



Working With Difficult People

*Feels Like Getting Pinched by a
Lobster Claw!*

Presented by

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Coping With Difficult People

Dr. Robert Bramson

Dealing With People You Can't Stand

Dr. Rick Brinkman & Dr. Rick Kirschner



10 Most Unwanted List

1. “**Tank**”

- Confrontational, pointed & angry
- The ultimate in pushy behavior

2. “**Sniper**”

- Rude comments, biting sarcasm
- Attempts to make you look foolish



10 Most Unwanted List

3. “**Grenade**”

- After initial calm, explodes into uncontrolled ranting & raving

4. “**Know-it-All**”

- Has a low tolerance for correction and contradiction



10 Most Unwanted List

5. “**Think-They-Know-It-All**”

- Attempt to fool some or all of the people most of the time
- Really an attempt to get attention

6. “**Yes Person**”

- Say “yes” without thinking things through
- An attempt to please people and avoid confrontation



10 Most Unwanted List

7. “**Maybe Person**”

- Procrastinates in hope that a better choice will present itself

8. “**Nothing Person**”

- No verbal feedback
- No non-verbal feedback
- Nothing



10 Most Unwanted List

9. “**NO Person**”

- Able to defeat big ideas with a single syllable
- Deadly to morale

10. “**Whiner**”

- Feel overwhelmed by an unfair world
- Misery loves company and they bring their problems to you



Four Choices

These are the difficult people that most people cannot stand working with, talking to, or dealing with.

You have four options:



1st Choice

1. Stay and do nothing

- Leads to suffering and complaining to someone who can do nothing about it
- Can be dangerous because frustration builds and gets worse over time
- Complaining to people who can do nothing tends to lower morale



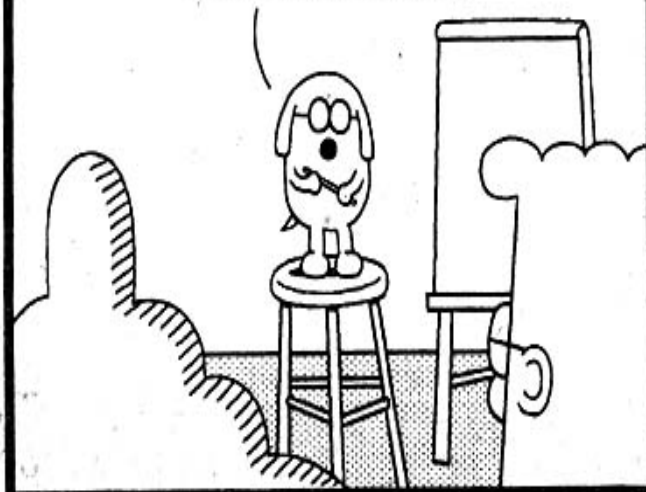
2nd Choice

2. Vote with your feet

- Not all situations are resolvable and some are just not worth resolving
- If everything you say makes matters worse, remember, discretion is the better part of valor
- Eleanor Roosevelt said, “You’re nobody’s victim without your permission.”

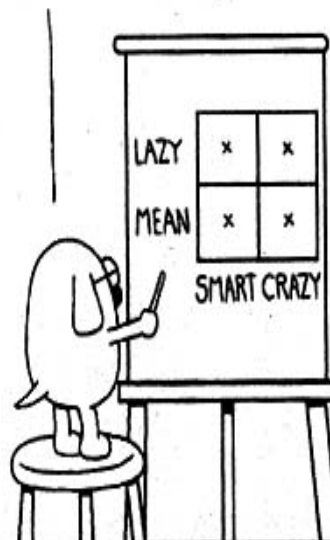
DILBERT

WELCOME TO MY
SEMINAR ON DEALING
WITH DIFFICULT
COWORKERS.



www.dilbert.com scottadams@aol.com

DIFFICULT COWORKERS
GENERALLY FALL INTO
ONE OF THESE GROUPS.



11-11-05 © 2005 Scott Adams, Inc./Dist. by UFS, Inc.

THE ONLY WAY TO DEAL
WITH THEM IS TO
QUIT YOUR JOB AND
BECOME A SYNDICATED
CARTOONIST.

THANKS FOR
COMING.





3rd Choice

3. Change your attitude about your fellow board members

- Learn to: see them differently, listen to them differently and feel differently around them
- Change your attitude to set you free from your reaction to the problem you see in their behavior



4th Choice

4. Change your behavior

- Change the way you deal with people and they will need to learn new ways to deal with you
- Once you know what needs to be done and how to do, you will be able to take charge of an unpleasant situation and redirect its result



Observations About People

People:

- Are creatures of habit
- Behave in certain ways to meet their needs

Observations:

- How we communicate is a habit
- When our needs are not met, we react
- Stronger the need, the stronger the reaction



Lens of Understanding

Everybody responds to different situations predictably during times of challenge, difficulty, or stress.

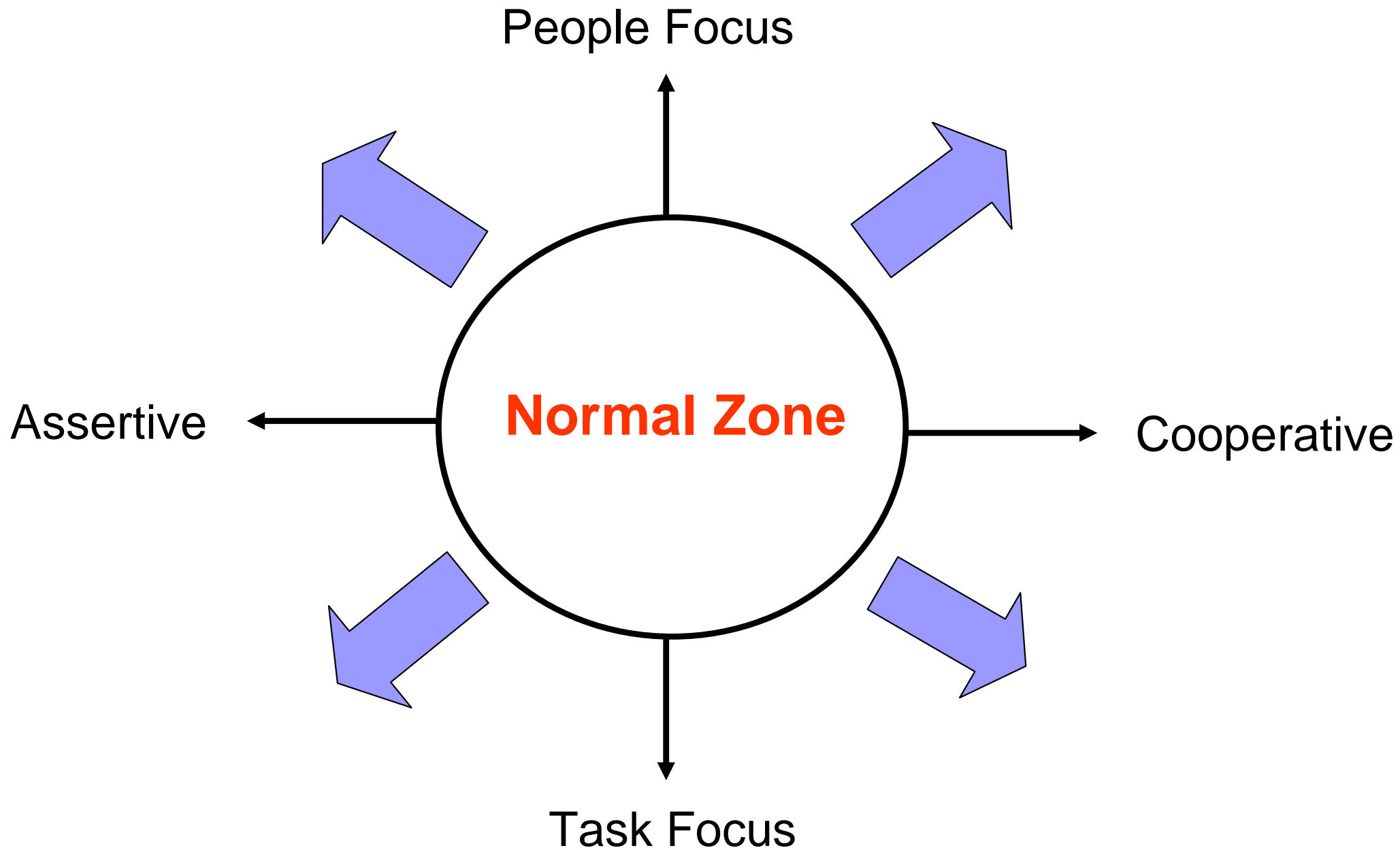
People tend to move outside their behavior comfort zone and become either more passive or more aggressive than normal.



Patterns

For a better understanding of a person's predictable behavior during times of duress, look for patterns of behavior to determine what people usually focus their attention on in a given situation.

- People vs. Task
- Assertive vs. Cooperative



GRENADE
SNIPER
**THINK-THEY-
KNOW-IT-ALL**

People Focus

NOTHING
YES Person
MAYBE Person

Assertive

Normal Zone

Cooperative

TANK
SNIPER
KNOW-IT-ALL

Task Focus

WHINER
NO Person
NOTHING Person



Dangerous Assumptions

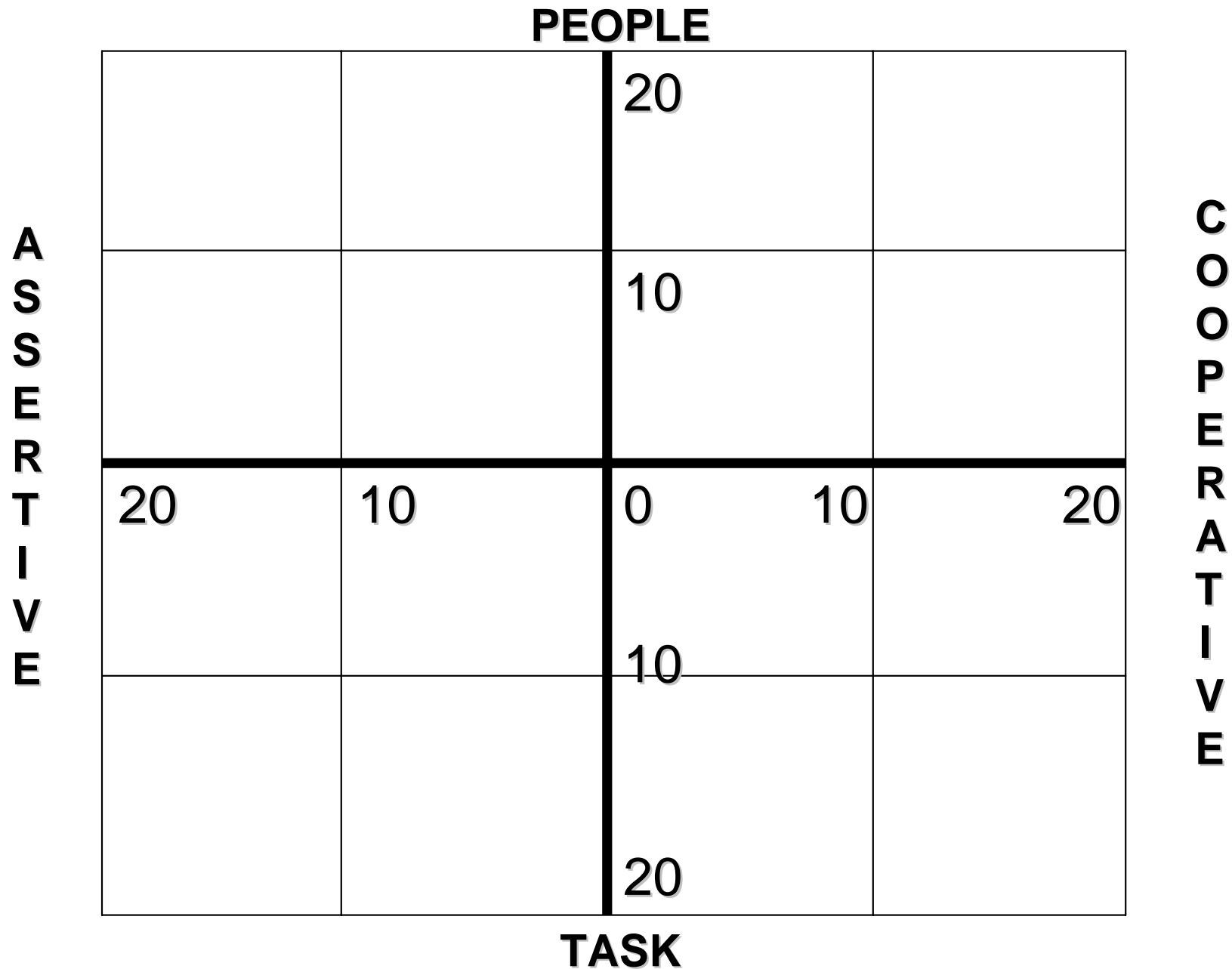
- “They are just like me.”
- “They should act the way I expect them to act.”
- “I am right. They are wrong.”
- “My view is the only valid view.”
- “I know what they meant by that . . .”
- “Their intention is obvious.”



Table Work

- Complete Communications Style choices
- Locate communication quadrant
- Separate into groups
- Pose questions to groups

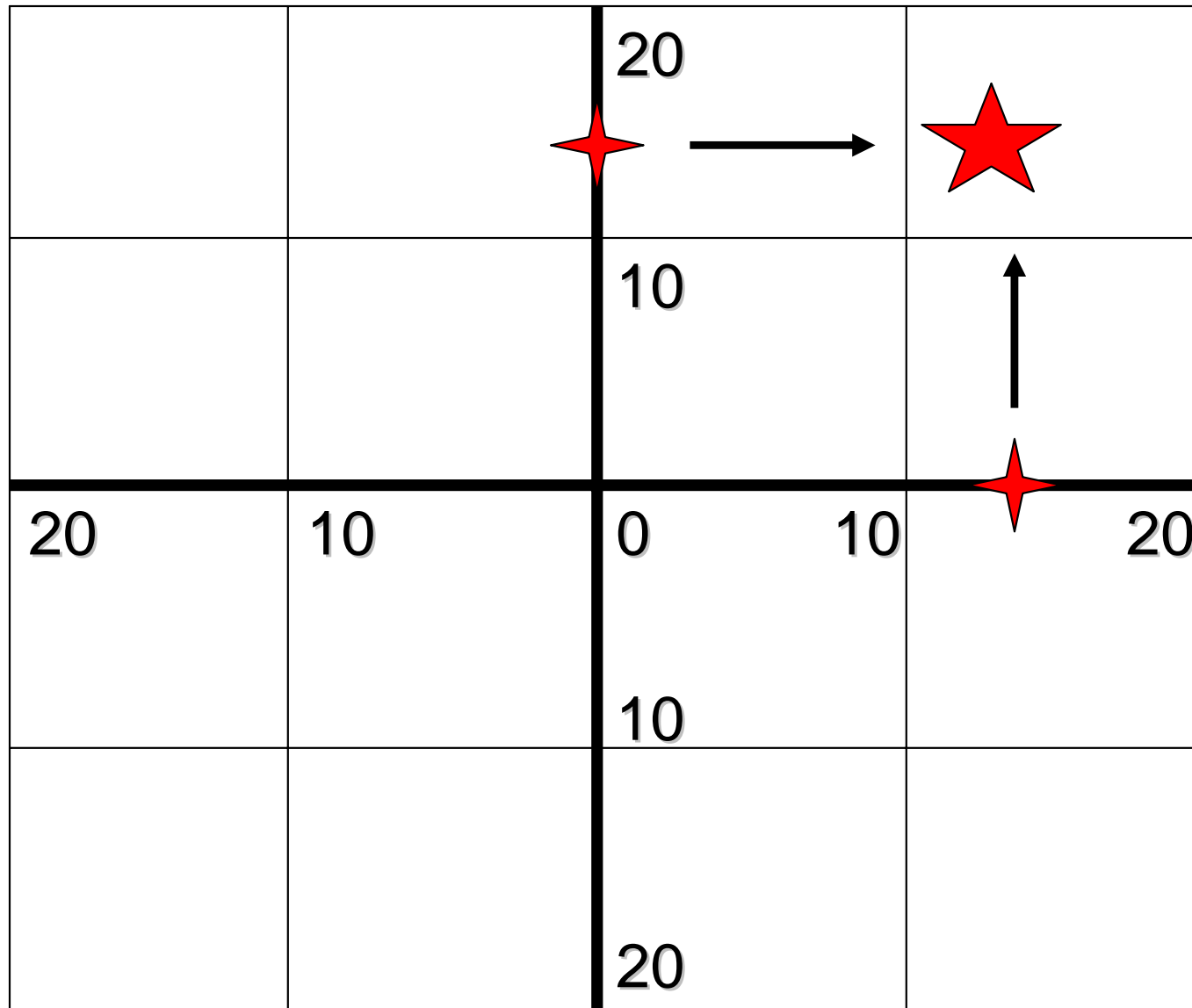
COMMUNICATION PROFILE GRID



COMMUNICATION PROFILE GRID

PEOPLE

A
S
S
E
R
T
I
V
E



C
O
O
P
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V
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TASK



Question #1

List 5-8 words that describe your group's behavior style.

The Nail Game





Observers Report



Behavior Has a Purpose

- Every behavior has an intent or purpose and that intent is to fulfill.
- People do what they do based on what seems to be most important for any given moment.
- Four “general intents” determine how people will behave in any given situation.



Four General Intents

1. Get the job done.
2. Get the job done right.
3. Get along with people.
4. Get appreciation from people.



Styles

Style

Driver

Analytical

Amiable

Expressive

Intent

Get it done

Get it right

Get along

Appreciation

Observation

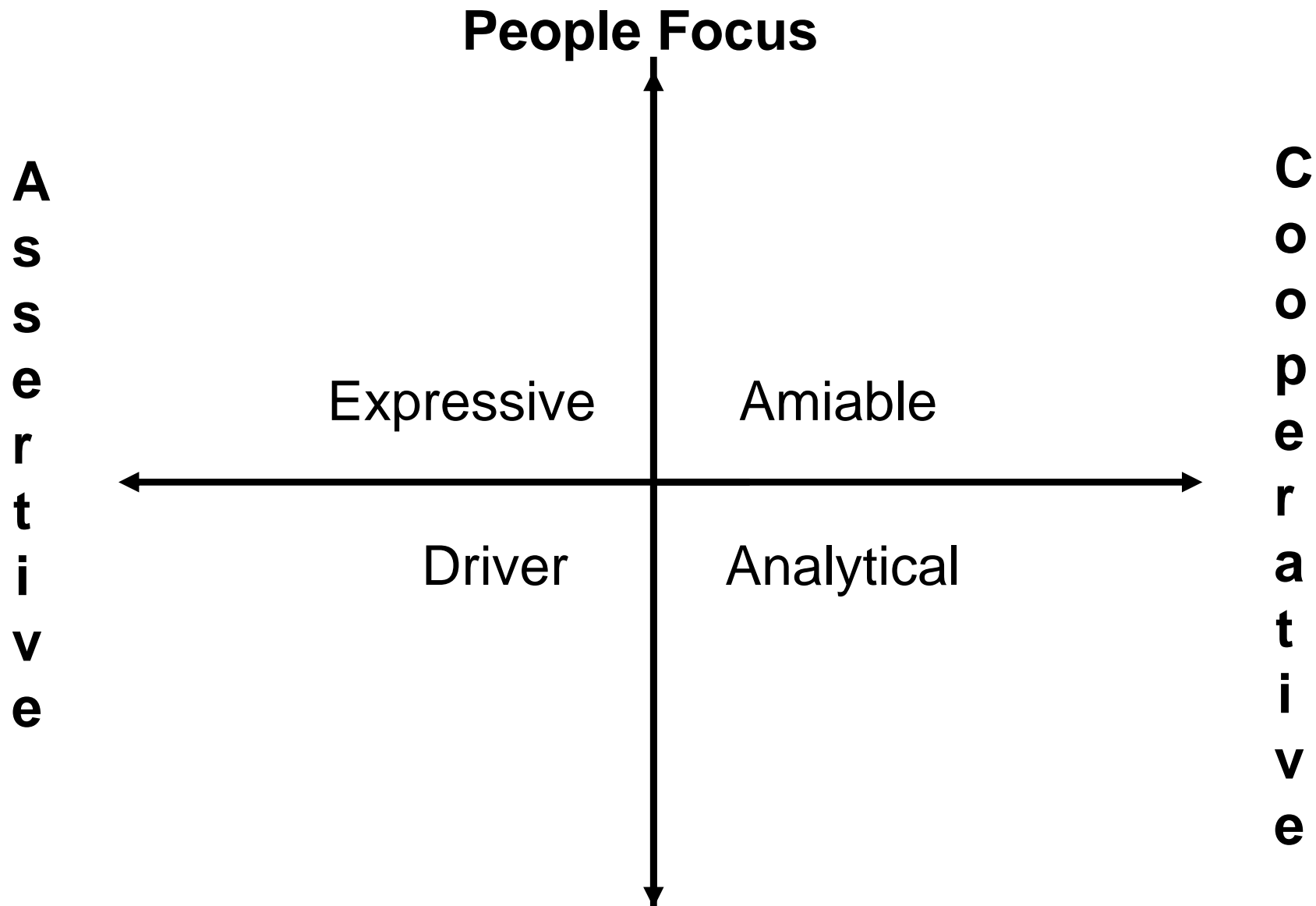
Controlling

Perfectionist

Seeks Approval

Seeks Attention

THE FOUR COMMUNICATION STYLES





Which Style?

“Just do it. What’s next on the agenda?”

(Task/Aggressive - Driver)

“I think I’ll double check your figures.”

(Task/Passive - Analytical)

“Come see the award I won today.”

(People/Aggressive - Expressive)

“Let me help you with your project.”

(People/Passive - Amiable)

**SNIPER
GRENADE
THINK-THEY-
KNOW-IT-ALL**

**People
Focus**

**NOTHING
YES Person
MAYBE Person**

Assertive

Get
Appreciated

Get Along

Normal Zone

Get It Done

Get It Right

Cooperative

**TANK
SNIPER
KNOW-IT-ALL**

Task Focus

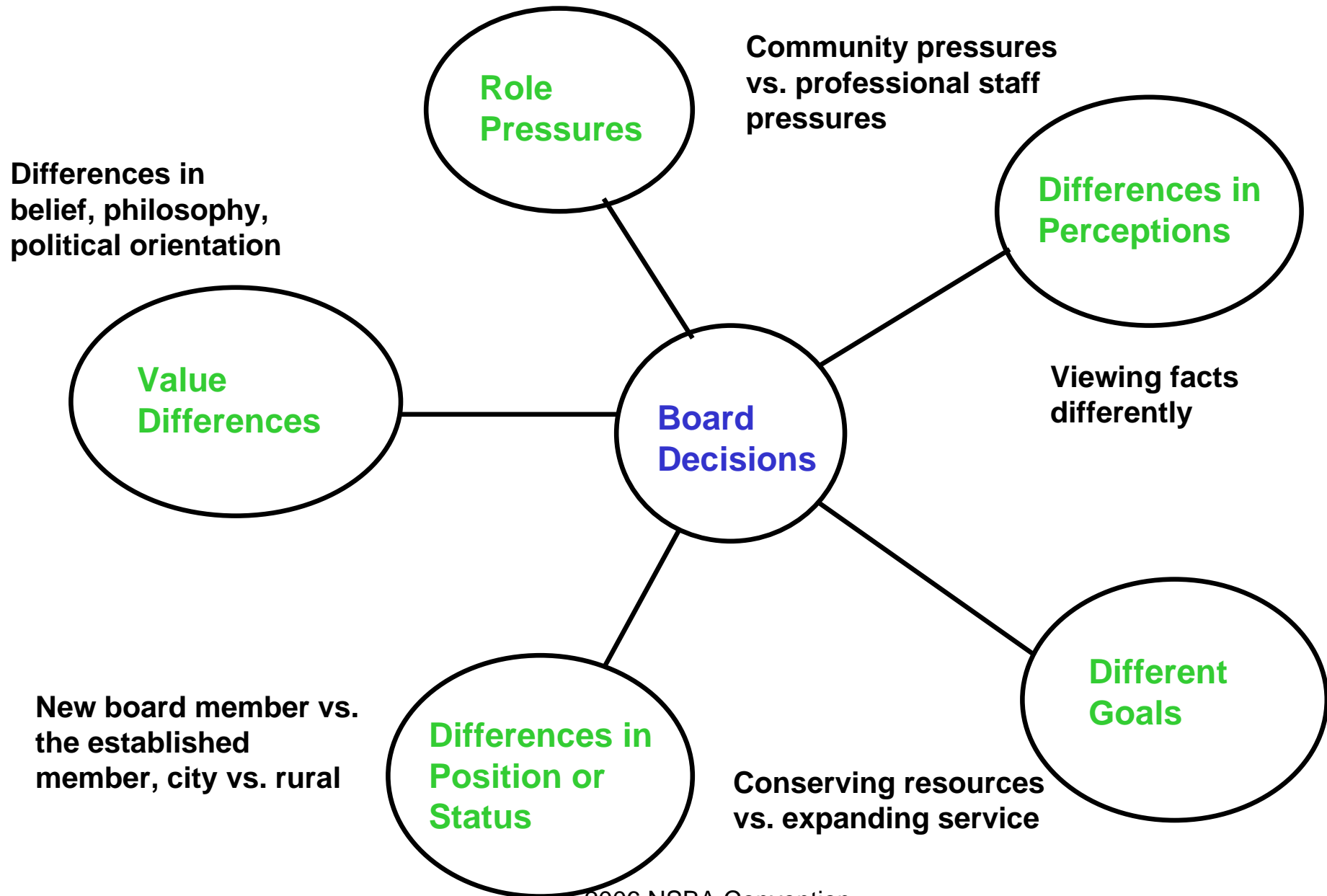
**WHINER
NO Person
NOTHING Person**



Notes

1. All of these intents have a time and place in our lives.
2. One quick indicator of a person's intent is their communication style.
3. When people have shared intent or priorities, conflict is unlikely.
4. As intent changes so does behavior.

Inherent Conflict in Decision Making





Know Your Teammates

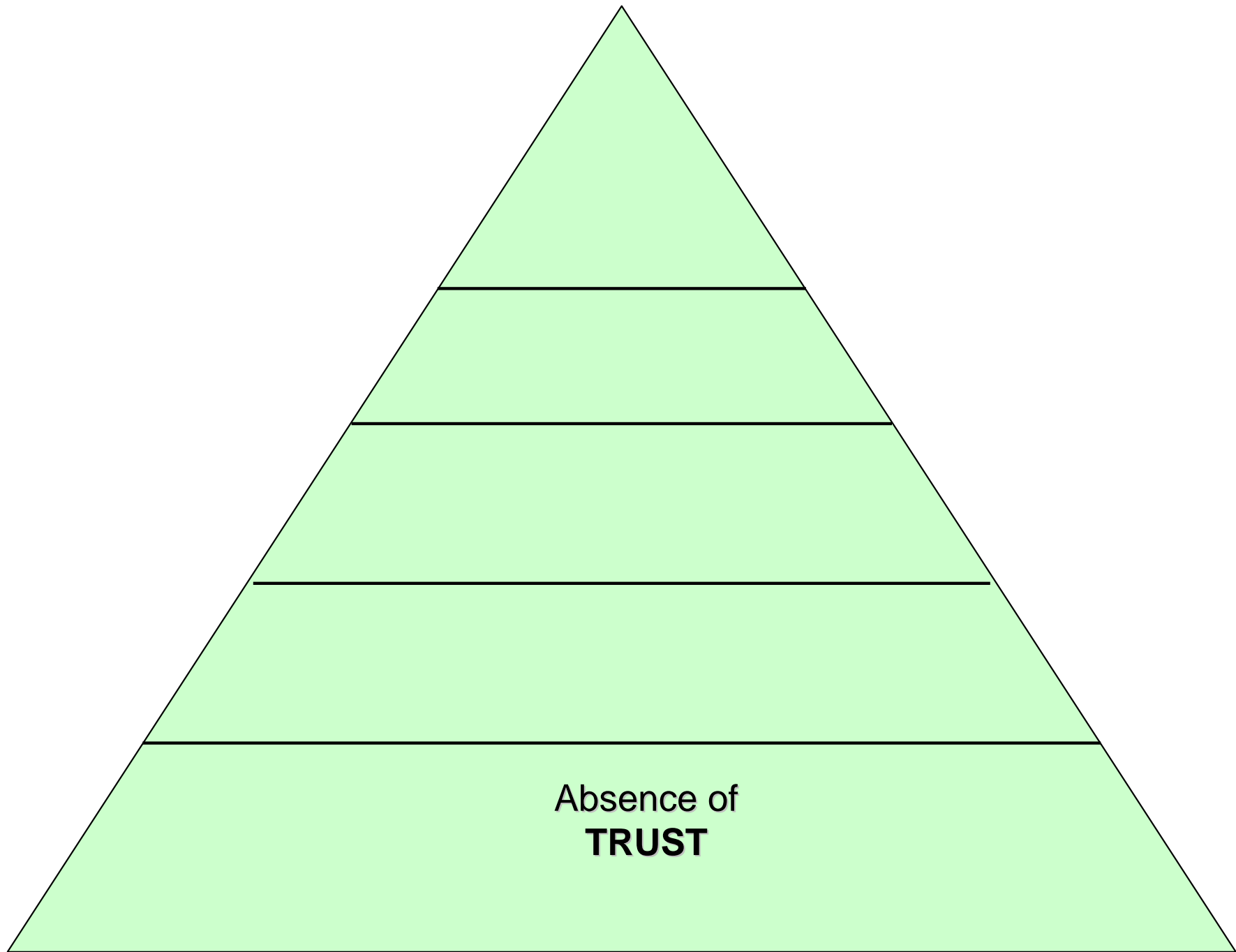
- Not understanding the intent and communication style of team members amplifies the inherent conflicts already complicating board decision-making.
- Not understanding why groups are dysfunctional in part or whole further complicates effective decision-making.



Why Teams Underachieve

The Five Dysfunctions of a Team

-- By Pat Lencioni





Teams with an absence of trust . . .

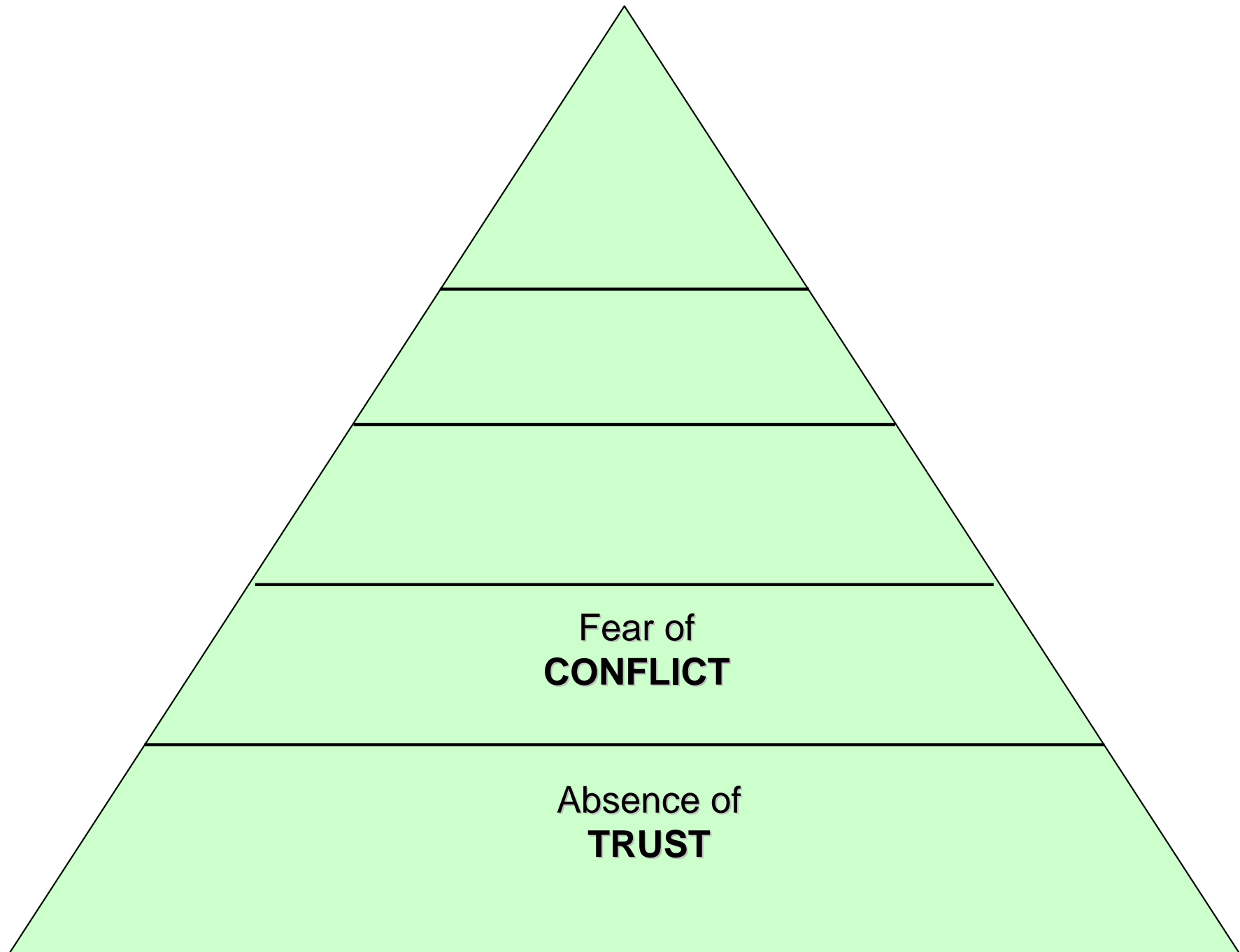
- Conceal weaknesses and mistakes from each other
- Hesitate to ask for help or provide constructive feedback
- Hesitate to offer help outside their own areas of responsibility
- Jump to conclusions about the intentions of others without attempting to clarify them
- Fail to tap into one another's skills and experiences
- Waste time and energy managing their behaviors for effect
- Hold grudges
- Dread meetings and avoid spending time together



Overcoming Lack of Trust

Vulnerability-based trust requires shared experiences over time, multiple instances of follow-through and credibility, and an in-depth understanding of the unique attributes of team members.

- Personal Histories Exercise
- Team Effectiveness Exercise
- Personality and Behavioral Preference Profiles
- Spending social time together





Teams that fear conflict...

- Have boring meetings
- Create environments where back-channel politics and personal attacks thrive
- Ignore controversial topics that are critical to team success
- Fail to tap into all the opinions and perspectives of team members
- Waste time and energy with posturing and interpersonal risk management

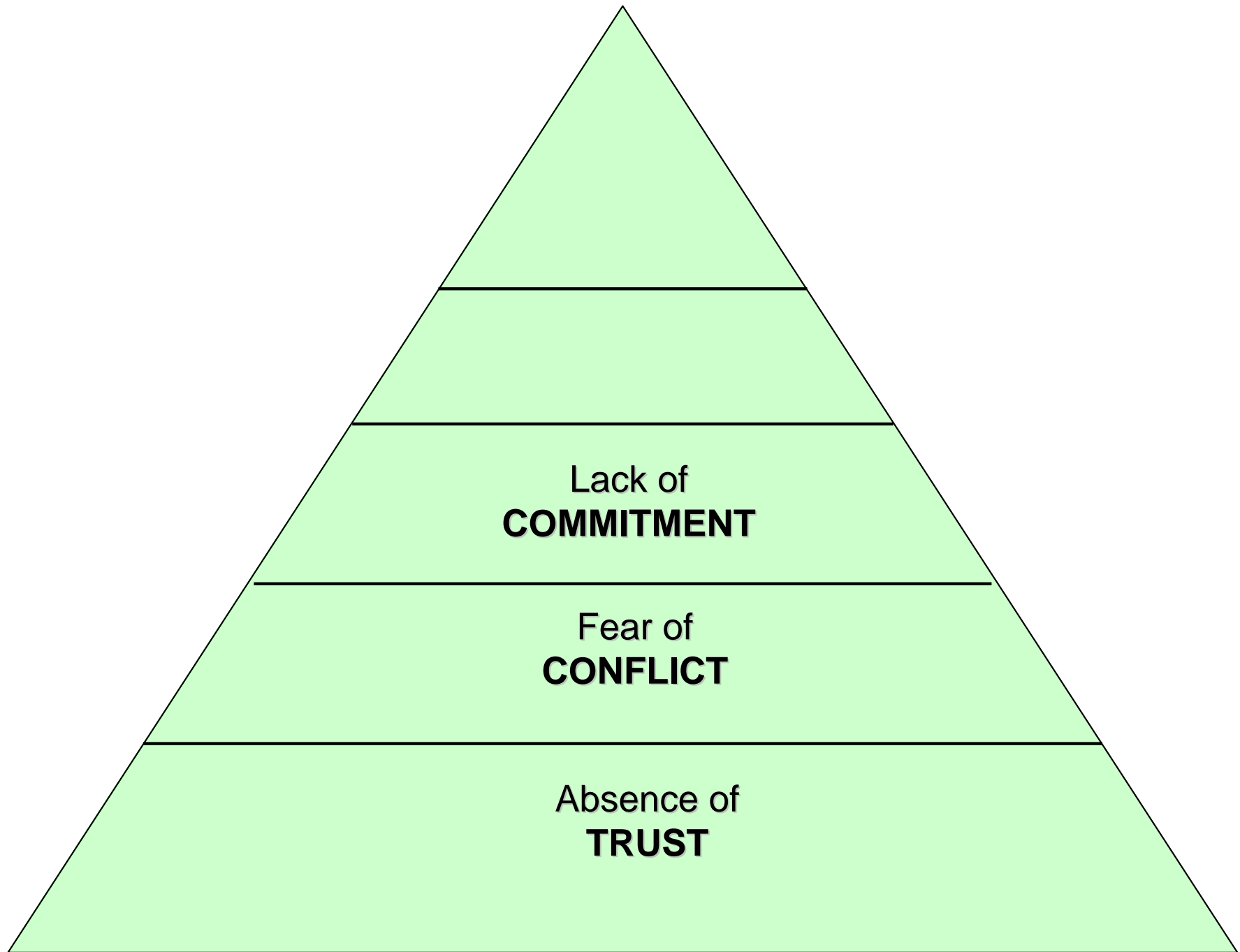


Overcoming Fear of Conflict

The first step is acknowledging that conflict is productive.

- Mining
- Real Time Permission
- Personality Profiling

The second step is always debate “issues” not personalities.





A team that fails to commit...

- Creates ambiguity among the team about direction and priorities
- Watches windows of opportunity close due to excessive analysis and unnecessary delay
- Breeds lack of confidence and fear of failure
- Revisits discussions and decisions again and again
- Encourages second-guessing among team members



Overcoming lack of commitment

- Discuss what needs to be achieved up front
- Clarify the worst-case scenario for a decision you are struggling to make.
- Engage in substantial discussion. The quality of the decision is usually better than expected.
- Review the key decisions made during the meeting, and agree on what needs to be communicated to other constituencies about those decisions.



Involvement vs. Commitment

■ Breakfast Food Analogy

☐ Chicken involved with breakfast

☐ Pig is TOTALLY committed!





A team that avoids accountability...

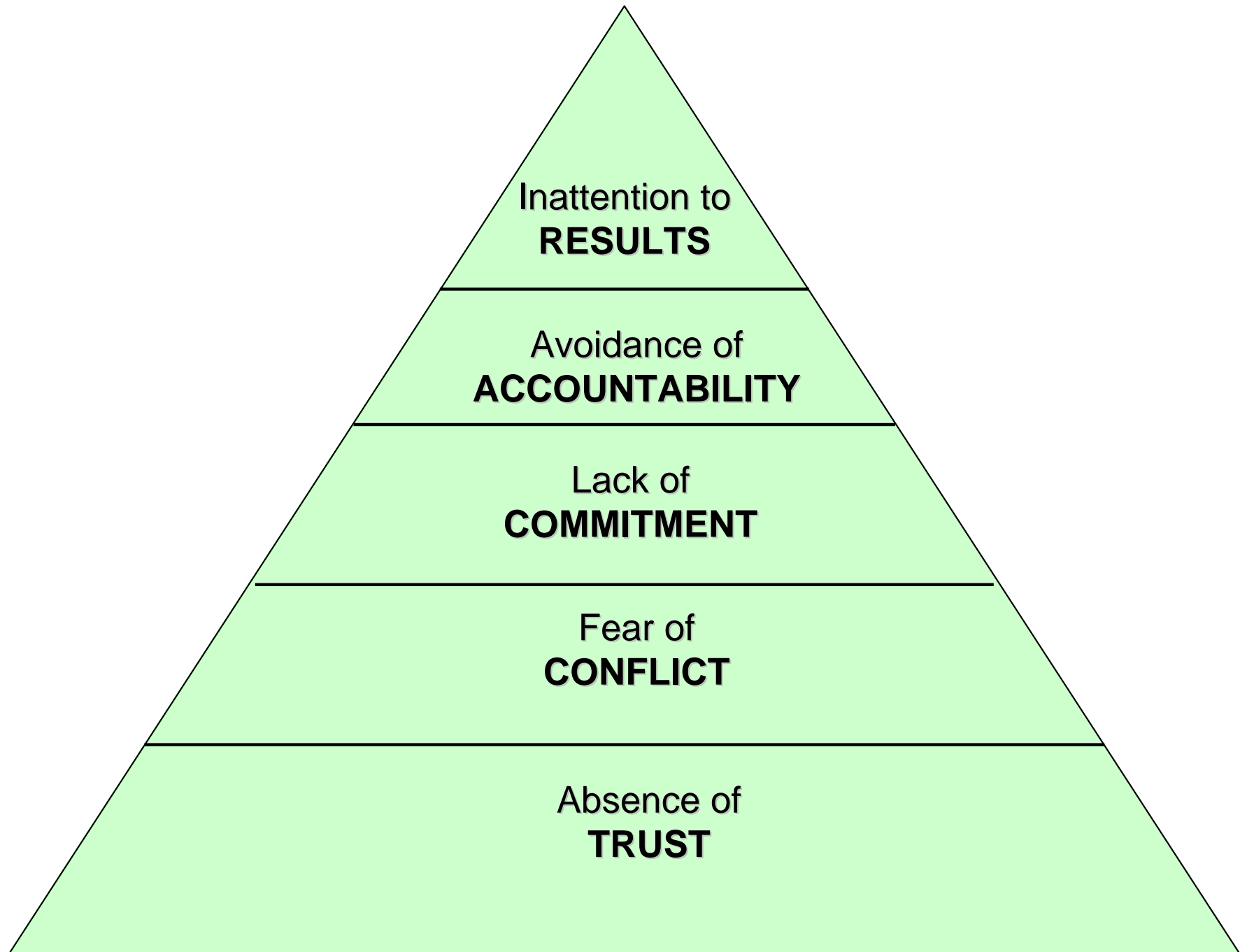
- Creates resentment among team members who have different standards of performance
- Encourages mediocrity
- Misses deadlines and key deliverables
- Places an undue burden on the team leader as the sole source of discipline.



Overcoming Absence of Accountability

The key to overcoming this dysfunction is adhering to a few classic management tools that are as effective as they are simple.

Publication of Goals & Standards - Clarify publicly exactly what the team needs to achieve, who needs to deliver what, and how everyone must behave in order to succeed.





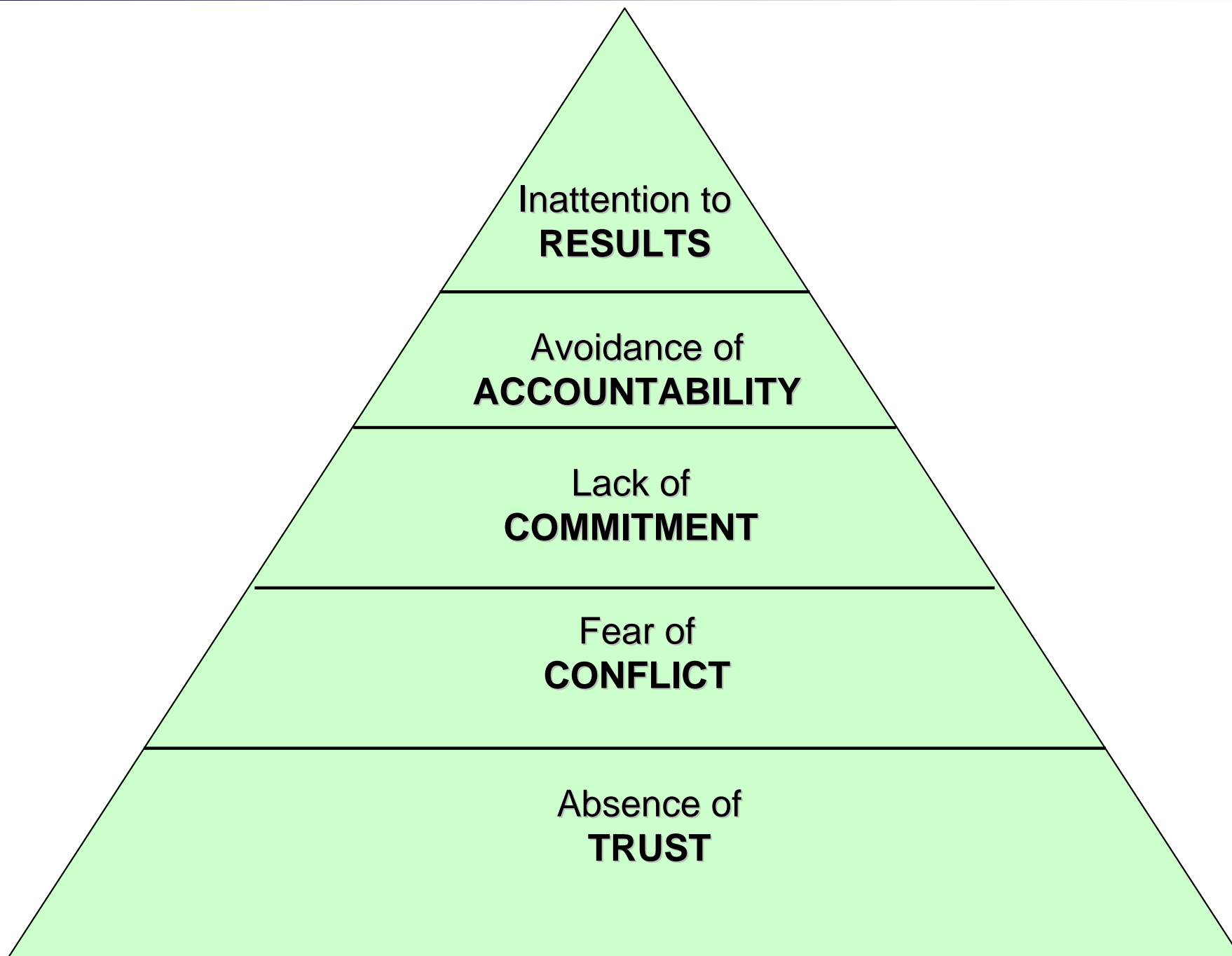
A team that is not focused on results...

- Stagnates or fails to grow
- Loses achievement-oriented employees and team members
- Encourages team members to focus on their own careers and individual goals
- Is easily distracted



Overcoming Inattention to Results

- *Public Declaration of Results* – Committing publicly to specific results is more likely to create a passionate, even desperate desire to achieve those results. Teams whose goal is, “We’ll do our best,” are subtly, if not purposefully, preparing themselves for failure
- *Results-Based Rewards* – Tie the team’s rewards to the achievement of specific outcomes.





Easy Steps

- Just as certainly some people bring out the best in you, some people bring out the worst in you.
- There are effective learnable strategies for building better teamwork and overcoming group dysfunctions.



Listening Skills Exercise

- Divide the group into pairs
- Select one person as the speaker
- Select one person as the listener
- Brief each group separately
- One minute speaking exercise
- Switch Speaker/Listener

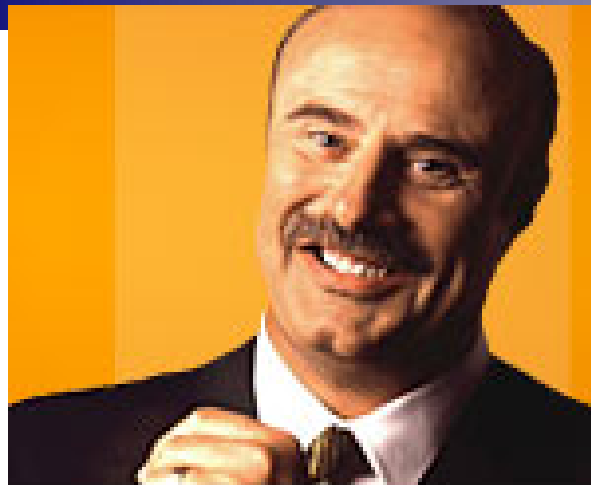


Listening Exercise Debrief

- We communicate our interest while listening by:

Verbal responses

Body language

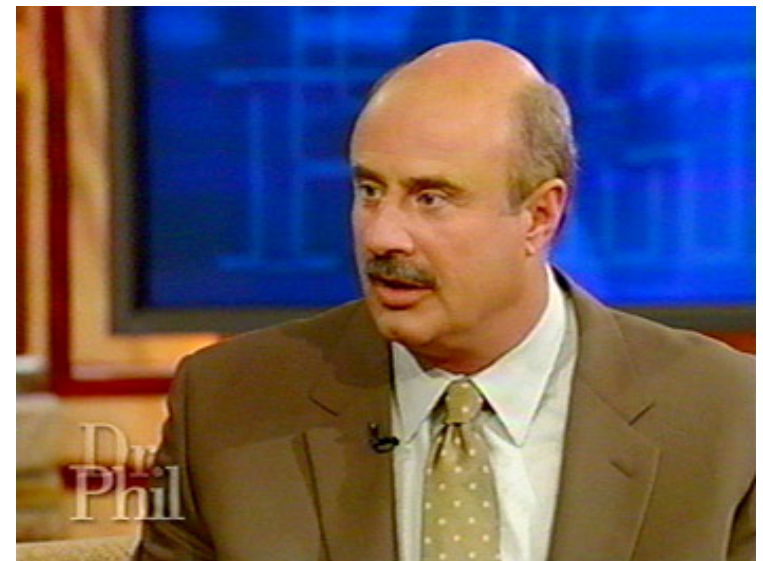
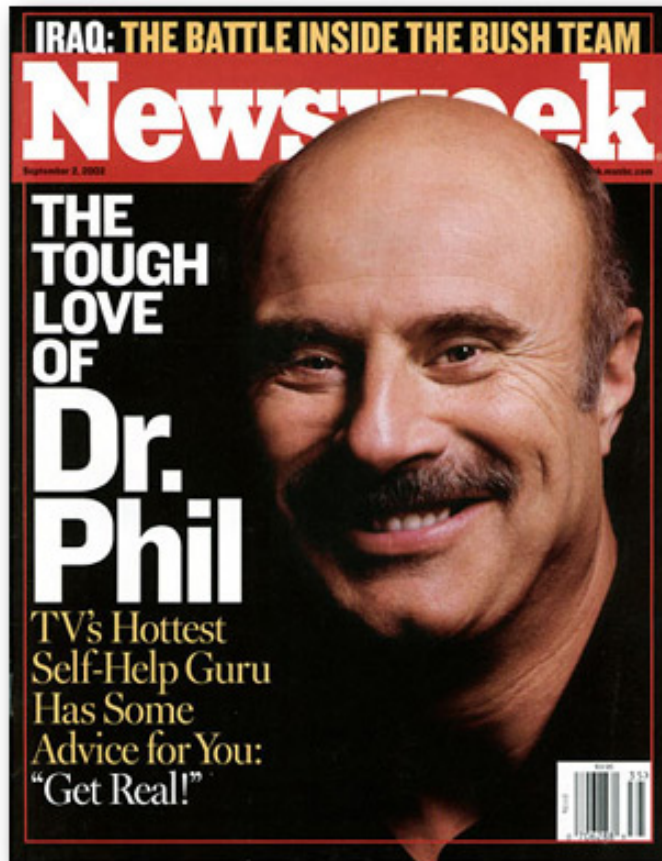


GET REAL
GET SMART
GET GOING

Dr.
Phil

's

Closing Remarks On Resiliency...





Listening Skills

For


- Eye contact
- Focus on points of agreement
- Not judgmental
- Attentive body language
- No interruptions
- Repeat some words of speaker



Listening Skills

Against

- Inattentive body language
- Verbal fillers
- No eye contact
- Distractions
- Kidnap their story
- Constant interruptions




Listening in 3 Channels

VERBAL - Actual words used

VOCAL - Tone, inflection, volume,
speed, tempo, pitch

NON-VERBAL - Body language



Listening in 3 Channels

VERBAL – Actual words used
(7%)

VOCAL - Tone, inflection, volume,
speed, tempo, pitch
(38%)

NON-VERBAL - Body language
(55%)



Blending

- Any behavior by which you reduce the differences between you
- Result is to increase rapport
- Automatic when people share a common vision, care about each other
- No one cooperates with someone who seems to be against them



Blending Strategies

- Mirror each other's body posture, facial expressions and degree of animation
- Blend with the speaker's voice volume and speed (**anger exception**)
- Ask clarifying questions
- Identify what you think the speaker really wants



Blending Strategies

- Listening “for” while the difficult person vents, blows off steam, whines or complains
- Repeat some of the actual words the other person is using
- Summarize what you have heard
- Check for understanding



Redirecting

- Any behavior by which you use the rapport from “blending” to change the direction of the interaction
- “Redirecting” always follows blending whether listening to understand or speaking to be understood



Tips

- We get along better with people when the emphasis is on our similarities
- Success in communication depends on finding common ground
- Reducing differences is vital in dealing with people who cause you difficulty
- When we communicate better – teams function better



Communicate Challenge

Your goal: Communicate to be understood

Action Plan:

1. Monitor your voice's tone, pitch, volume, pace, etc.
2. Be positive about your response
3. Tactfully interrupt
4. Ask clarifying questions
5. Be ready to listen attentively
6. Blend and Redirect



Attitude

Life is 10% what happens to me
and 90% how I react to it!

Attitude

by Charles Swindoll

The longer I live, the more I realize the impact of attitude on life.

**Attitude, to me, is more important than education,
than money, than circumstances, than failures,
than successes, than what other people think, say or do.
It is more important than appearance, giftedness, or skill.
It will make or break a company...a church...a home.**

**The remarkable thing is we have a choice every day
regarding the attitude we will embrace for that day.**

**We cannot change our past...
we cannot change the fact that people will act in a certain way.**

We cannot change the inevitable.

**The only thing we can do is play on the one thing we can control,
and that is our attitude.....**

**I am convinced that life is 10% what happens to me,
and 90% how I react to it.**

And so it is with you...we are in charge of our attitudes.



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