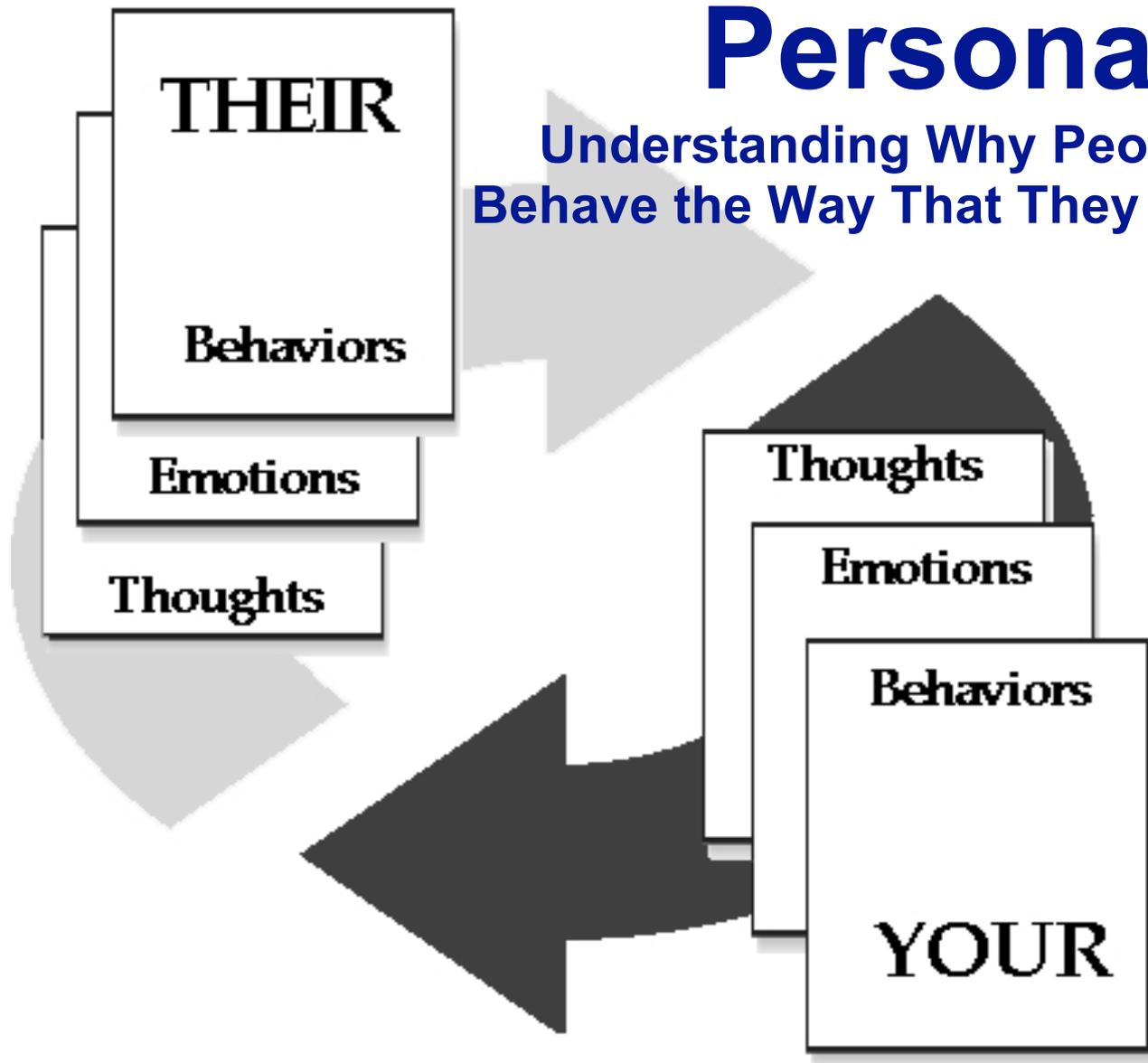


It's Not Personal!

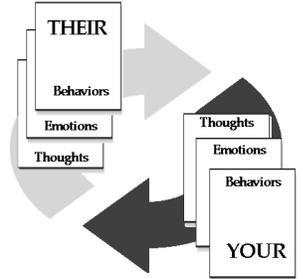
Understanding Why People Behave the Way That They Do



Robert Pennington, Ph.D.
RESOURCE INTERNATIONAL

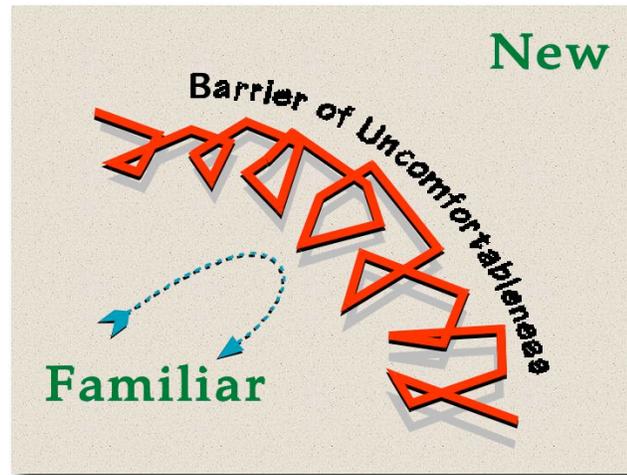
What People Do That Gets On My Nerves

Thinking about your relationships at work, what is it that people do or don't do that gets on your nerves and makes your job harder? Make a list of the characteristics, behaviors, and emotions which people exhibit that you wish they did not. What types of people and what things do they do that really gets in your way?



Their	Thoughts	Your
	Emotions	
<p>Make your list here:</p>		
	Behaviors	

Taking Things Personally - It's a Habit!



We are uncomfortable with what is unfamiliar

- We notice another's behavior is different from how we would behave.
- We feel uncomfortable (because how they behave isn't familiar to us)
- We make a negative judgment about their behavior (that they are wrong in their behavior and we are right in our opinion) AND we make a judgment about their motive (they are doing it on purpose, because they don't respect/value/appreciate/care/love US!)
- We take their behavior personally (because if they respected us they would not behave that way).
- We react automatically (in habitual, unconscious ways).

What we can and cannot do about it

We cannot control our first, automatic reaction of feeling uncomfortable. That's unconscious and habitual.

We can learn though to *suspend* (not avoid) the negative judgment, realize the person's behavior is not personal, that it tells us more about their emotions and their thoughts and find a more effective response to the person's behavior than something that is guaranteed to make them defend their position even more.

But it's easier said than done!

Understanding Emotions

(A Key To Understanding Why People Behave The Way They Do)

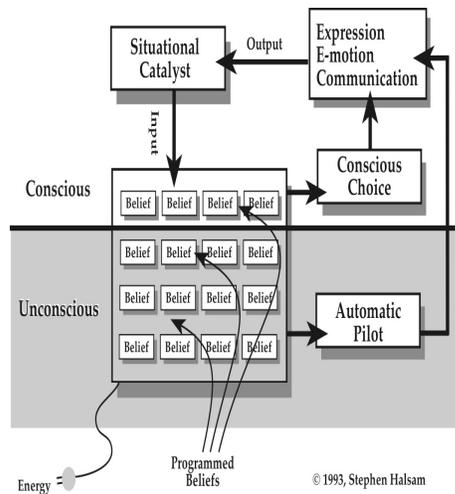
by Robert Pennington & Stephen Haslam

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Every one experiences emotions at work. We get frustrated with bosses giving more work when they don't understand how much work we already have. We get upset with co-workers who don't do their jobs, so we can't do ours. We get angry with irate customers who don't realize we are only trying to help. We worry about an uncertain future. We take it personally when others are disrespectful.

Your Emotional Computer



But with all these emotions, most people don't believe they have anything to do with how they are feeling. They believe their emotions are a result of an external cause, i.e., the circumstances or situations of their lives or the behavior of others. It looks that way because that's how you have been taught to think about emotions. It just isn't true.

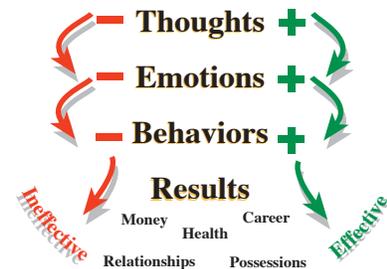
The goal is not to never have any negative emotions though. That's not possible. The goal is to recognize them faster and move through them quicker. That is realistic...but how?

First, recognize you've got something to do with *your* emotions. Consider

E-MOTION as "Energy in MOTION". That's what it feels like doesn't it, an energy moving through your body? The root word of emotion is 'emote', which implies the direction the energy is moving - outward. Emotions could be considered an attempt to express outwardly, to express what we believe.

If your belief is unconscious then you will act on automatic pilot. If conscious, then you have some choice. In either case, how you feel is a reflection of how you think. Your negative thoughts produce negative emotions. Your positive thoughts produce positive emotions.

So, emotion is not something that happens to you. Emotion is actually something you are doing. If you experience an emotion then you've got something to do with it. Be curious about thoughts that precede your emotion.



Second, understand laws exist about emotions just like there are laws about physics. As mysterious as it seems, every emotion you have is a result of some thought that preceded your emotion. The only exceptions to this rule are if you have some chemical or neurological damage that throws everything out of whack. But if you have a healthy body then how you think causes how you feel. How you feel affects how you behave. And, how you behave produces results. It's just a law.

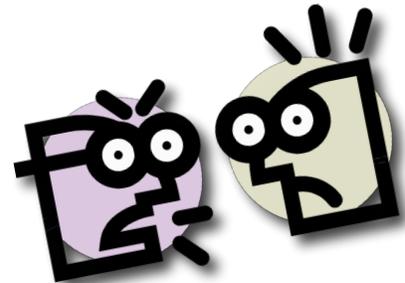
Third, accept that any choice to change how you feel will always come after the fact. That's because you can't control your initial reaction to anything! Your habits are too powerful. But you can control your second thought and in that is your saving grace. Below is a list of activities that can help master emotions:

- **Reconsider beliefs that produces harm** to anyone, including yourself. Like Gerry Jampolsky says in his very popular book, Love is Letting Go of Fear, "I am never upset for the reason I think". If you think of why you are upset, and you are still upset – then that isn't the reason. If you don't like how you are feeling, you might be able to change the world or change yourself and feel better. But if you aren't willing to reconsider the "truth" of one of your beliefs then you can't change the resulting emotion.
- **Keep a journal**, a record of your emotion. Use the journal to bring your unconscious to conscious. Ask yourself questions of your emotions to understand your underlying beliefs. Don't ask, "Why am I feeling this way". It is difficult to answer such a question. Rather make guesses. Am I feeling hurt because they didn't do what I wanted? Am I unhappy because I'm not perfect? Am I angry because they don't understand my challenges? When you ask the right question you will know it is the right answer.
- **Talk with friends**. Don't talk with people who gossip and just reinforce the idea you are a victim. Talk with people who are interested in understanding what they have to do with how they are feeling. Develop friendships with people who are interested in recognizing negative emotion and moving through it faster.
- **Read books and listen to audio recordings**. There are lots of authors and speakers who have the latest insights and guidance for living a more effective life emotionally. Find some. Listen or read what they have to say. If you like it, listen repeatedly. Find out what they read or who they listen to.
- **Get counseling**. What you don't know (about you) could be what is harming you. Don't put up with pain. If you are not waking up each morning like Charles Fillmore, author of The Twelve Powers of Man, who was quoted when he was 94 as saying, "*I fairly sizzle, with zeal and enthusiasm, and spring forth with a might faith to do the things that are to be done by me today!*" then you might consider counseling.

The Three Types of Disagreements

There are three categories into which all disagreements will fit.

1. Misunderstandings
2. Negotiable
3. Non-Negotiable



Category 1: Misunderstandings: These disagreements are simply misunderstandings. When you make sure everyone is understood, you find that there really was no disagreement, simply a misunderstanding. You actually had an agreement all along, one that you would agree to and they would agree to, but someone just misunderstood. Most people find that anywhere from 50-90% of our disagreements fall into this category.

Category 2: Negotiable Disagreements: In this category, there is no misunderstanding. You do disagree. But the solution is negotiable. One side or another is willing to make an adjustment because it is not an absolute requirement. Most people find that any between 8-40% of our disagreements fall into this category. The negotiation question to ask yourself:

“What would it take for me to want to do what they want me to do?”

Category 3: Non-Negotiable Disagreements: In this category, not only is there no misunderstanding, but there is no negotiation - at least for one party. At least one side has taken an absolute stand for their fundamental requirements. But even when this is true, something might be a requirement for one person that isn't for the other person. So, there is room for agreement/negotiation. Most people find that only 2-5% of disagreements fall into the portion of this category where the requirements are mutually exclusive. But many people respond to all disagreements as if there is no alternative but their own (or the other's) point of view, and so they are not able to resolve misunderstandings and negotiable disagreements.

The Water Glasses Model ©

There are so many books and trainings on the topic of active listening one would think that by now everyone would have become an expert. Unfortunately, in the middle of a disagreement or misunderstanding most people are hit by an automatic emotional wave that knocks all communication skills out of the window. So it is actually important to have some very basic guidelines that may seem ridiculously simple. The simpler they are, the easier they are to practice. Here is a simple analogy to keep in mind the next time you feel your emotional wave overflowing.



As illustrated in figure to the left, the glass represents you, and the water is your thoughts. The second glass to the right represents the other person, and the water in that glass represents his thoughts.

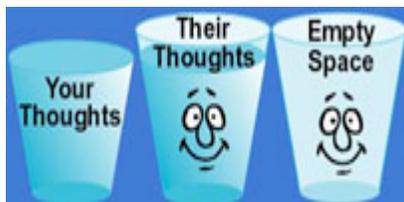


The splashing water in glasses to the right shows you what an argument looks like. You are trying to get some of your thoughts into him, and he is trying to get some of his thoughts into you. A little exchange is actually happening, but generally it just makes a big mess.



What would happen if you just started pouring your water into his glass? Of course, it would overflow all over the floor. He is too full of his ideas, so there is no room for yours. You need to create some openness.

Some people try to do this by punching a hole in the other person's cup, puncturing his ego by pointing out that he is wrong. But if you attack the other person, he is not likely to want to listen to you. He may go back to friends who agree with him, until his ego is repaired. Then he will return to argue with you again because he knows you did not understand him.



It is true that you need the other person to be more open, but there is another way to accomplish this. Take your thoughts and set them aside for a moment. These thoughts will be there when you get back. Create some openness in yourself first, and just as he expects you to argue with him, stop and say,

The Water Glasses Model, continued

1. **“This is really important. What is it you want me to know?”** Become a receptive force, drawing information out of the other person. He will pour his ‘water’ into you. Repeat his words back without adding any of your own ‘water glass thoughts’ (*we’ll deal with those later*), just to make sure you are clear.
2. And then you say, **“Is there anything else?”** What do you think is the likelihood that the other person has more thoughts that he has not yet shared? Pretty good. He will pour some more water, while you repeat his words just to make sure you are clear.
3. Finally you say, **“Is that all?”** Pause, and give the other person time to think. You want to squeeze all water you can out, to create as much open space as possible for him to consider your ideas.

The simple truth is this: **if you want get people to become open to your ideas or suggestions, be open to considering theirs first.** This is the simple principle of “seek first to understand.” The Three Questions For Eliminating Misunderstanding[©] listed above are necessary in order to make certain your understanding is thorough. Together with the Five Levels of Communication[©], they enable you to assist others to communicate not only what they were aware of but also what they had not yet thought to say.



Please complete any of the following sentences with what's true for you.

- One thing that would promote a more positive work environment at our office would be . . .
- In the past I have coped with conflict/disagreement with others at work by . . .
- An instance in which a co-worker listened empathetically and wholeheartedly to me . . .
- Co-workers I have trouble listening to . . .
- We could work better together as a team at our office if we . . .
- A situation at work that annoys me is . . .
- People I work with. . .

More information at: <http://www.resource-i.com/communications.html>
<http://www.robertpennington.com>

The Five Levels of Communication[©]

The following example shows how to use the Five Levels of Communication[©] as an active listening tool by interviewing a person in order to clarify potential misunderstandings, before giving feedback.

Five Levels	Guidelines	Example
<u>Facts</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe the facts objectively, like a reporter (or like Jack Webb from Dragnet, or a CSI!) Check to see if the person is even aware of the facts you have noticed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Let me see if I understand. You have heard that we are using the same training materials in different classes? (<i>Check for confirmation</i>) Have you actually talked to the people in the classes? (<i>Check for confirmation</i>) Have we received this feedback in written evaluations? (“Yes.”) From how many people have you heard this? (“4 people.”) How many people have taken our programs in the past 12 months? (“About 1000.”) Have the HR directors expressed any concerns? (“No, but I know they will.”)
<u>Thoughts, Opinions</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe what you think when you observe those facts, what makes them positive or negative Check to see if that is what the other person means. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> O.K., so the HR directors have not expressed any concerns, but you think they are going to hear about it, and then they’ll be concerned. Is that right? (<i>Check for confirmation. Be careful not to be sarcastic! Go for understanding, not for pointing out the weak point in the argument.</i>)
<u>Emotions</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be sure to describe the emotion you feel, so the person does not read you wrong. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> And obviously you are very upset about this. (“Yes. You should be too!”) Yes, this is upsetting.
<u>Meaning/ Importance</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe what is so important about this. Why do you feel the way you do? What do you really want the other person to understand? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This is really important. Even if this is not true about us, if people think we are doing it then they will not continue using our services. We could lose a lot of business. (“I’ve been trying to tell you that!”)
<u>Action/ Expectation</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicate factually what you want the person to do. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What do you think we should do? (“Provide a clear outline for each program to show we do not repeat material in different classes. And then you have to stick with the outline!”)

The Five Level Interview Worksheet

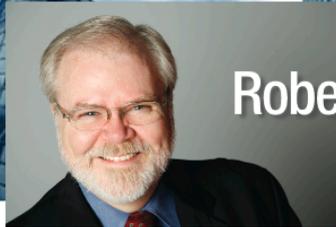
Worksheet

Use the following worksheet to take notes about your partner's story.

Five Levels	Your Example
<u>Facts</u>	
<u>Thoughts, Opinions</u>	
<u>Emotions</u>	
<u>Meaning Importance</u>	
<u>Action Expectation</u>	

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Professional Background

Resource International co-founder, Dr. Robert Pennington, received his doctorate in educational psychology from The University of Texas at Austin. He spent his early career as a faculty member at the University of Houston and Sam Houston State University. He left the academic world to focus on his true passion; applying his psychology background, life experience and professional development at the National Training Laboratory to the challenges of business leaders and their direct reports. Dr. Pennington travels extensively consulting with corporations and government agencies undergoing massive change.

Recognition

Four-time recipient of the Mental Health Association's Outstanding Speaker Award and one of Meeting Professionals International's original Platinum Presenters, Dr. Pennington is consistently rated, "one of the best presenters I've ever heard." You can count on Rob to create a memorable and transforming program for your organization, whether speaking at a conference, consulting with corporate leadership or training people throughout your corporation.

Extensive Experience

A Keynote Speaker for numerous national associations such as the National Safety Council, American Medical Association, and the American Society of Association Executives,

Dr. Pennington's presentation and speaking style is refreshingly informal and uniquely engaging. He involves his audience directly as few professional speakers can, making complex issues understandable in a delightfully common-sense manner. His entertaining insights and delivery make him one of today's most powerful and unforgettable speakers. He uses these abilities to make his executive coaching and consulting more relevant and enjoyable.



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