

# The Difficult Negotiator

- Objective:** To give participants an opportunity to practice dealing with an individual who presents problems during a negotiation
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- Time:** 55 – 70 minutes for each role-play and the discussion.
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- Group Size:** 3
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- Materials:** Copies of the Personality Profile Worksheet as well as the Role Play and Observer Sheet
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- Trainer's Notes:** This activity may be completed with any role-play. You may use one from this book (see Appendix) or from *25 Role Plays to Teach Negotiations*, Asherman and Asherman, HRD Press, 1995. We have used several role-plays and all of them have worked well. This activity is enhanced if you have a particular model for handling problem behavior for the participants to follow. If you do not have a specific model, you should focus your discussion at the end of the activity on those things that worked and those that did not in an effort to build a model.
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- Procedure:** *Note:* If you have not already done so, divide participants into groups of three, with one observer and two role-players. The roles will change during the activity so that everyone will have an opportunity to practice negotiating.
- Step I** Explain the exercise. Indicate the following:
- “You will have the opportunity to practice negotiating with someone who gives you trouble. In each group, one of you will observe and two will negotiate. Decide who the negotiators will be. One of the negotiators will play him or herself; the other will play a ‘difficult negotiator.’
- “I will shortly hand out a personality profile worksheet. The people playing themselves should check the behaviors that the person who gives them difficulty usually demonstrates. Do not check more than five items. You may feel free to substitute items.”
- Step II** Distribute copies of the Personality Profile Worksheet and the role-play you will be using. Ask participants to complete the worksheet. *Allow 2 to 3 minutes.*
- “When you have finished, hand the worksheet to your partner, who will play that person in the upcoming negotiation.”

**Step III** Give the following additional directions:

- “The role-play will provide the focus for this activity.”
- “For those of you who have been given the personality profiles, incorporate the checked behaviors into how you carry out this role-play. You may feel free to add other behaviors.”
- “The observers need to watch the role-play and identify what skills were used in dealing with the ‘difficult negotiator.’ ”

Allow 5 minutes for preparation. While people are preparing, you want to brief the observers. Distribute copies of the attached Observer Sheet.

**Step IV** Conduct the role-play. *Allow 10 minutes.*

**Step V** Debrief the role-play. *Allow 10 minutes.*

**Step VI** *Reporting Back — Allow 20 to 30 minutes.*

Have each group report back. Focus on the negative behaviors and the skills used in dealing with them. Pay particular attention to what worked and what created difficulty. Post this material.

After all the groups have reported back, summarize the key points that were made.

**Step VII** Have the groups repeat the process three times, so that each person can practice negotiating with a difficult person. In the second and third tries, have people practice the skills that were previously identified as having worked.

**Step VIII** Lead a discussion that summarizes the key points. *Allow 10 to 15 minutes.*



## WORKSHEET: Personality Profile

### *Directions:*

Check no more than five behaviors that are typical of someone who presents a problem for you. You will then give this list to your partner, who will use those behaviors in the improvised role-play.

- ☐ Makes demands
- ☐ Doesn't say a word
- ☐ Uses put-downs
- ☐ Questions my feelings
- ☐ Denigrates my concerns
- ☐ Never asks questions
- ☐ Does not listen
- ☐ Threatens
- ☐ Interrupts frequently
- ☐ Is judgmental
- ☐ Focus is primarily on his or her concerns
- ☐ Raises his or her voice
- ☐ Gets up and walks around
- ☐ Makes me defend my position
- ☐ Questions why my position is even an issue
- ☐ \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ \_\_\_\_\_





