

Getting Proactive Exercise

One way to “get in front” of difficult interactions is to get more proactive about them by doing some work ahead of time to get clarity about what we want to achieve in these interactions, what gets in the way, and how we might eliminate barriers to success.

Choose one person on your current list of “most difficult clients” and ask yourself:

a) What are the power dynamics in this interaction?

b) What are my goals for this communication?

c) What am I assuming? How could I check those assumptions?

d) What do I think the other person/people might be assuming? How can I check that (and clarify/correct any misassumptions)?

(over)

e) What in the way this is typically framed might be a trigger (for them or for me)?

f) What could I do differently (in terms of framing, or other things) that might create more curiosity/openness?

g) What kind of support would be useful to me as I work on this?

h) If I tend to get triggered by this person:

1. What's hard about interacting with them?

2. Is there anyone I know who is not/would not be triggered by this person?

3. What are they bringing to that interaction? And can I borrow some of that energy (or, if they are on staff, can I bring them into this to help if I am anticipating a difficult interaction?)