

DEALING WITH DIFFICULT PEOPLE

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COMMUNICATION – The transfer of information, opinions, beliefs, or feelings from one person to at least one other person and agreement on the meaning of the message.

MESSAGES consist of two elements: feelings and information.

COMMON SENSE RULES FOR SOLVING CONFLICT

- **LISTEN** – Try very hard to listen and understand what the other person is saying. Hear the other person out. Don't interrupt. Be patient. Hear the other person's feelings as well as his or her arguments.
- **ACCEPT THE RIGHT OF THE OTHER PERSON TO HIS/HER CLAIM ON THE SITUATION ALONG WITH YOUR OWN** – Recognize and acknowledge that the other person has legitimate rights which have to be respected in the solution of the problem and an equal right to a satisfactory solution.
- **STATE YOUR OWN FEELINGS AND OPINIONS FRANKLY – BUT CALMLY** – Be kind. There is all the difference in the world between being assertive and being aggressive.
- **DO NOT START THE CONVERSATION WITH YOUR MIND ALREADY MADE UP** – If you do this there is no way you can receive new information and ideas. A constructive solution will be almost impossible.
- **DON'T TRY TO WIN** – Winning arguments inflates the ego, but it does not solve problems. People with inflated egos cannot hear other people and they cannot search for reasonable solutions or compromises. Being smarter than someone else is not important; being smart enough to help solve a serious problem is very important and very smart.
- **STICK TO THE PRESENT – THE HERE AND NOW – AND THE FUTURE** – Don't drag in the past. Above all, don't blame. Don't expect or ask the other person to say that he or she has been wrong.
- **RAISE THE LEVEL OF DISCUSSION** – Look for the higher ground – the higher values, purposes, and principles on which you do agree. Find the higher goals you are both committed to: Look for solutions that meet both persons' needs or that are more important than either of your own needs.