Managing up:
managing conflict and preparing for difficult conversations in the work place

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What are some sources of conflict?

- Goals & Expectations
- Roles
- Methods
- Values
- Relationships
- Quality
- Timing
- Resources

- Two Big Ones:
  - Work Styles
  - Culture
Understanding Work Styles

How do you like to work?...and your peers/boss???

- Talk things out vs. think about them
- Details vs. big picture
- Structured vs. go with the flow
- Hierarchy vs. flat working structures
- Time plentiful or scarce
- Micro vs macro management
- High vs. low competition
- Private or personal rewards
- Friendships or friendly
- Uncertainty and change
Understanding What You Need

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competence</th>
<th>Enthusiastic Beginner</th>
<th>Disillusioned Learner</th>
<th>Cautious Performer</th>
<th>High Achiever</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Confidence</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Some</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Needs</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Variable</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Direction</td>
<td>Support</td>
<td>Support</td>
<td>Independence</td>
</tr>
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Adapted from Ken Blanchard, *Self Leadership and the One Minute Manager*
Geert Hofstede’s Cultural Dimensions/GLOBE Study

- Ideas first based on a large research project into national culture differences across subsidiaries of a multinational corporation (IBM) in 64 countries and later expanded several times.
- Together these studies identified and validated several independent dimensions of national culture differences.
- But with important caveats:
  - The averages of a country may not relate to individuals or even regions with subcultures of that country.
  - Data collected are based on survey responses with inherent
How we view time

SCARCE………………………………………….………..PLENTIFUL

• Treats time as a limited resource & worries about wasting it
• Wants meetings to start on time, likes to stay busy & wants to see results quickly
• Treats deadlines as firm commitments

• Treats time as infinitely available & has no concerns about wasting it
• Has less concerns about schedules & deadlines
• Treats deadlines as expressions of intents & not firm deadlines
Individualism

COLLECTIVE……………………………………………..INDIVIDUAL

• Define themselves more in terms of a group or extended family/clan to which they belong
• Expect strong loyalty and support from a group
• Show strong loyalty to the group

• Define themselves more though their own achievements
• Need less support from the group
• Are self-reliant and expect to chart their own course
Power Distance

EQUAL

• Prefers that differences in power among members of a group be minimized
• Wants superiors to be accessible & to consult with them
• Those with & without power see themselves as essentially equal

UNEQUAL

• Expects & accepts large differences in power & status
• Wants superiors to be benevolent autocrats who make decisions & take care of their needs
• Those with power & those without do not see themselves as equals
How we respond to uncertainty & change

DYNAMIC..................................................................................................STABLE

- Accepts uncertainty & ambiguity at work & in life
- Comfortable with conflict, dissent & competition
- Values flexibility & adaptability
- Open to changing the rules as the situation dictates
- Shuns unfamiliar risks or unpredictable situations
- Gets nervous when encountering change, conflict, & competition
- Uncertainty causes stress
- Feels compelled to avoid mistakes & failure
Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Grid

- **Competing**
  - Goal: Win

- **Collaborating**
  - Goal: Win-Win Solution

- **Compromising**
  - Goal: Find Middle-Ground

- **Avoiding**
  - Goal: Delay

- **Accommodating**
  - Goal: Yield

Axes:
- **Assertiveness**
- **Cooperativeness**
Getting your needs met, understanding how to be assertive
Learning to be Assertive

Assertiveness is based upon the principles that we all have the right to express:

- Thoughts
- Feelings
- Needs

Assertiveness training emphasizes expressing your feelings, but in a respectful way, with the goal of conveying how we feel.
Learning to be Assertive

- Assertiveness does not guarantee you will get what you want – nor provides a way to force your way (aggressive behavior)
- Assertiveness allows for the consideration of other peoples needs, but not at the sake of your own feelings (passive behavior)
- Assertiveness training helps reduce anxiety, depression, and improves interpersonal relationships
How to Assert Yourself

Assertive training techniques state everyone has the right:

- To ask for what we need
- To express feelings
- To say “I don’t understand.”
- To make our own decisions and be responsible for the consequences
- To make unintentional mistakes
Assertive Techniques

- Basic Assertion: direct statement of feeling, thought, belief, or need.
  - I need to leave at 5 pm today.
  - I was disappointed by your performance on that task.
  - I had not considered that outcome.

- Empathic Assertion: basic assertion also recognizes the other’s feelings, thoughts, or needs.
  - I appreciate you don’t like the new rules, but I need you to follow them until they change.
  - I realize you are busy, but I need to discuss something urgent with you.
Learning to be Assertive.

- **Consequence Assertion**: strongest form of assertion, usually reserved for changing behavior.
  - If you continue to interrupt others during the meeting, I will need to ask you to leave.
  - If you continue to ignore the policies on postdoctoral scholars, we will need to discuss it with the Dean/Provost/Office of Research.

- **Broken Record**: repeating your basic assertion, remaining calm, avoiding arguments.
  - I appreciate you don’t like the new rules, but I need you to follow them until they change.
  - I realize you are busy, but I need to discuss something urgent with you.
Learning to be Assertive

- Negative Feeling Assertion: expressing negative feelings, but drawing attention to the other person’s behavior
  - Describe the other person’s behavior or the situation objectively – do not judge or interpret
  - Describe the impact it has on you – be clear and specific, and do not over generalize
  - Describe your feelings (basic assertion)
  - State a preferred resolution or future behavioral change

Also called Situation/Action/Impact/Feedback
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>General Feedback Scaffold</th>
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</table>
| **State the constructive purpose**                                                      | I wanted to talk about .....  
  I wanted to discuss....  
  I feel we need to talk about.... |
| **Describe what you observed**                                                          | “When you were…, you .....  
  Yesterday I observed you.....  
  When XXXX asked you to …, you said .... |
| **Describe the impact on you, the group, the project**                                  | “I was .....  
  I felt ......  
  As a result..... |
| **Give the individual a chance to respond**                                              | How do you feel about this feedback?  
  What ideas can we come up together to solve this? |
| **Offer specific suggestions**                                                          | My strategy for dealing with XXX, is YYY. Perhaps....  
  Have you considered…  
  Would you like help finding… |
| **Summarize and express support**                                                       | I think we agree....  
  I appreciate your effort in .... And know you will continue to improve. |
Situation

- During staff meeting your co-worker interrupts you often. You can never get thru your informations, you get stuck on tangents, your boss has started to comment that you are unfocused. You feel like they are trying to one-up you with their “smarts” so they look like the better worker.

- Yesterday they interrupted you 4 times, and you have had enough!
Using the Feedback Scaffold

<table>
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<tr>
<th>State the constructive purpose</th>
<th>“I would like to talk about the meeting yesterday”</th>
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<tr>
<td>Describe what you observed</td>
<td>“When I was presenting my project you stopped my presentation four times to discuss your part of the project”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Describe the impact on you, the group, the project</td>
<td>“I feel like I am not able to tell my story and I am not able to get the critical feedback I need to move my project forward”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Give the individual a chance to respond</td>
<td>“Is there a reason you always interrupt me?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offer specific suggestions</td>
<td>“Can we come up with some ways for me to be able to present all of my information next week?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summarize and express support</td>
<td>Sounds like we are going to try X, Y, and Z next week…If it doesn’t work for us, let’s re-look at this again.</td>
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Learning to be Assertive

- Responding to Criticism: Assertiveness can be helpful in responding to criticism, especially overly negative or overly false
  - Listen to criticism, resisting temptation to immediately ‘jump to your defense.’ If need be, state your need to take time to process before your respond (basic assertion)
  - Decide on what is true, what you should respond to, and what behavior changes are reasonable. Even ‘untrue’ criticism can lead to improved performance/relationships, but you need to think how to integrate it.
  - Respond Assertively, using one or many of the assertive techniques.
Your Turn

Feedback groups
1. Boss who continues to change strategy
2. Member of the PDA who never does their share of the work
3. Co-workers not respecting your time
4. Your boss does not give you feedback on your progress

Group shout out
- How did you feel giving, receiving and watching the feedback?
- What did you see that was effective?
- What did you see that was ineffective?
- What would you do different?
Use resources

- Books: Crucial Confrontations, Becoming a Conflict Competent Leader, HBR Manager’s toolkit
- See your PDO
- See your Ombudsperson
- Review resources on CBT & Assertiveness training & nonviolent communication
- Books on workstyle (Type Talk at Work, People Style at Work)