Please Don't Feed the Hog

How the World's Best Leaders Solve Tough People Problems

Kerry Patterson . Joseph Grenny . Al Switzler . Ron McMillan

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"Leadership is my religion. I think about it twice a year and I'm racked with paralyzing guilt."

– Lament of a midlevel manager

Preface

What Skills Do We Cover?

We've all known people who are steely-eyed smart—Trivial Pursuit geniuses with near perfect SAT scores—but who don't have all that many street smarts. You know the type: they're better with books than they are with humans. That's because traditional IQ and social IQ aren't exactly twins. They're scarcely cousins.

Maybe you yourself face thorny interpersonal problems that push you to the limit. You're not exactly "people challenged," but you consistently run into prickly people and situations. For instance, you give a well-rehearsed presentation to an indifferent audience. The best you can do is whip them into a nap. You hold a performance-review discussion with a menacing employee. You barely hang on by your fingernails. Your boss asks you to deal with a team that's "falling apart." You don't have a clue where to start.

That's where this handbook comes into play. It contains tools and techniques for mastering tough interpersonal challenges. Learn this material and you'll never walk away from a problem again.

Where Did These Skills Come From?

For years, we (the authors) studied individuals at home, at work, and at play. It didn't take us long to recognize social gurus. Where others failed, they thrived. Then we stood these gifted people alongside others who were decent, even good, at their jobs, and watched for differences. We weren't interested in learning what separates the *good* from the *bad*. Anyone can do that. We wanted to separate the *good* from the *best*.

In short, we wanted to capture skills that made a difference in how people lived their lives. And we did it. Across twenty-five years we meticulously researched the distinct, identifiable, and replicable actions that make the difference between surviving tough interpersonal situations and mastering them. We found the skills that help foster healthy teams, communities, organizations, and marriages. Here they are.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

"You're not saying that I'm going to have to work with people are you? Because if you are, I'm quitting."

– Comments from a harried leader

[Some people] spend hours bemoaning the fact that they can't communicate, the very least they can do is to shut up.

– Tom Lehrer

1 WHAT'S WITH "THE HOG"?

Our search into how to deal with challenging "people problems" began in the fall of 1978 when a research colleague and I rolled up to an enormous plywood mill in Oregon. As we exited our shiny new rental car (dressed in wannabe professor clothes that made us stand out like Prince William at a demolition derby) we gingerly approached the entrance to the mill. We promptly walked smack dab into an ambulance that was parked out front. *"What's with that?"* my friend nervously asked.

It didn't take us long to find out. Minutes later, as we met with the plant manager, we asked him about the vehicle. *"It's here to pick up an injured employee,"* he explained. *"One of our front-line supervisors got into an argument with him and beat him up."*

The situation was positively dripping with irony. We had been brought in from Stanford University to measure the impact of an ongoing leadership-training program. *"Well, at least there's plenty of opportunity for growth,"* I thought to myself.

Later that day while interviewing groups of hourly employees, I asked about what had happened earlier. To avoid stirring up a hornets' nest, I asked, *"What happens when you don't get along with your supervisor?"* As one they immediately blurted: *"The hog!"*

"The Law of the Hog" Is Born

We had been introduced to "the hog" earlier that day. In the corner of the mill sat a shack where scraps were ground into sawdust by a monstrous set of saw blades. This was the hog.

You can imagine my surprise when employees mentioned the hog as their cure to poor supervision. *"We don't throw the boss into the hog,"* someone went on to explain. *"We throw good plywood into the hog. That way we kill his productivity numbers and get him in trouble."*

Revenge, sabotage, payback—that was the game. If a boss did something employees didn't like, they got even by "feeding the hog." It wasn't long until we coined the expression "The Law of the Hog." Meaning: When employees dislike how they've been treated, expect a drop in productivity.

Of course, not everybody seeks revenge. In fact, most don't. The most common form of feeding the hog takes place when people spend valuable time thinking about how they were treated rather than finding ways to be more effective.

It's Not Simply a Morale Issue

Hogs can be costly. As employees become disgruntled, they often use their ballooning discretionary time (today people make far more choices about how to spend their time than employees of previous generations) in nonproductive ways. In fact, 40 percent of the people we recently interviewed said they had more energy and creativity to give to the company than they were currently giving. More surprising still, just under half of the employees we questioned agreed that they put in as little effort as they could without being fired.

The good news is that leaders who do solve problems effectively without damaging the relationship have an enormous competitive advantage. Here's why.

Robust organizations are filled to the rafters with employees who willingly and skillfully do whatever it takes to satisfy the demands of customers, investors, other employees, communities, regulatory agencies, and anybody else who has a stake in the enterprise (stakeholders). This gives them a huge competitive advantage over companies staffed with employees who either don't care about their stakeholders or only worry about a small subset of the affected parties—themselves, for instance.

Effective problem solvers are able to deal with daily challenges in a way that resolves the problems, builds on the relationship, and directs people toward making smart choices. When a problem is handled well, employees not only resolve the immediate situation, but they also continue to make sensible decisions. As they make use of their discretionary time, they take into consideration the complex and often competing demands of all the stakeholders. The last thing on their minds is petty revenge.

No Hogs Allowed

Over the years as people have heard about the hog and its terrible costs, they've taken such a shine to the creature that they've made it part of their daily language. The most popular reference has come in the form of a warning. When leaders are about to charge half-cocked into a problem situation, their friends are likely to advise:

"Don't feed the hog!"

Twenty-five years later we offer the same admonition. We also offer a non-porcine based alternative. In the next few pages we share the skills that gifted problem solvers use when facing tough "people problems." We hope that the material will help you step up to one of the most difficult challenges you face— dealing with broken promises.

Most of all, we hope that nobody will ever feed a hog again—metaphorically speaking, of course.

When employees feel mistreated by their leaders they spend hours fretting over how they've been treated—instead of thinking about quality improvements, better ways to serve customers, or new methods to increase productivity. It's the absence of initiative that really kills organizations, and nothing kills initiative more than heavy-handed problem solving.

*"Of course I go off
half-cocked every time
I hear of a problem. Why do
you think I'm able
to get off a shot so quickly?
If you're not half-cocked,
you're not prepared!"*

Somebody has let you down. Maybe an employee missed a deadline. Perhaps a friend violated a safety procedure. Maybe your boss insulted a coworker. Whatever happened was definitely a problem.

prob·lem (pròb¹lem) *noun*
> *A gap. A difference between what you expected and what actually happened.*

2 LEAPING INTO THE FRAY

And when we talk about problems, we mean crucial people problems—situations where stakes are high, opinions vary, and emotions run strong.

So here's the $64,000 question: how do you step up to these challenges? How do you begin a crucial conversation in a way that sets the proper tone for everything that follows? Better yet, how do you avoid feeding the hog?

Common Hog Feeders
To help us avoid a bad start, let's look at the five most common errors people make when beginning a problem-solving conversation.

Sandwiching. This trick is based on the notion that people are too fragile to jump right into a problem-solving discussion. To soften the blow, first say something nice, next bring up the problem, then say something nice again (thus the title sandwiching).

> *"Hey Bob, good looking briefcase. By the way, do you know anything about the ten grand missing from our retirement fund? Love the haircut."*

People despise this technique. It's slippery and manipulative. It also ruins genuine praise.

Playing Charades. Rather than coming right out and talking about a problem, many leaders rely on nonverbal hints. To make their points, they frown, smirk, or look concerned. When somebody's late, they glance at their watch. This vague approach is fraught with risk. People may get the message, but what if they misinterpret your nonverbal hints? Besides, how are you supposed to document your action?

"February 14, 2 P.M.—Raised my right eyebrow three centimeters. Analyst nodded knowingly and reworked the calculations."

Passing the Buck. Some leaders erroneously believe that they can play the role of "good cop." All they have to do is turn their own boss into the "bad cop." By being the "good guy," they believe that they're more likely to stay on civil terms with their direct reports. Here's the kind of stunt they pull:

"I know you don't want to stay late, but the big guy says if you don't we'll have to write you up. If I had my way, we'd all go home early for the holiday weekend."

This strategy is disloyal, dishonest, and ineffective. Anyone with an IQ greater than that of a sea sponge can see through it. Nothing undermines your authority more than blaming someone else for requesting what you would be asking for if you had any guts.

Deal Cutting. Occasionally leaders are so desperate to resolve a problem that they make unethical or even illegal deals. Rather than holding an employee accountable to do the right thing, the boss turns a blind eye to an infraction, and then rewards the employee with an unofficial perk.

"I tell you what, you can do whatever you want this afternoon. Just finish the job by noon."

Implied in this deal is the following. "I know you'd finish on time if you put in any effort at all, but you're not really trying. I don't want to deal with that right now, so I'll let you loaf for four hours if you'll only do what you're supposed to do in the first place."

Once you've cut this kind of deal, you've sold your soul. Since you've done something unethical, against policy, or illegal, the other person now "has the goods on you." Leaders who've fallen into this trap have a horrible time regaining respect and control. They typically have to be transferred to a new area with new direct reports before they're able to handle routine problems without having to offer an undeserved reward.

Playing "Read My Mind." If you scour the bookstores you might stumble across a leadership text that makes the following suggestion: Since people benefit from learning on their own, don't come right out and tell them about the problem that has you concerned. Instead, make them "discover" (i.e., guess) what's on your mind.

> *"Well, Carmen, why do you think I called you in this morning?"*
> *"I don't know. Is it because I crashed the company car?"*
> *"Nope."*
> *"Hmm. Is it because . . ."*

This tactic is as ridiculous as it is ineffective. Despite good intentions, asking others to read your mind often comes across as patronizing or even manipulative.

Two for Two

For every leader we watched feed the hog, we were privileged to observe a skilled supervisor or manager at work. These skilled problem solvers were something to behold. Not only did they resolve problems, but they did so in a way that actually built on existing relationships. In the words of one senior manager we interviewed:

> *"It's easy to find a leader who creates warm and lasting relationships, but who struggles to get things done. It's equally easy to find a no-nonsense, hard-hitting leader you might send in to put out a fire, but who leaves dead bodies along the way. But when you find someone who can manage both people and production, you've got a real gem."*

How did these skilled professionals go two for two? How did they start up conversations in a way that solved problems and didn't feed the hog?

It didn't take us long to realize that the skilled leaders we studied had somehow managed to discover the same exquisitely simple principles.

Take PRIDE

When skilled leaders describe a problem—the gap between what they expected and what they observed—they take **PRIDE** in the way they deliver the first part of their message. **PRIDE** stands for:

- **P**rivate
- **R**espectful
- **I**mmediate
- **D**etailed
- **E**nd with a question

Private

Always discuss problems in private. No matter where you may encounter a problem, retire to your office or another secluded setting where you can talk one to one.

Avoid Inappropriate Humor. Don't violate privacy by masking a public performance review with inappropriate humor. *"Well, look who just arrived. Forget how to find the meeting room?"* For many, it's a hard habit to break. It takes years to learn how to make the right remark—veiled enough to deny, clever enough to get a laugh, pointed enough to be nasty, but not blatantly abusive. Nevertheless, drop the sarcasm.

Don't Chastise the Group. Don't deal with individual problems in meetings by chastising the entire group. This cowardly tactic fails in two ways. First, the guilty may miss the fact that they're the targets of your snide comments. Second, the innocent resent the fact that they're being thrown in with the guilty. Problem solving should be done in private, one to one.

Respectful

When you first approach a problem, don't assume the worst of the other person. Nothing feeds the hog more than rushing full speed into a problem because you're just certain that the other person is guilty as sin. If we remember to assume the best, we're likely to walk up to a person and carefully describe what we've observed. For example: *"You said you'd pick me up by noon; I've been waiting here for more than an hour."* And we won't add an insulting capper—*"What's wrong with you? Are you demented or just plain mean?"* (Oops.)

As long as we're giving others the benefit of the doubt and otherwise doing our best to treat them with respect, we're halfway home. Here are a couple of other tips that help us keep the conversation civil.

Use Tentative Language. Since you're not sure what has prevented the other person from keeping the promise, make sure your language is free of absolutes. Trade *"You said"* for *"I thought we agreed."* Swap *"It's clear that"* for *"I was wondering if."* Since you're unsure what caused the problem, you should have an open mind. Be curious, not conclusive.

*Most leaders
would rather suck eggs than
talk to a subordinate
about a failed promise.*

Immediate

Skilled problem solvers don't beat around the bush. They don't shrink to silence and then pray that the problem will heal itself. Instead, they deal with problems directly and immediately. By stepping up to problems right away, they enjoy four benefits.

Limited Damage. Problems are addressed while they're still fresh and readily resolved.

Fresh Information. By dealing with problems right away, you don't have to rely on outdated information or rusty memories.

Implied Approval. If you don't say something right away, you're giving your unspoken approval of the behavior. This lowers the standard and makes it harder to say something the next time the problem arises.

No Games. A lot of people are afraid to step up to a problem. To avoid a confrontation, they mistakenly drop hints and play games. (Most of the bad techniques we talked about earlier were forms of game playing.)

People appreciate a timely, direct approach to problem solving. For instance, one group of government employees we interviewed spoke of their straight-shooting leader in the following glowing terms.

"He walks straight up to us and talks about problems. None of that stupid stuff where they pretend to be chatty or chummy. Or worse still, where they smile at you, but badmouth you behind your back. Oh yeah, and no entrapment either. We hate entrapment worse than anything."

"We're adults," someone went on to explain. *"If you've got a problem, talk to us directly and immediately. Don't back away from the real issue or try to warm up with stupid games."*

Detailed

Bruno was one of the first leaders we ever watched on the job. He had been selected for our research because he demonstrated (note the root word, demon) all that is bad and wrong. Hogs loved him. He, of course, thought that he had been singled out because he was brilliant.

Be Specific. It's ten minutes into the workday and we're roaming with Bruno through a nest of cubicles teeming with technicians. *"Watch this,"* Bruno fiendishly giggles as he approaches one of his direct reports. Bruno then circles the fellow like a vulture, shakes his head in disgust, mutters under his breath, and flaps off to new ground.

The technician is clearly alarmed. *"Keep 'em on their toes,"* Bruno cackles, *"That's my motto."* True to his word, for four straight hours Bruno not only failed to approach people immediately, when he *did* step up, he explained nothing in clear terms. He constantly prodded people with ambiguous expressions such as *"shape up," "fix that," "that could kill someone,"* and the ever popular, *"get a better attitude."*

Nobody understood this guy. His tactics were vile and ineffective. Strangely enough, Bruno was purposefully vague. He used ambiguity as a torture device. But that's just Bruno. Most people are vague simply because they're inarticulate. Whatever the root cause, lack of clarity is a problem solver's worst enemy. People can't improve if they don't know the specific details of the infraction.

Stick with Facts. Which details should we share? When we walk into an interaction we're inclined to lead with our conclusions. Worse still, we often do so in an insulting way.

- "I can't believe that *you purposefully made fun of me* in that meeting!"

- You *don't care* about quality one tiny bit. Just look at this mess!"

When you share your negative judgments, other people only know what you think, not what they've done. Every time you share a conclusion or story instead of facts, you're betting that other people (1) won't become defensive, and (2) can translate what you're thinking into what they did.

If you've observed the person . . .

Stay External. Paint a picture of what's happening outside your head (*"You cut the person off midsentence"*) as opposed to what's happening inside your head. (*"You're rude."*)

Explain What, not Why. Facts tell us what's going on (*"You spoke so softly it was hard to hear."*) Conclusions or stories tell us why we think it's going on. (*"You're afraid."*) Observe, think, and talk facts. They provide helpful detail.

If you haven't observed the person . . .

Probe for Detail. If you only know about a problem because others complain, you're at risk. People usually offer fuzzy conclusions and inflammatory labels. Probe for facts. Demand behaviors.

Watch and Listen. Look for opportunities to see the person in action.

End With a Question

To bring the first sentence or two to a close, end with a diagnostic question: *"What happened?"* *"Am I missing something?"* *"Is there something else I should know?"* Asking a question maintains respect by turning what could be a monologue into a dialogue. If you're genuinely curious, this will come off as an honest inquiry, not as a veiled threat or accusation: *"What's wrong with you?"*

Once you've asked the question, listen for information about root causes of the problem. Specifically, you're trying to determine whether the problem is due to a lack of motivation, ability, or both.

> ## *"Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it."*
>
> *– George Santayana*

Avoid Groundhog Day

A salesperson who reports to you has a history of promising clients discounts that cut too deeply into your profits. You talked to her about this practice and she agreed to toe the line. Five minutes ago you overheard her deep-discounting again. You bring the problem up in a way that is **P**rivate, **R**espectful, **I**mmediate, and **D**etailed, and you **E**nd with a question.

"Louise, I thought we agreed that you wouldn't sell the product below the set formula. I just overheard you promising a price that was clearly out of bounds. Did I miss something?"

Louise explains that she really, really, really needed this commission. Now what?

Pick the Right Problem. You now have two problems. First, the price violation. Second, Louise didn't live up to her commitment to you. If you only talk about the price formula, you're like Bill Murray in the movie *Groundhog Day*. You keep going back to the same beginning—where you're forced to relive the same problem. Savvy leaders know better. They deal with the bigger problem.

"Let me see if I understand. You agreed to not cut prices, but because you wanted the commission, you did anyway. Is that what happened?"

This follow-up statement leads to a very different discussion. Instead of simply talking about discounting pricing (you may still want to hold that discussion), you're now talking about failing to live up to a commitment. This is a far bigger and more important issue.

> **When you step up to a problem, make sure it's the right one.**

"If the people don't want to come out to the park, nobody's going to stop them."

– Yogi Berra

3 MOTIVATING OTHERS

You don't motivate people. People are already motivated—they just may not be motivated to do what you want them to do. Motivation is best thought of as education. It may not be as glamorous to envision yourself as a teacher as say, a forceful or charismatic leader, but it's a lot more effective.

Once you've uttered your first few words, the problem-solving conversation is off and running. *"Well Bob, it looks like you didn't make that customer call like we agreed. What happened?"* Bob then speaks, and if you have any sense at all, you turn your undivided attention to his response.

From this point on, the plot thickens. There are literally thousands of reasons that might cause Bob to fail to live up to the commitment. How do you spot and then handle each? To help organize our thinking, we'll place problems into one of two bins. First, there are those that stem from ability. Bob *couldn't* do what was asked. Second, there are those that are rooted in motivation. Bob *didn't want* to do what was asked.

The motivation vs. ability distinction lies at the very heart of a street-smart diagnosis. That's because each barrier requires a different response. If Bob says, *"Come on, nobody likes to make those nasty calls,"* it'll take us down one path. If he explains, *"I tried but I was unable to get the customer records to come up on the computer,"* it'll direct us down a very different route.

Let's start with *want*. How do you get people to want to do something? How do you motivate others?

What Motivates?

Years of research have taught us that humans are not giant-sized versions of rodents running through the mazes of daily life. They don't simply respond to stimuli. Quite the contrary—humans think. They anticipate what's going to happen if they do certain things and then choose accordingly.

That's right, all humans are propelled into action by the exact same thing—the consequences they anticipate. If people act one way, it's because they expect that it will yield the best bundle of consequences. If you want them to act in another way, you have to let them know how a different behavior would yield a better consequence package. But how? How, for example, do you get people to understand that their existing view of the consequences is either inaccurate or incomplete? What does it take to change expectations or anticipated consequences?

Natural and Administered Consequences

There are two different kinds of consequences we need to be aware of: natural and administered. Natural consequences are consequences which naturally occur because of an individual's actions.

"If you don't insert the bracket correctly, the part won't work."

Administered consequences are consequences which a boss or leader imposes in order to reward or discipline an individual. They utilize a leader's control over rewards and discipline to motivate.

"If you're late again, I'm going to write you up."

If all else fails, why not use your power or authority to mandate what needs to be done? Power is quick, easy, and it always works. Or does it?

NOW I GET IT

An older fellow from Iowa takes his retirement money and opens up a shop in New York City. It's not long until two thugs show up and suggest that he needs their "protection." Unwilling to be bullied, the fellow holds out for several weeks.

One day the two hoodlums try a new tactic. Instead of hinting that if the owner doesn't pay, some unknown criminals will cause him problems, they take a more direct approach.

"Listen up stupid. If you don't pony up like everyone else in the neighborhood, we're going to come in here with a baseball bat and break your arms and legs."

With that, the old guy reaches into the till and pays the money. Surprised by the sudden change in heart, his assistant asks him, "Hey pops, how come you never paid before and now you sign up for their services?"

"It's easy," answers the old fellow. "Nobody ever explained the benefits package."

Power Kills

"Love of power more frequently originates in vanity than pride…and is…more the sin of little than of great minds."

- Frances Wright

Leaders often use power to motivate. They believe that it's easiest to change others' thinking about an existing consequence package by administering painful consequences of their own. It's also a tool that they can whip out in a second. It's deliciously simple. If they make the current consequence bag unattractive enough, people will abandon it. Here's what it sounds like.

"If you don't finish the project on time, you're fired!"

"If you talk back to me like that again, you're grounded until the end of the summer!"

"If you disrupt one more team meeting like that, I'm writing you up!"

Smart leaders know better. They use patience and forbearance when faced with resistance. Here's why.

Force Doesn't Last. Consider the following study. Researchers randomly assigned leaders one of three leadership styles—authoritarian, hands-off, and democratic. Subjects then used their assigned style to lead a team to produce a product. As expected, the authoritarian (power-based) style produced the highest results when the leader was in the room. Also as expected, force yielded the lowest results once the leader left the room. Uh-oh.

When people produce solely out of fear, once the fear is removed, so is the motivation to continue production.

Force Destroys Empowerment. When we use threats to encourage people, we miss an important opportunity. When someone says, *"Come on, what's the big deal anyway?"* and we say, *"Because if you don't do it I'll write you up!"* we pass up a teaching moment. Using power to cut off conversations keeps people from the very information that they need to make effective choices. Power is disempowering.

Force Kills Relationships. Also, (and this is probably the most obvious problem), every time you decide to use your power base to influence others, you damage your relationships. You eventually move from a healthy partnership based on trust and mutual respect to a police state that requires constant monitoring. Power, rapidly and inappropriately applied, has fed more hogs than Oscar Meyer and Hormel combined.

But You Still Have Power. Suggesting that skilled leaders don't typically use their power base doesn't mean that they don't discipline employees or otherwise use their formal authority. It simply means that they don't lead with it. If necessary, you can always work your way up to firing someone. Authority doesn't disappear simply because you refuse to lead with it.

All we're suggesting is that smart leaders don't rely on their position of power as a means of daily influence.

Employees should act because they understand natural consequences, not because they fear their leader will administer new consequences.

Explain Natural Stakeholder Consequences

When you ask people to do something that they don't enjoy doing or that takes them away from another important priority, they shouldn't do it merely because of a boss's threat. They should be aware of the natural consequences that affect those involved. All requests need to be linked to key stakeholders.

Sample Stakeholder Consequences

Other Employees. "I know that it's hard to always remove the outer burring—but if you don't, it causes problems for the people in assembly."

Customers. "Try your best to answer the phone by the second ring. Customers have been complaining about having to wait too long."

Share Owners. "When making copies for internal use, take paper from the economy box. It's cheaper than customer material. I know it's not as nice as working with better paper, but by using less expensive paper, we were able to cut our production costs 15 percent last month."

Government Agencies/Community. "I realize that it's a pain to pour the leftover liquid into the vat—I used to do this job myself. But if you pour it down the drain it leeches into our ground water. Since it contains several poisons, it's against the law."

The Employee. "If you wear a long-sleeved shirt when you complete this operation, it could get caught in the gears, pull you into the machine, and cause you serious injury."

Curiosity or Resistance?

Which of these many stakeholders you choose to talk about and how you choose to talk depends on whether the other person's lack of desire stems from curiosity or resistance. When people simply want to know why something needs to be done, teach them. When they want to be convinced, it's far more complicated. Consider the following motivational circumstances.

The New Employee (Teaching)

When they first teach someone the elements of their job, experienced leaders explain both what and why. *"Make sure that every file is backed up"* (a time-consuming and not-so-fun job). *"We've lost four hard drives this year. The first time it happened we hadn't been backing up and it took our staff eight days to recreate what they had lost."* (Message: It's worth doing to avoid the pain.)

When you're introducing someone to a new job, an explanation of consequences is both informative and motivating. When people know the impact of their actions on other stakeholders, these natural consequences stay behind in the leader's absence and continually serve as a source of motivation. That's how effective leaders are able to lead from a distance.

With new jobs, explain both what and why.

The New Circumstance (Updating)

After you've taught people their jobs, they often run into turbulence. As changes occur, explain why old actions are no longer appropriate and why new ones are. You're still a teacher, but you're now teaching against a backdrop of what used to be and why circumstances are now different. *"I know in the past we didn't include a brochure in the shipment, but we've learned that once we've sold one item, customers want to know what else we have to offer."*

Keep employees informed and motivated by making timely updates and carefully explaining how circumstances are now different. Link new actions to new consequences.

With changes, explain what differs and why.

"Skill is nil without will."

– Judah ibn Tibbon

KNOW WHEN TO STOP.

Explain the consequences to stakeholders until the other person agrees to comply. Your goal is to find a consequence that helps the other person see the need to act. Once he or she does, there's no reason to continue explaining consequences. If you do continue, it can feel like you're piling it on.

KNOW WHEN TO BACK OFF.

As you're explaining the impact on stakeholders, the other person is often explaining why he or she doesn't want to comply. As the other person talks, if it becomes clear that the cost is truly too great, back off.

Your goal is to do what's right, not to win people over. Young leaders often fear that if they change their mind midconversation, they'll look weak. That's simply untrue. When you hear new information and then change your mind, you look flexible, reasonable, and smart.

KNOW HOW TO FINISH.

After the other person has agreed to comply, don't leave anything to chance. Decide who does what by when. Remember, there is no "we" when it comes to making assignments. Clarify what you will do, what they will do, and set clear deadlines and follow-up times.

Then follow up. The foundation of accountability is predictability. If you say you're going to follow up, follow up.

The Conflicted Employee (Reminding)

Once people settle into their routines, it's common for them to start cutting corners, avoiding certain tasks, or simply juggling priorities. So how do you motivate stretched, even overworked, employees without feeding the hog?

These conversations are always delicate. Maybe a direct report has forgotten why she was supposed to do a certain task. Perhaps she was hoping that nobody would really care if she dropped that part of her job. Obviously somebody does care. With conflicted employees, offer a tactful reminder of why the task needs to be completed.

When caught in a priority war,
gently remind.

The Resistant Employee (Searching)

When people are openly resistant, you need to be careful or you'll have a fight on your hands. This means that you'll have to do your best to explain why something needs to be done, without jumping straight to discipline.

In this case you're on a consequence search. You explain consequences until you find one that rings the other person's bell. That is, you keep explaining consequences until the other person cares or realizes that he or she is starting down the path to discipline and agrees to comply in order to stay out of trouble.

When facing resistance, search for
consequences that matter to the person.

The Out-of-bounds Employee (Disciplining)

Despite your best efforts, there are times when you need to start down the path of discipline. You've explained how each stakeholder will suffer, and the person doesn't care one iota. It's time to change tactics. It's time to move from communicating to imposing consequences (discipline). As you do, keep the following guidelines in mind:

Know the Mechanics. Every organization has (or should have) its own discipline steps and policies. Study them carefully. If you fail to follow procedure, your efforts may be thrown out when reviewed—undermining your credibility.

Explain the Next Step. As you talk about what will happen to people as a result of an infraction, let them know what will happen the next time they make the same mistake. Explaining the next level of consequence informs and motivates. It also helps eliminate surprises—*"Nobody said I was going to be fired!"*

Be Consistent. Don't play favorites. When discipline falls under review, the first thing that third parties examine is equity. Did the person get fair treatment? Don't single people out.

Don't Back Off Under Pressure. Once you've started the process, stick to it. Follow the steps and don't be dissuaded simply because the person puts up a fight. If discipline is called for, stay the course. If you waffle, you'll gain a reputation for making hollow threats.

DISCIPLINE CHANGES RELATIONSHIPS

Disciplining another person changes the very nature of a relationship. When you deny another person access to valued resources, you take on the job of parent or police. Although you can always bring dignity to the interaction by treating the other person professionally, the very fact that you're using force screams:

"We're no longer partners. We are now director and directed, prisoner and guard."

This doesn't mean that you should never discipline somebody. But it does dictate the tone. Discipline must be administered with the same sense of loss one might feel with the departure of a friend. Once you've changed roles from partner to police, you've buried any notion of partnership and you may never regain your previous relationship.

Consequences Motivate. Motivation isn't something you do to someone. People already want to do things. They act on the basis of the consequences they anticipate. Since any action leads to a variety of consequences, people act on the basis of the over-all consequence package.

Power is Costly. You can quickly affect the consequence package by applying power. Force can generate short-term compliance but rarely serves over the long run. It disempowers employees, feeds the hog, and destroys relationships.

Stakeholders Rule. Explain stakeholder consequences. They are the most persuasive reason for doing what's expected. Stakeholders include other employees, customers, shareowners, communities, and regulatory agencies. Stakeholder consequences motivate beyond the presence of the leader.

Style Varies with Circumstances. How you choose to talk about consequences depends on whether the other person is curious or resistant. When people simply want to know, explain both *what* needs to be done and *why*. When dealing with resistance, search for consequences that matter to the other person. Resist the temptation to immediately jump to power.

Performance Coaching

DESCRIBE THE PROBLEM
The first few seconds of a conversation set the tone for the entire interaction.

Private—Discuss problems one to one. Don't use veiled humor or public humiliation.

Respectful—Don't assume the worst of others. Instead, impute good motive. Use tentative language and end with a diagnostic question.

Immediate—Don't put off discussion or beat around the bush with silly tactics. Discuss problems right away.

Detailed—Describe the gap. Start with facts (what you saw and heard), not with conclusions or stories.

End—Finish off with a diagnostic question.

MOTIVATE NATURALLY

Explain stakeholder consequences. Stakeholders include the employee, coworkers, leaders, shareowners, customers, families, communities, and agencies.

Avoid leading with your power.

Know *when* to stop. Explain only until the other person agrees to comply.

Know *how* to stop. Determine who does what by when, set a follow-up time, and follow up.

"Can't means won't!"

4 HELPING THE UNABLE

Let's assume that the person we're working with is highly motivated but unable. Now what?

First, we're going to have to break a long-standing habit. When we hear that someone has a problem you can bet the farm we'll jump in with suggestions. In fact, we can scarcely control ourselves from spouting answers. That's often how we get promoted to a leadership position in the first place. We understand how things work, so when we see a problem we roll up our sleeves and deal with it.

To further ice the deal, when people come to us, problem in hand, and explain that they're at their wits' end, it's pretty much guaranteed that we're going to tell them what to do. They're asking for help, so what else should we do?

Do It Yourself?

In truth, immediately jumping in with our answers isn't always the best thing to do. Skilled problem solvers know that it's actually best to jointly work through problems. They slow down their natural tendency to leap in with an answer, and instead involve the other person in coming up with a permanent solution. That's because there are several advantages to allowing others to help you work through a problem to its complete resolution. Two big ones come to mind.

Involvement Both Enables and Motivates

Ability. When you involve others in solving problems, you get to hear their ideas. They may not know exactly what to do, but they probably have a good idea about what doesn't work. Actually, they often do know what to do, but need materials or permission to do it. In any case, savvy leaders start problem-solving discussions with a simple phrase: *"You've been working on the problem. What do you think needs to be done?"* This question invites others to put their ideas out on the table where everyone can benefit from them. When people help create potential solutions, they're also more likely to be motivated to implement them. Consider the following formula.

Effectiveness = Accuracy X Commitment

Motivation. There's an important secondary benefit to involving others. Most problems have multiple solutions. How effective a particular solution is depends on its accuracy or the power of the tactic. That's obvious. It's equally important that the person implementing the tactic believe in it. That's where commitment comes into play. A solution that may be tactically inferior but that has the full commitment of those who implement it may be more effective than one that is more accurate but resisted by those who have to make it work.

By involving others, you empower them. You provide them with both the means and motive to overcome problems.

Common Mistakes

When we first trained people in how to deal with ability problems, it all seemed so simple. We'd explain the benefits of asking others for their ideas. Who could possibly mess things up? As it turns out, there are several ways to go wrong. Here are the top three.

Bias the Response. During training exercises many leaders would try the following technique. *"So you can't get ahold of the lawyers. Drive over to their office and wait until they return. What do you think?"*

Leaders who tried this method figured that as long as they ended with a question, they were okay. Unfortunately, when you're the boss, giving your idea first and then asking for approval biases the other person. It can cut off good ideas.

Pretend to Involve. Sometimes leaders have already made up their minds on something but want to involve others in coming to the same conclusion. So they ask others for their ideas and then pray that they'll come up with the same idea. This particular ploy comes off as manipulative and even hypocritical.

"What do you think it'll take to get these things out on time?" asks the boss.
"How about if we put more people on the job?" (The boss grimaces and shakes his head.)
"I guess I could work overtime myself." (This time the boss frowns deeply.)
"I don't know, what if I leave out a few steps along the way?"
"What did you have in mind?" asks the boss.
"We don't have to shrink wrap the materials. That'll save a

couple of hours.”

"No not that. Maybe the paper work.”

"I could leave out the billing.”

"Different paper work.”

"How about the environmental reports?”

"I love your idea. Thanks for coming up with the perfect solution.”

It's okay to have ideas. Leaders should have ideas. But it's not okay to mask your firm opinions as an employee-involvement opportunity. The sham ends up looking like a game of "read my mind."

Involve others in solving ability problems only if you're willing to listen to their suggestions.

Jump in Too Quickly. We made this argument earlier, but let's hammer it one more time. When we run into an ability problem, our natural tendency is to leap in with a suggestion. In fact, it's more than a tendency, it's a compulsion.

The following story helps explain the source behind our knee-jerk compulsion to jump in with a suggestion. It was first told to us by a retired actor friend.

Shop Bubba Bob's for Explosive Savings!

"Forty years ago my agent called and asked me if I would take a part in a store-opening ceremony. I told him that I wasn't willing to learn a bunch of lines for a one-shot job. He explained that I only had to learn one line, 'Shop Bubba Bob's for explosive savings!' So I agreed to take the gig.

"As I rode the train, I kept practicing my line. I did it with accents, I put the emphasis on different words, I practiced with the person seated across from me—I was ready for anything.

"Well, almost anything. When I got off at the station I couldn't find a cab. For thirty minutes I desperately searched for a taxi. Eventually I bummed a ride. As I rushed into the store, the owner was frantic. It was only a couple of minutes until I was supposed to deliver my line. 'Here, hold this sign over your head. When I give you a thumbs up, haul this sign to center stage and give your line,' the storeowner breathlessly instructed.

"'Shop Bubba Bob's for explosive savings,' I practiced over and over again. And then the owner cued me. I walked to center stage, looked out on an audience of hundreds of shoppers, and just as I opened my mouth to deliver my line, an ear-piercing explosion came from behind me (an explosive device set off by Bubba himself). It startled me so badly that I dropped the sign and shouted: 'What in the hell was that?!'"

Fair Warning

Nobody told our friend that they were setting off an explosion. Had he been warned, he wouldn't have been so surprised. He would have prepared himself mentally, the explosion would have occurred, and he would have delivered his line. But nobody warned him.

How does this relate to the topic at hand? Without a warning, loud, prominent, hard-wired stimuli yield hard-wired responses. And so we're warning you—when someone comes to you with an ability problem, it'll come at you with a roar. You won't respond with your well-rehearsed line (*"You've been working on the problem. What do you think needs to be done?"*). Instead, the roar will swallow up your best intentions and you'll bark out your ideas like one of Pavlov's dogs. You'll lose your chance to involve and empower.

So, put up a sign. Make yourself a note. Tie a string around your finger. Warn yourself. Don't leap in with suggestions until you've given others a chance to share their recommendations.

WHY DO WE LEAP IN WITH AN ANSWER?

Remember what it was like during that first year of school? Your teacher asks a question. You quickly raise your hand—praying for the chance to show off your superior intellect. "Please, God, let her call on me! Look here. Call on MEEE!" If you're selected, there's a chance that you'll be right. And if you happen to answer correctly, you'll hear the words you live for: "Good job."

As luck would have it, she calls on someone else. Rats! Timmy, the little guy in the yellow sweater, is given first chance at the question. Curse his bright sweater. It's like a beacon. You drop your arm, let out a moan, and hope that Timmy falls on his face. Not that you want to see Timmy suffer, but you do want your chance to be right—and that calls for sweater boy to go down for the count.

What happens if Timmy is right? Do you celebrate, thrilling in the success of a friend while basking in the knowledge that you too knew the correct answer? Fat chance. It takes about one day of schooling to learn that *also* knowing the correct answer yields no satisfaction whatsoever. Heck, you think to yourself, being *also* right holds no charm at all. Although being right is good, being right first is far better. Once you learn this immutable rule, you're never the same.

Search for the Root Cause

Let's assume that the person you're working with is unable to do what has been asked. You stop, pause for long enough to stifle your instinct to jump in with your best recommendation, and say: *"You've been working on the problem. What do you think needs to be done?"* What's next?

Skilled leaders listen to the other person's recommendations and then do their best to partner in thinking through the root causes.

What forces are behind this problem? Think multiple sources.

- *Individual*—Does the person have the knowledge and skills required to do the job?

- *Social*—Are other people providing the necessary information, equipment, resources, and assistance?

- *Organizational*—Is the work setting stable and conducive to what needs to be done? Are policies and procedures supportive? Is there anything in the environment or the way the job is structured that is putting up a barrier?

These three sources help us think of multiple areas of influence and are helpful in both one-to-one discussions as well as team brainstorming meetings.

Will This Person Keep Facing the Problem?

Identifying multiple sources is a good start, but only a start. When it comes to removing ability blocks, ensure that the problem won't keep resurfacing. Coming up with a one-time fix is hardly the preferred solution. For instance, the person doesn't have the materials he or she needs. Making a phone call to secure the material solves the instance but doesn't answer the question, *Will this problem occur again and why?*

Will Others Have Similar Problems?

This companion question explores the need for extending the solution to others. For example, a person doesn't know how to do the job. The two of you come up with a development plan. *Will others need a similar plan? Is the problem unique to the person?*

Have We Identified the Real Root Cause?

The ultimate question, of course, is *Have you gone to the core of the problem, fixing it once and for all?* For instance, the person needs to take a software course. Why didn't the existing course help? Because the teacher was ineffective? If that's true, why?

Japanese executives encourage leaders to ask "why?" five times. Whether it takes two, five, or twenty times, probe until you've solved the problem once and for all.

Performance Coaching

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End—Finish off with a diagnostic question.

MOTIVATE NATURALLY

Explain stakeholder consequences. Stakeholders include the employee, coworkers, leaders, shareowners, customers, families, communities, and agencies.

Know when to stop. Explain only until the other person agrees to comply.

JOINTLY SOLVE ABILITY PROBLEMS

Empower others by asking for their ideas.
(Don't jump in with your ideas.)

Know how to stop. Determine who does what by when, set a follow-up time, and follow up.

*"Anger is a signal,
and one worth
listening to."*

– Harriet Lerner

5 DEALING WITH STRONG EMOTIONS

Going "Post Hole"

You work as a manager for a company that imports gardening implements from the Far East. You notice that Carl, your head accountant, hasn't finished a month-end report that you asked to have by yesterday afternoon. So you walk into Carl's office and start up a conversation.

To set the right tone, you start out the conversation with a healthy problem description. *"Carl, I noticed that the monthly report wasn't in my box this morning. Did you run into a problem?"* Carl explains that he didn't know it really mattered, and he really hates doing it. You don't leap to your power. Instead, you share a couple of stakeholder consequences. Carl then states that he'll get right on it. No big deal.

That's how you expect the interaction to unfold. You act professionally and your efforts pay off. But what if it doesn't go as planned? Despite the fact that you're the picture of professionalism, Carl becomes angry and says: *"I'm your best employee. I miss one deadline and you're all over me. Leave me alone!"* Then he grabs a sales sample (a half-sized post hole digger) and throws it at a file cabinet.

Now what do you do?

Ensure Your Safety

When others become angry, there's always the chance that they also may become physically violent. They've blown their cork, will they take it to the next level? No listening skill or anger-reduction technique will overcome a person who is chasing you around the desk with a letter opener.

Don't be a hero. If you think that you're in danger, leave. Remove yourself from the situation. Then call the appropriate authorities. In most companies that's security, HR, or both. Let your boss know what happened. Don't even think about dealing with the danger yourself.

This kind of thing doesn't happen very often, but if it does, you need to be prepared.

Dissipate the Emotion

> *"All music jars when the soul's out of tune."*
> *– Miguel de Cervantes*

If you're not in danger, deal with the emotion, not the argument. As Cervantes suggests, any argument you make will simply jar other people as long as their emotions are out of tune. In addition, any argument that they make is likely to come across as an assault. So stifle your desire to jump into the content of the argument. Instead, dissipate the emotion.

But how? What does it take to reverse the effects of adrenaline? You can always give in and try one of the seven techniques on the following page. Or not.

SEVEN HOG FEEDERS

The Hook. Become as angry as the other person. This should be easy and is bound to lead to a peaceful resolution.

The One-up. Let others know that whatever bugs them doesn't compare to your far-more-serious problems. Putting others down helps place their problems in perspective. They'll thank you.

The "Grow Up!" Explain that the other person is acting like an infant. This is bound to have a calming effect.

The "Cool Down!" Complain that the other person is out of control and can't talk to you until he or she has calmed down. People love this technique.

The Side Show. Distract the other person by picking up on a minor point. *"He didn't yell at you on Tuesday, it was Wednesday. I remember because it was the day you came in late to work. You do remember coming in late don't you?"* People love this.

The Disprove. Immediately point out errors in the actual argument. As soon as others realize that they're mistaken, they'll thank you and apologize.

The Robot. Show no emotions. If anything, act completely in control and maybe even superior. Better still, let others know that you've been through anger-management training. People love to hear about your self-mastery when they're so mad they could spit.

Explore the Source of the Anger

In reality, to effectively deal with strong emotions you have to understand what caused them. Actively listen. We'll start with simple listening tools, and then move to some that are better suited to dealing with strong emotions.

Power Up Your Listening With AMPP

We have four different tools to help uncover the other person's story. We'll use the acronym **AMPP** to help us recall them, and as a reminder that they boost the power of our listening skills.

AMPP reminds us that we can simply **A**sk to get things rolling, **M**irror to encourage communication, **P**araphrase to clarify, or **P**rime to make it safe.

Ask to Get Things Rolling

Your teenage son walks into the house, slams the door, and throws his books on the kitchen table. You start with a simple question.

> *"What's going on?"*
> He comes back with the classic.
> *"Nothin'!"*
> So, you ask him to join in a conversation.
> *"No really. I'd love to hear what happened."*
> *"I don't want to talk about it."*

You don't know if he wants to talk or not. So you invite him one more time. *"Honest, I'm all ears. I promise—I'll just listen. Sometimes it helps."*

> *"Well, this morning before science class . . ."*

Mirror to Encourage

Tom (a coworker) sits in a meeting, says nothing, and looks discouraged. Normally Tom is upbeat and contributes to the conversation. As the meeting ends, you ask, *"Are you feeling okay?"*

He's not. He's upset, discouraged, and a little embarrassed. Over the past year Tom has put on thirty pounds, and during the meeting you referred to him as "Big Guy." Three times, no less. Tom was humiliated. However, when you ask him straight out, he comes back with, *"Well, uh, I'm, uh . . . I'm feeling just fine."* Only he says it with a tone of voice and body posture that communicate exactly the opposite.

To encourage Tom to open up, you hold a mirror up to him. You describe the disconnect between what he just said and how he just said it. *"You know, the way you said that makes me wonder if you are okay. You seem kind of, I don't know, low energy, maybe a bit glum. Are you sure you're okay?"*

What you're trying to do, of course, is make it safe for Tom to talk. By holding up a mirror, you let him know that you're concerned and that his brush-off wasn't taken at face value. Once again, you're trying to open up a conversation, not compel Tom to spill his guts.

Mirroring is one of the best tools to use when a person comes at you with a burst of anger. When you acknowledge the other person's emotions and show that you're concerned and want to get to the root of the problem, the other person often calms down.

Paraphrase to Clarify

Sometimes you catch a break. The other person is upset, walks in, and dumps out her feelings and conclusions in one fell swoop. She spouts:

"Boy am I miffed. You can be so controlling. It drives me crazy. Yesterday I got another one of your follow-up notes. Do you have to monitor me by the hour? I feel like I'm being baby-sat!"

At this point it's best to see if you understand what she said. Paraphrase. Put in your own words what you think she stated. Let her know that you're trying to understand.

"You feel as if I'm watching you too closely because I follow up frequently? Maybe too frequently?"

Prime to Make it Safe

Sometimes it takes quite a bit to encourage others to talk openly. Maybe the topic is controversial, their stance is unpopular, or the issue is sensitive and rarely talked about in public. Whatever the cause, sometimes people figure that if they express their feelings openly they'll get into trouble.

You've asked, mirrored, and paraphrased, but so far the other person remains silent and angry. What next? Our final tool is our most intrusive one. It takes us into the other person's head—right into his or her ugly stories. We prime (add words to the conversation, hoping the other person will do the same). We do this by taking a guess at what he or she might be thinking.

"Are you upset because I did something unfair? I gave the promotion to Margie and maybe you think you're more qualified or that I didn't do a good job of making a choice? Is that it?"

54

Style Is Everything. The second half of this skill lies in how you guess the other person's conclusion. You're trying to make it safe for others to share their thoughts. That means that you have to express your best guess in a way that says, *"Don't worry, I'll be okay with this discussion. I won't become defensive or angry."*

You do this, of course, by stating your guess calmly and matter-of-factly. You don't choke the flow by stating, *"You're not upset because you think I made an unfair choice are you? Because you need to know, I tried my darndest!"*

> **Prime to make it safe, not to invite
> others out only to punish them.**

55

Using AMPP

AMPP reminds us that we can simply ask to get things rolling, mirror to encourage and diffuse, paraphrase to check our understanding, or prime if we want to make it safe. And we can use these skills in any order or combination. Watch.

Carla bursts into the room and exclaims: *"That's the last time I'm offering a suggestion!"*

You: *"What happened?"* (Ask)
Carla: "Never mind, it doesn't matter."
You: *"No really, I'd like to hear."* (Ask)
Carla: "It's no big deal."
You: *"I don't know. The way you're saying that makes me think it is a big deal."* (Mirror)
Carla: "I don't want to hurt your feelings. I know you did your best in that meeting."
You: *"Is it something I did? Did I cut off one of your ideas or something?"* (Prime)
Carla: "Duh! I think calling my ideas naive pretty much killed my credibility! That, plus calling me the 'new kid'!"
You: *"Using the terms 'naive' and 'new kid' undermined your credibility?"* (Paraphrase)
Carla: "I'll say. I was hoping that . . ."

Take Action

Once others have explained their conclusions, and the actions that led to them, you're now in a position to deal with the problem. As the person's emotions drop to a level where he or she can carry on a normal conversation, jointly problem-solve. Ask for his or her recommendations. Actively seek solutions.

Caution: Remember, people don't simply want you to listen to them pleasantly, actively, and endlessly. Listening is a necessary, but insufficient step. You also have to *do* something. First actively listen, then actively act.

If you can't personally solve the problem but believe that somebody else might be able to take corrective steps, refer the problem to the right person.

If nobody can solve the problem, explain why. Once people have calmed down, a reasonable explanation goes a long way in bringing the incident to a close. Now, that means that the problem is truly insoluble. If you can't implement a solution because it's against policy, then it's a matter of choice, not a matter of impossibility. This being the case, refer the person to the appropriate authorities. Never confuse policy with impossibility. Policies are fashioned by people and can be refashioned by people as well.

Strong Emotions, In Summary

Emotions change the very nature of a problem-solving discussion. You can't simply ignore them and hope things will get better. Well, you can, but you're not very likely to succeed.

First, Ensure Your Safety. If the other person is out of control or close to it, exit the situation. Seek guidance from your professional staff.

Second, Dissipate the Emotion. Remember: emotions first, content second. Avoid the traditional pitfalls. Don't get hooked and respond in kind. Never tell the other person to calm down. Don't try to either disprove a minor point or jump straight to the error of the other person's thinking. Finally, don't throw out your feelings of concern. It's okay to be shocked, alarmed, or concerned. Just don't get angry.

Third, Explore the Cause. The best method to both calm the person and get the problem to the point to where it can be solved is to get into his or her head. Remember **AMPP: A**sk people to share their thoughts and feelings, **M**irror to encourage others to talk as well as to diffuse the emotion, **P**araphrase to check your accuracy, and **P**rime to make it safe.

Fourth, Take Action. As the other person calms down, jointly solve the problem. If you can't, find someone who can. If nobody can, explain why. Never confuse policy with hardened reality. If a policy prevents a sensible resolution, refer the problem to the appropriate authorities.

Performance Coaching

DESCRIBE THE PROBLEM
The first few seconds of a conversation set the tone for the entire interaction.

    Private—Discuss problems one to one.

    Respectful—Impute good motive.

    Immediate—Discuss problems right away.

    Detailed—Describe the gap.

    End—Finish off with a diagnostic question.

MOTIVATE NATURALLY

Explain stakeholder consequences. Stakeholders include the employee, coworkers, leaders, shareowners, customers, and others. (Avoid leading with power.)

Know when to stop. Explain only until the other person agrees to comply.

JOINTLY SOLVE ABILITY PROBLEMS
Empower others by asking for their ideas.

Know how to stop. Determine who does what by when, set a follow-up time, and follow up.

WATCH FOR STORIES AND EMOTIONS

Don't respond in kind or play games.

Actively listen. Show that you're concerned. Ask, mirror, paraphrase, and prime (AMPP).

Deal with the problem. As the other person calms down, jointly solve the problem.

6 TURNING IDEAS INTO HABITS

Master the Content

Do something. Read a section of this handbook, practice the material you covered until you master the skill. Repeat with another section.

Discuss and teach. Teach a friend your favorite concepts. Stick with it until he or she really gets it.

Change methods. Visit our website at v*italsmarts.com* and watch video examples of dos and don'ts. Order the audio mastery course for true-to-life examples.

Master the Skill

Rehearse. While you're at our website, download role-plays that you can use to practice the skills with a friend.

Practice. Look for opportunities to do what you've learned at home and at work. Then step up to the plate and practice.

Sign up for training. If you'd like comprehensive training, give us a call and see if you can either schedule a session at a location near you or bring the training into your company.

Build in Cues

Reminders. While at our website, download problem-solving tips that will help remind you of the material.

Permanent cues. Send for a poster of the model, place it on the wall, and use it as a handy reference.

Changing your problem-solving style is about as painless as changing your shoes, socks, and spleen.

More Performance-Coaching Tools

On-Site Training
VitalSmarts provides a complete set of materials to train the content of this handbook. This performance-coaching training is divided into five separate sixty- to ninety-minutes sessions. These sessions can be trained on site, by your own leaders, and across several weeks—allowing time for spaced learning. Or the lessons can be delivered back-to-back for a more intensive, focused approach.

Each session contains exercises, discussions, video examples, practice scenarios, and application tools. Materials include Leaders' Guides, Toolkits, posters, and reminders. The materials are thorough, relevant, and entertaining.

Public Training
The Performance Coaching one-day course is offered in numerous cities throughout the year. The focus is on developing actual skills and the courses are either led by the authors or by experienced trainers who have been certified by VitalSmarts.

Train the Trainer
Your trainers and leaders may be certified to teach Performance Coaching™ to your executives, managers, department heads, front-line supervisors, and employees.

More VitalSmarts Tools

Dialogue
Crucial Conversations Training. This two-day course is designed to help you stay on the path to better results and better relationships. Experienced by thousands of participants in dozens of Fortune 500 companies, this material helps improve relationships with customers, coworkers, and family members. Materials include books, handbooks, off-site courses, on-site training, and audiotapes or CDs

Teamwork
This training program includes twelve Single Point Lessons, a leader's guide, video segments, and an assessment tool to help teams improve the quality of their work as well as the quality of their work life. Participants learn to set goals, reduce barriers, embrace change, take initiative, make decisions, improve meetings, and hold one another accountable.

Customer Service
This training program includes eleven Single Point Lessons, a leader's guide, video segments, and an assessment to help teams understand, measure, and serve their customers well.

Leadership and Vitality
This one-day seminar explores how leaders coach, communicate, praise, and model crucial behaviors. It teaches leaders how to diagnose their organization's behaviors, results, and influence methods—and then what leaders need to do to improve each.

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Kerry Patterson began his research into the challenges of improving organizations during four years of intensive study and research at Stanford University. He has taught at Brigham Young University, and for over two decades has worked as a consultant on extensive culture-change projects with clients including Ford Motor Company and Allstate Insurance. His award-winning training programs have been used successfully by over 300 of the Fortune 500 companies.

Joseph Grenny cofounded California Computer Corporation and was an executive at Covey Leadership Center. He has taught and coached thousands of leaders and orchestrated major change programs for IBM, AT&T, Lockheed Martin, Xerox, and Columbia HealthCare. His emphasis is on driving measurable business improvements by influencing human performance. Joseph is a cofounder of *Unitus,* a non-profit organization that helps the Third World poor achieve economic self-reliance.

Al Switzler is on the faculty of the Executive Development Center at the University of Michigan. He has taught at Auburn University, the University of Kentucky, and Brigham Young University. He has served as the president of two consulting firms, vice president of marketing for an information firm, and director of training and management development for a healthcare company. He has consulted with over 300 clients, including Ford, Intel, and OG&E.

Ron McMillan has worked as a consultant and teacher for over twenty-five years. His experience ranges from facilitating two-day personal empowerment training to designing and directing five-year organization-wide culture change projects. He cofounded Covey Leadership Center where he was vice president of research and development for seven years. He has worked with a variety of clients including AT&T, Nike, Saturn, Disney Imagineering, Aetna, Browning, Intel, and Lennox.