice (words and body language)
1.			
2.			
3.			

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The Change Formula

Personal change is difficult – the end result may be viewed as a gain but the transition is often problematic and experienced as a loss…so we avoid making the necessary changes.

For any change you may find it useful to consider the following formula for success:

$$(V+D+S)>R$$

V = Vision of the future

D = Dissatisfaction with the present

S = Knowing the first Steps to take

R = Resistance: the perceived cost of change or the inertia that keeps things as they are

Consider a change that you would like to facilitate in yourself or another person and make notes to encourage that (V+D+S)>R.

Area for change:

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The Power of Three

"Selling your solution": Power of 3 - example framework

1. <u>Summarise the problem in a couple of sentences</u>

E.g. Two large unplanned additional projects have been delegated to my department – project X and project Y. Due to this, it is unlikely that project A will hit its deadline, resulting in it being submitted 1 month late.

2. <u>Give 3 possible solutions and the pros and cons of each.</u>

Sol. 1 **Second someone from another department for 4 weeks to assist with project A.**

Pros
- Get project A back on track and enable other projects to also be managed within timelines. Be perceived as delivering on time to senior management

Cons
- Finding the right person with the right skills that is able to move out of existing role for a short period. May take them a few days to bring them up to speed

Sol. 2 **Bring in an external supplier (expert) for a few weeks**

Pros
- Expertise may bring a different dimension. Easy to bring this kind of source in for a short period. Get project A back on track and within timelines. Be perceived as delivering in time to senior management

Cons
- Additional cost. May take a few days to bring them up to speed. Taking the project away from the existing team may prove to be de-motivational to them.

Sol. 3 **Re-negotiate the timelines for project A**

Pros
- No additional cost. Keep the project with the existing team working on it

Cons
- May be perceived as being unreliable by senior management. May have a knock on effect to the next project that is due to be taken on by the team on project A.

3. <u>Give recommendation and rationale</u>

I recommend solution 2 - bring in external help for a short period of time. This is because project A is important to organisational strategy and a loss in time may result in lost opportunities. Whilst there is no budget for an external supplier the cost could be absorbed by other cost centres. By getting the supplier to work closely with the existing project team it may provide a developmental opportunity.

3. <u>Ask for feedback and/or agreement for action</u>

I need your feedback as to which of the three solutions you think would be best.

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Selling Your Solution: The Power of 3 Template

1. Summarise the problem in a couple of sentences

2. Give 3 possible solutions and the pros and cons of each (+ factors & - factors)

Solution 1:	
Pros:	**Cons:**
Solution 2:	
Pros:	**Cons:**
Solution 3:	
Pros:	**Cons:**

3. Give recommendation and reasons

4. Ask for feedback and/or agreement for action

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Self-Reflection

Learning – What are your key learning points from today?

Insights – Why were those key learning points important to you and how will they benefit you and your customers?

Action – What will you do differently as a result of this session?

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T +44(0)845 260 6886

E info@acceleratorsolutions.com

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+44 (0) 845 260 6886