**Dealing with Difficult People or Opinionated People - a Training Course**

**Might your need to be more successful  
at dealing with difficult or opinionated people  
be met by this management training course  
called *Skills with People*?**

**Yes if you agree with any of the following**

* You hate confict and try to avoid it if you can.
* But sometimes to avoid conflict you find yourself giving in to difficult or opinionated people.
* You'd feel better if you could stand up for what you feel is right, but you need to know how to do it gracefully and without making things worse.
* You don't seem to be able to deal successfully with difficult or opinionated people, and sometimes you don't see why you should have to.

**What you'll take away from this course about dealing with difficult people or opinionated people**

You'll have the understanding, skills and confidence to deal with difficult people or opinionated people in a way that gets through to them and gets the best out of them. We'll help you develop your emotional intelligence and gain useful insights into why people are difficult.

**How to accept this offer**

Simply**contact us** for a preliminary chat and to arrange your free exploratory coaching session.

**What this session will do for you**

In this session we'll aim to give you something practical you can use right away that'll help you handle a difficult situation more successfully at work. All you need do to [**prepare for this session**](https://www.gouldtraining.co.uk/faqs/how-to-prepare) is think about the kinds of situations you want to be able to handle more successfully.

**FAQs**

You'll find answers to many of your questions about the content and method of this course under **FAQs** (in the main menu above).

**How the skills you'll practise on this course  
will make you much more successful at dealing with  
difficult or opinionated people**

**What’s a constructive way of dealing with difficult people?**

Instead of trying to squash them, find out what’s behind their being difficult - what they really want. It may be that making trouble is their only way of drawing attention to a problem that needs to be addressed. Address the problem and they’ll probably have no more need to make trouble.

For dealing constructively with trouble makers you need to be good at listening with empathy. It's one of the two main skills we'll help you master.

**Why are people ‘difficult’ or opinionated?**

We can all be difficult when we’re under pressure. It’s human nature. When we feel bad, e.g., afraid, misunderstood, anxious, we automatically go into attack or defense mode, the fight or flight response. We become ‘difficult’. It’s a survival instinct. This doesn't only happening to the people you perceive as ‘difficult’. It’s what sometimes happens to you, too. Scratch the surface and we’re all similar in this respect.

When a human being’s negative emotions are aroused he tenses up, both mentally and physically. He becomes ‘difficult’. This means irrational, deaf to reason, closed minded, uncooperative, making complaints, dissenting, disagreeable, unreceptive, stubborn, aggressive, hostile, disruptive, resentful, discordant, angry, unwilling to change. He can’t help it. When he feels under threat his emotions are like an internal alarm system alerting him to protect himself – though he may not be aware of it.

The first step in dealing with difficult people is, instead of being afraid of them or angry with them, to be aware that they are in a defensive and self-protective state of mind. If you had the power to change their state of mind they'd no longer need to be difficult. You do have much more power to influence people's states if mind than you may have realised, and on this course we'll help you learn how to use it.

**What keeps people in this ‘difficult’ or opinionated state of mind?**

The answer is bottled-up emotion. The quickest way to help someone be less difficult is to help them discharge their pent-up emotional energy – express their feelings – let off steam. Animals don’t hold on to fear. They express it immediately by fight or flight, and it’s gone. They rapidly recover their ability to function. Human beings have the same set of instincts, but human society trains us to bottle up emotion, suppress it, hide it, deny it. The result is we often get stuck in a difficult and dysfunctional frame of mind.

**When you're dealing with difficult people how can you change their state of mind?**

The answer is – you can help them let off steam. How can you do this? Not by arguing, but by *listening with empathy*. This isn't easy to do, because when people are difficult with us the natural impulse is to be difficult back. So you may need coaching, and that’s what we can give you on our course.

But below, in a nutshell, are some simple guidelines about how to do it. Why not start experimenting with it the next time you have to deal with a difficult person?

**But doesn’t this approach clash with what society teaches us?**

This approach certainly goes against the grain for many of us, because we have been brought up to fear and suppress feelings: *"There, there, don't cry", "Pull yourself together", "Let's be rational – let's not get emotional"*. Behind these common phrases is a belief that there is something wrong with admitting and expressing feelings, that the more we express a bad feeling the worse we feel, that if we stop expressing it we will feel better, and that the best way to stop people being irrational is to discourage them from expressing feelings.

But like many of the beliefs that hold us back from expressing ourselves, this is a mistake. Much nearer the truth is the following: *Bottling up feelings makes us less, not more, rational. The more we can admit and express feelings the more rational we are able to be.* If we want to influence and persuade people who are being difficult and resistant - if we want to make them more receptive to new ideas and to change – we need to encourage them to express their feelings and let off steam.

**Here's a set of simple practical guidelines...  
... about how to listen with empathy when you are dealing with difficult people or opinionated people**

Pay very close attention to the person you're trying to influence. Try to identify and reflect back as accurately as you can the following three things:-

* **How they feel** (Try to name their feeling, e.g., *“You don’t look too happy,” “I imagine you must be frustrated”, “You seem upset/angry”.*)
* **What the feeling is about** (What specific event or experience are they reacting to? What has happened?)
* **Why they are reacting this way** (What specific need, belief or difficulty of theirs is making them react this way? In other words, what really matters to them?)

Then **pause and keep paying attention**, giving them time to let off steam, time to think, and time to say more. When they do say more, repeat the process. Often when you succeed in making someone feel understood they respond with a spontaneous, *“Exactly!”*That’s when they begin to calm down and become less difficult.

**Is listening with empathy all it takes when dealing with difficult people or opinionated people?**

No, but it goes a long way, and you will find it very rewarding. The other skill you need is being **assertive** (not aggressive). These two skills are at the heart of this training course about dealing with difficult people or opinionated people, called *"Skills with People"*. The course enables you to master them both and use them together to handle the situations you find most challenging.

**Yet more reasons why you might benefit  
from this training in dealing with difficult  
or opinionated people**

* You find it very hard to have to cope with and respond to difficult people, whether they're customers, peers, subordinates, bosses, or suppliers.
* You find difficult customers the hardest to handle, because they become so emotional when things go wrong, as if their life depends on it. It's very hard having a rational conversation with someone in that state of mind.
* It's doubly difficult dealing with people who are being negative, because it's not just *their* feelings you have to cope with but also *your own*.
* You would like to be able to deal more calmly with disruptive people and angry people, because if you're attack back you only make matters worse.
* It would be great to be able to turn trouble makers into cooperative allies.
* When dealing with difficult people you need to be able to stand firm but in a way that avoids confrontation.