

SNIPERS AND WHINERS AND TANKS, OH MY!
THE TOP TEN BEHAVIORS THAT PEOPLE CAN'T STAND
By Dr. Rick Brinkman

Everyone is someone's difficult person now and again, even us on occasion, (of course not as often as those other people). But whenever you interact with someone you always have a choice:

You can do nothing and suffer,
you can leave or get them to leave,
you can change your attitude,
or you can change your behavior.

The first step is to understand why people act the way they do. So, let me introduce you to the Lens of Understanding. People have 4 intents operating within them: the intent to Get Things Done, to Get Things Right, to Get Along with People, and to Get Appreciated by People. Depending on the situation, one of these will become more important than the others and their behavior will change.

For example, if a person is in a Get it Done mode they will focus on the task at hand and become more assertive to make things happen. If things are not getting done and they perceive the situation is out of control they go into what I call Tank behavior. It is aggressive and they can even attack the person who is there to help them. Consider the customer whose life is disrupted because their car is in the shop and the insurance company won't pay for parts the shop knows are needed. When people become Tanks they declare martial law and you are either part of the solution or you're eliminated. Tanks can rip you apart personally and the irony is, "it's nothing personal." You just happen to be in the way of an end result.

But control has other expressions especially when people suppress their anger. Then Sniping is the result. Their attack is hidden sarcasm and put down humor which can be to your face or behind your back.

If you add ego and knowledge to the recipe then control will express itself as Know-it-All behavior. They control through knowledge and they really know a lot, but they are closed minded to everyone else's ideas.

If we shift gears to the intent to Get it Right, we find people still focused on the task but less assertive because they have to slow things down to make sure all the details are covered. If they think other people are not paying attention to getting it right, then they become perfectionist. They get critical and nitpicky or even get to a point where no one including them self can meet their high standard and begin to feel helpless or hopeless.

Helpless is the root of Whining. When people feel hopeless, Negativity results. They both speak in generalizations that "everything is wrong, nothing is right, and it's always that way." It is these generalized problems that drive everyone around them crazy, because the first step to problem solving is specifics. But you can't solve a

generalization. If they are on a working team they can drag everyone's morale down the drain because whining and negativity spreads like the flu through a team of people.

Other people just get frustrated and give up. They say, "Fine, do it your way. Don't come crying to me when it doesn't work out." From that point they become Nothing people.

You also see Nothing behavior from a different motivation. Out of the intent to Get Along with people, if you don't have something nice to say, don't say it at all. So, Nothing is a common result. Agreeable Yes behavior also stems from this motivation. Out of the desire to please and get approval, people don't consider their own needs but just say yes to whatever anyone else wants. When a decision that could hurt someone's feelings they go into Maybe behavior. We have all told the sales person, "I'll think about it." But you really weren't going to think about it. That's approval-oriented behavior. And to make matters worse all these "nice" behaviors can easily become passive-aggressive behind your back.

Shifting mental gears we move to the intent to Get Appreciated by people. Here the focus is on people. Behavior tends to be more assertive because what goes hand in hand with appreciation is a desire to contribute to others. But if they are not getting the appreciation seek, then their behavior becomes attention getting and before you know it you may be dealing with a Grenade.

The Grenade is the temper tantrum. It is different than a Tank attack in that the Tank is focused and you know what the issue is. When a Grenade blows up they do so in 360 degrees, indiscriminately and you are more likely to hear things that have nothing to do with the present circumstances like, "It's the government's fault! That's the problem with the world today." A Tank attack is demanding action. A Grenade tantrum is demanding attention.

What also comes from a need for attention is another kind of sniper; friendly fire. These are people who like you and use put down humor or gossip as a way of making connection. However, it can also quickly change from friendly to malicious.

Another behavior with an extreme ego-need for attention is Think-they-know-it-all behavior. Here you have someone acting like they know what they are talking about, but they really don't. They brag, they exaggerate, and this is where you get one-upsmanship. If you were sick, they were sicker, if you had a great vacation, they tell you about their greater vacation.

Tanks, Snipers, Know-it-alls, Think-They-Know-it-Alls, Grenades, Whiners, No people Yes, Maybe and Nothing people, are the top ten-problem behaviors people face. But the good news is communication is like a phone number and there is a "right number" behaviorally that you can dial that will pull people out of their stress response and back into the normal zone of behavior.

In the Difficult University Online Course, you will learn the sure-fire strategies that handle and prevent all difficult behaviors and you will become a Communication Master.