

By DR VICTOR S.L. TAN

# THE ART OF GETTING ALONG WITH PEOPLE



OVER the years in the corporate world, I have observed that the success of one's career depends on one very important skill - the art of getting along with people. All the knowledge, skills and experience will not help if one cannot work with people. In fact, there are a lot of people playing smaller roles and not moving up the corporate ladder because they are difficult to get along with and they are where they are because of this weakness.

Yet if employees would learn to get along with one another, there are great benefits to companies as well as individuals:

- People will communicate more effectively
- They will trust one another more
- There will be less conflict
- They will be better team spirit
- Productivity will increase
- Moral of staff will be higher
- Individuals will be less stressful
- The workplace will be harmonious and people are happier

Here are six proven ways of getting along with people.

## 1. Respect One Another

One very essential value to help us get along with people is a genuine respect for others. Yes, we may come across some seemingly difficult characters, but all the same if we begin with respect for them, it already starts with the right footing. Think of it this way, if God had also created such people which He

deems them as worthwhile, then the very least we could do is to show respect for such people. It is amazing how the power of respect can win over "seemingly difficult people". Psychologists tell us that a lot of so called "difficult people" are actually suffering from low self-esteem. By showing them respect, we actually enhance their self-esteem and make them "easier" to get along with.

## 2. Take The Initiative To Get To Know Others

There is one effective way to get people to like you. It is by taking a genuine interest in them. A good way for effective rapport building is to ask about the other person's interests, their work, their concerns and their families. Some people may come across as "unfriendly" initially but once you break the ice and show your interest, they will begin to respond warmly and they may even end up being good friends with you.

## 3. Look At The Better

## Side Of The Other Person

No one is perfect. If we are to pick on each and every flaw of people then we will find it hard to get along with everybody. The key is to focus on the strengths of people rather than their weaknesses. People make mistakes. However, the art of getting along with people starts with recognising the right things people do and complimenting them. This is the concept of catching people doing the right things and reinforcing that behavior to encourage its sustainability in the future. We certainly cannot condone the mistakes others made. However, people are more open to correct their mistakes later, if they are first recognised for those things that they do right.

## 4. Learn To Resolve Conflict

There is no escape from conflict in the workplace. Even for the best people working together, situations will arise that lead to conflict. Addressing conflict the right way will ensure that people can continue to work harmoniously with one another. It is important to first understand the real situation and then acknowledge the problem. Communication should be open and focus on issues rather than individuals. Persuasive approach will work better than coercive. The strategy selected to resolve the conflict must result in a win/win outcome for both parties.

## 5. Watch Your Tone Of Voice And Non Verbal Gestures

Often it is not what one says that offend the other person, it is the way he or she says it. If we use a sarcastic tone in our suggestion to correct someone's mistakes, the person will retaliate and defend himself. Likewise, if we frown or exhibit a displeasure look, the party affected will not take it well. He or she might fight back all the way resulting in a full-fledged conflict. Watch what we say but more importantly be very careful with the tone of your voice and your body language as you communicate with others. Make these your allies rather than your enemies if you want to get along with people.

## 6. Being Magnanimous

The ultimate way of getting along with people is being magnanimous. People who are magnanimous have a generous attitude in showing kindness or forgiveness of any insult or wrong that others have done them. They do not take uncalled for remarks or insensitive outbursts personally. They do not seek revenge or harbor resentment as they refused to let such "pettiness" bog them down. The magnanimous person practices what Eleanor Roosevelt advocated, "Nobody can get you upset without your consent". When a person is magnanimous, he has a big heart and he does not let tiny and trivial matters affect his mood and well-being. And that is a magnetic person that everyone will find easy to get along with.

Human resources are not the key asset of a company until their people learn to get along with one another. Calling all HR leaders to get their people to start practicing the above 6 desired work behaviours as these are indeed the critical factors for success in business.

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