

This item is provided to support UOB courses.

Its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission.

However, users may print, download, or email it for individual use for learning and research purposes only.

هذه الوثيقة متوفرة لمساندة مقرارات الجامعة.

ويمنع منعاً باتاً نسخها في نسخ متعددة أو إرسالها بالبريد الإلكتروني الى قائمة تعميم بدون الحصول على إذن مسبق من صاحب الحق القانوني للملكية الفكرية لكن يمكن للمستفيد أن يطبع أو يحفظ نسخة منها لاستخدام الشخصي لأغراض التعلم والبحث العلمي فقط.



GLOBAL
EDITION

Human Relations

Interpersonal Job-Oriented Skills

TWELFTH EDITION

Andrew J. DuBrin



ALWAYS LEARNING

PEARSON

Helping Others Develop and Grow

Mark Mollenkopf is the president of Cutting Edge Laser Technologies, Inc., in New York State. The company was founded in 2002 with a very simple mission: To help medical professionals integrate technology into their practice to improve the performance of their business, patient care, and client satisfaction. Mollenkopf said:

We started by securing an exclusive distribution agreement for surgical lasers for the North American veterinary medicine market. We got the business started by hiring two people in the office and five as outside sales representatives in large markets across the country. Our focus was on helping veterinarians practice better medicine by using lasers instead of scalpels for their surgeries. We were fortunate to have success early, and to be able to grow the business internally.



LEARNING

Objectives

After reading and studying this chapter and doing the exercises, you will be able to:

1. Understand how being a nurturing, positive person can influence the development of coworkers.
2. Specify the behaviors and skills helpful for being a mentor and role model.
3. Acquire beginning skills in coaching and training.
4. Deal with difficult people on the job.

The best part of my job is being able to see our strategic plans for growth go from the whiteboard to implementation. Over the past eight years, I have been very fortunate to be able to watch many of our employees grow along with the growth of the company. Historically, we have had very little turnover within the company. It has been rewarding to see employees develop and grow to support the business.

The hardest part of my job is ensuring that we have the right people in the right positions with the necessary resources to support our key initiatives. It is people that are behind every successful business, and I have found that continuing to find and develop the human capital within the business is one of the most critical areas for success.^[1]

The comment of the executive whose company provides technology that helps the welfare of animal patients emphasizes how important the growth and development of human workers is for business success. However, the growth and development of workers is not the sole responsibility of managers or training specialists. Companies are placing increasing emphasis on workers training and developing each other. The Great Recession of 2008–2009 gave impetus to this movement as training budgets were slashed.^[2]

This chapter describes the major ways in which employees help each other, and lays the groundwork for skill development in these vital activities. Learning to take the initiative to help others is particularly important because there is a natural tendency for people to be embarrassed or fearful of asking for help. The concern is that the person asking for help will be seen as deficient in some important way. Despite these concerns, a company is at an advantage when workers help each other.^[3]

Among the key helping roles are nurturing others, mentoring, coaching and training, and helping difficult people become more cooperative. A study of how new employees are developed, involving 378 recent graduates, underscores the importance of workers helping each other. Among the findings relevant in the study were that (1) buddying with a coworker was the most helpful developmental method, and (2) the company did not provide enough mentoring despite its importance.^[4]

Do Self-Assessment Quiz 12-1 to gain preliminary insight into your attitudes toward helping others in the workplace.

BEING A NURTURING, POSITIVE PERSON

A major strategy for helping others grow and develop is to be a nourishing, positive person. A **nurturing person** promotes the growth of others. Nurturing people are positive and supportive and typically look for the good qualities in others. A **toxic person** stands in contrast to a nourishing person, because he or she dwells on the negative. Visualize the following scenario to appreciate the difference between a nurturing person and a toxic one.

LEARNING OBJECTIVE 1

nurturing person

One who promotes the growth of others.

toxic person

One who negatively affects others.

Attitudes Toward Helping Others

Directions: Describe how well you agree with the following statements by circling the appropriate letter after each statement: disagree (D), neutral (N), or agree (A).

- | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. If I see a coworker make a mistake, I do not inform him or her of the mistake. | D | N | A |
| 2. It should be part of everybody's job to share skills and ideas with coworkers. | D | N | A |
| 3. The manager should have exclusive responsibility for coaching people within the work unit. | D | N | A |
| 4. I can think of many instances in my life when somebody thanked me for showing him or her how to do something. | D | N | A |
| 5. I have very little patience with coworkers who do not give me their full cooperation. | D | N | A |
| 6. To save time, I will do a task for another person rather than invest the time needed to show him or her how to do it. | D | N | A |
| 7. I would take the initiative to put an inexperienced worker under my wing. | D | N | A |
| 8. As a child, I often took the time to show younger children how to do things. | D | N | A |
| 9. Rather than ask a coworker for help, I will wait until the manager is available to help me. | D | N | A |
| 10. It is best not to share key information with a coworker, because that person could then perform as well as or better than me. | D | N | A |
| 11. "Give a person a fish and he or she will have one meal. Teach that person to fish, and he or she will eat for life." | D | N | A |

Total Score _____

Scoring and Interpretation: Use the following score key to obtain your score for each answer, and then calculate your total score.

- | | | |
|------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. D = 3, N = 2, A = 1 | 5. D = 3, N = 2, A = 1 | 9. D = 3, N = 2, A = 1 |
| 2. D = 1, N = 2, A = 3 | 6. D = 3, N = 2, A = 1 | 10. D = 3, N = 2, A = 1 |
| 3. D = 3, N = 2, A = 1 | 7. D = 1, N = 2, A = 3 | 11. D = 1, N = 2, A = 3 |
| 4. D = 1, N = 2, A = 3 | 8. D = 1, N = 2, A = 3 | |

28-33 You have very positive attitudes toward helping, developing, and training others in the workplace. Such attitudes reflect strong teamwork and a compassion for the growth needs of others.

19-27 You have mixed positive and negative attitudes toward helping, developing, and training others in the workplace. You may need to develop more sensitivity to the growth needs of others to be considered a strong team player.

13-18 You have negative attitudes toward helping, developing, and training others in the workplace. Guard against being so self-centered that it will be held against you. Being a nurturing, positive person is a lifelong process rather than a tactic that can be used at will. Nevertheless, making a conscious attempt to be nurturing and positive can help you develop the right mindset. For example, today you might encourage a coworker or friend who is facing a work or personal problem. Skill-Building Exercise 12-1 provides an opportunity to practice being a positive person.

SKILL BUILDING EXERCISE 12-1

The Nurturing, Positive Person

One student plays the role of Pat, a worker who is experiencing difficulty on the job and in personal life. Pat approaches a coworker during lunch in the company cafeteria and says, "What a day. I just received a rotten performance review. If my work doesn't improve within a month, the company may let me go. To add to my woes, my fiancé has threatened to break off the engagement if I don't get a big raise or a promotion. My hard drive went down, taking with it

my collection of music, videos, and photos. I feel like my whole world is collapsing." The other person plays the role of Leslie, who attempts to be nurturing and positive in order to help get Pat out of the doldrums. Run the role-play for about 10 minutes.

The rest of the class provides feedback on Leslie's skill in being nurturing and helpful. Jot down specific behaviors you think are nurturing and helpful. Also be on the alert for any toxic behaviors.

Randy, a purchasing specialist, enters the office where two coworkers are talking. One person is nurturing, the other is toxic. With a look of panic, Randy says, "I'm sorry to barge in like this, but can anybody help me? I've been working for three hours preparing a spreadsheet on the computer, and it seems to have vanished. Maybe one of you can help me retrieve it."

Margot, the nourishing person, says, "I'm no computer expert, but since I'm not the one who lost the document, I can be calm enough to help. Let's go right now." Ralph, the toxic person, whispers to Margot: "Tell Randy to use the help function. If you help him now, you'll only find him on your doorstep every time he needs help."

If you listen to toxic people long enough, you are likely to feel listless, depressed, and drained. Toxic people have been described as energy vampires because they suck all the positive energy out of you.^[5] Nurturing people, in contrast, are positive, enthusiastic, and supportive. The guideline for skill development here is to engage in thoughts and actions every day that will be interpreted by others as nourishing. Three actions and attitudes that support being a nourishing person are as follows:

1. **Recognize that most people have growth needs.** Almost everybody has a need for self-fulfillment, although people vary widely in the extent of this need. If you recognize this need, it may propel you toward helping people satisfy the need. You might engage in interactions with coworkers, such as sharing new skills with them, forwarding relevant news articles from the Internet, or telling them about an important new Web site you have discovered. You might also tell them about an exciting course you have taken that has enhanced your self-confidence.
2. **Team up with a coworker inside or outside your department so that the two of you can form a buddy system.** The buddy system is used during war combat and with children in a swimming program. You and a friend can use the same system to keep each other informed of decisions and events that could affect your careers. You might nurture your buddy by telling about growth opportunities in the company he or she might not have heard about. Your buddy would reciprocate. One person told her buddy about expanding opportunities for company employees who were fluent in both English and Spanish. The two buddies, who already knew some Spanish, worked together to become fluent.
3. **Be a role model for others.** An indirect way of being a nurturing, positive person is to conduct yourself in such a way that others will model your behavior. By serving as a role model, you help another person develop. How to become a role model for coworkers is as comprehensive a topic as learning to be successful. Among the many factors that make you role model material are a strong work ethic, job expertise, personal warmth, good speaking ability, a professional appearance, and great ethics. Do you qualify yet, or do you need some more work?



“ Help others get ahead. You will always stand taller with someone else on your shoulders. ”

—Bob Moawad, chair and CEO of Edge Learning Institute

LEARNING OBJECTIVE 2

mentor

An individual with advanced experience and knowledge who is committed to giving support and career advice to a less experienced person.

protégé

The less experienced person in a mentoring relationship who is helped by the mentor.

BEING A MENTOR TO COWORKERS

In Homer's tale the *Odyssey*, Mentor was a wise and trusted friend as well as a counselor and adviser. The term *mentor* has become a buzzword in the workplace, as well as in the community. A mentor is an individual with advanced experience and knowledge who is committed to giving support and career advice to a less experienced person. The less experienced person is the protégé (from the French word for "protected"). Here we look at various characteristics of mentoring, followed by behaviors that will be useful to you in mentoring others.

Characteristics and Types of Mentoring

The term *mentoring* is used so widely and in so many contexts that it can refer to almost any type of helping relationship. From a more technically precise perspective, mentoring is characterized as:

- A unique relationship between two people
- A learning partnership that involves emotional and task-related career support
- A reciprocal helping relationship
- A frequently changing relationship between the mentor and the mentored^[6]

A mentor usually outranks the protégé and is often older. For the present purpose, however, be aware that one coworker can be a mentor to another. As long as you are more experienced and wiser than a coworker in some important aspect of the job, you can be a mentor. A person who is not a manager can also be a mentor in another important way. He or she can select an entry-level person in the firm and serve as the inexperienced person's coach and adviser. Even when a person has a high-ranking person as a mentor, you can also be his or her mentor. The reason is that having more than one mentor improves a person's chances for developing job and career skills.^[7]

Mentoring is more important than ever because it supports the modern, team-based organization. Also, after years of downsizing, many organizations have fewer managers available to mentor employees. Coworkers often have to fill this void. More people work together as equals, and they are expected to train and develop each other. Mentoring facilitates such learning and also supports the current emphasis on continuous learning.

Mentoring often takes the form of the mentor and protégé communicating by e-mail, referred to as *virtual* (or *online*) *mentoring*. Many companies have established electronic matching programs that enable employees to receive mentoring from workers who are geographically distant from them. The virtual mentoring can include Web sites for matching mentors and protégés, following the model of online dating sites.^[8]

As the time of corporate professionals and managers has become more scarce, virtual mentoring increases in practicality. Also, online mentoring gives the protégé an opportunity to be mentored by a geographically distant mentor, overseas as well. The person being mentored might send a quick e-mail, instant message, or text message to the mentor explaining that he just received an outstanding performance review. The mentor might reply back with an encouraging message. When asked about a problem facing the protégé, the mentor might reply with advice quickly. Answers by the mentor within 48 hours are recommended to communicate an attitude of concern.^[9]

Mentoring coworkers can take place in one of two ways. With informal mentoring, the mentor and protégé come together naturally, in the same way that friendships develop. The formal approach is for the company to assign you somebody to mentor. Several studies have shown that mentoring is likely to be more effective when both the mentor and protégé have some input into the matching.^[10] Measures of mentoring effectiveness include rate of promotions, salary increases, and job satisfaction. Being mentored is also a career-advancement tactic, and will be discussed in Chapter 17.

Serving as a mentor is an excellent way of helping others on the job. Mentoring is also widely practiced off the job. Many communities have developed programs whereby working adults volunteer to serve as mentors to youths. Mentoring in these programs is designed to help the adolescents and teenagers succeed at school and avoid a life of crime and substance abuse.

Specific Mentoring Behaviors

To be a mentor, a person engages in a wide range of helping behaviors, all related to being a trusted friend, coach, and teacher. To prepare you for mentoring a less experienced person, a list of specific mentoring behaviors follows:^[11]

- **Sponsoring.** A mentor actively nominates somebody else for promotions and desirable positions. In some situations, one person is asked to nominate a coworker for a promotion to supervisor or team leader or for a special assignment.

- **Coaching.** A mentor gives on-the-spot advice to the protégé to help him or her improve skills. Coaching is such an important part of helping others that it receives separate mention in this chapter.
- **Protecting.** A mentor might shield a junior person from potentially harmful situations or from the boss. For example, the mentor might tell her protégé, "In your meeting today with the boss, make sure you are well prepared and have all your facts at hand. He is in an ugly mood and will attack any weakness."
- **Sharing challenging assignments.** One member of the team does not ordinarily give assignments to another, yet in some situations you can request that your protégé help you with a difficult task. You would then offer feedback on your protégé's performance. The purpose of these high demands is to help the protégé develop more quickly than if he or she were brought along too slowly.
- **Acting as a referral agent.** The mentor sometimes refers the protégé to resources inside and outside the company to help with a particular problem. For example, the protégé might want to know how one goes about getting the employee benefits package modified.
- **Role modeling.** An important part of being a mentor is to give the protégé a pattern of values and behaviors to emulate. Several of the specific behaviors included under being a role model were described earlier in connection with being a positive, nurturing person.
- **Giving support and encouragement.** A mentor can be helpful just by giving support and encouragement. In turn, the protégé is supposed to support the mentor by offering compliments and defending the mentor's ideas. In a team meeting, for example, the protégé might make a statement, such as "I think John's ideas will work wonders. We should give them a try."
- **Counseling.** A mentor listens to the protégé's problems and offers advice. Given that counseling plays such a central role in helping others, it also receives separate mention in this chapter.
- **Providing friendship.** A mentor is, above all, a trusted friend, and the friendship extends two ways. "Trusted" means that the mentor will not pass on confidential information or stab you in the back. (It is also possible to mentor someone who is not a friend, providing that person is interested primarily in learning business or technical skills from you.)
- **Encouraging problem solving.** Mentors help their protégés solve problems by themselves and make their own discoveries. A comment frequently made to mentors is "I'm glad you made me think through the problem. You triggered my thinking."
- **Explaining the ropes.** A general-purpose function of the mentor is to help the protégé learn the ropes, which translates into explaining the values and do's and don'ts of the organization.
- **Teaching the right skills.** The original role of the mentor in teaching skills (such as a master teaching an apprentice) is highly relevant today. Among the many skills a mentor can help the protégé develop are those dealing with communication technology, customer service, corporate finance, achieving high quality, and thinking strategically.
- **Encouraging of continuous learning.** A major role for the modern mentor is to encourage the protégé to keep learning. Part of encouraging lifelong learning is to emphasize that formal education and an occasional workshop are not sufficient for maintaining expertise in today's fast-changing workplace. The individual has to stay abreast of new developments through courses and self-study. A specific way in which the mentor can encourage continuous learning is to ask the protégé questions about new developments in the field.

As implied by the preceding list, mentoring is a complex activity that involves a variety of helping behaviors. To develop mentoring skills, you need to offer help to several people for at least six months. Skill-Building Exercise 12-1 is a good starting point in

SKILL-BUILDING EXERCISE 12-2

Getting Started Mentoring

If you choose to do this skill-building exercise, it will take time outside of class, and the exercise could turn into an ongoing activity. Successful mentoring requires experience, and all mentors need to start somewhere. The task is to find somebody to mentor, and then become his or her mentor. For starters, it is usually easier to find a protégé among people younger, and less experienced than you in some domain, such as math, communication technology, reading, or a sport. A source of a protégé might be a community center, a park and recreational center, a school, a church, or a temple. It is conceivable that you could find a source of people wanting mentoring in your community through an Internet search engine.

Identify the ways in which you might be able to function as a mentor, such as imparting knowledge, providing emotional support, or being a Big Brother or Big Sister. Be prepared to being subjected to a background check before being selected as a mentor.

After finding a protégé, keep a diary of your activities, including any observations about how your protégé is being helped. Identify mentoring roles that you have carried out. Record also how you are enjoying the experience. An example, "Today I was mostly a friend to Teddy. He was bummed out because the coach gave him only two minutes of playing time in Friday night's game. He was also complaining that he was the only kid on the team without an iPod. I listened carefully, and then explained that patience in life is important. Teddy felt a little better and smiled. I felt wonderful for having been helpful."

Observe also any mentoring skills you need to work on to become more effective as a mentor. Also evaluate whether the mentoring appears to be having a positive impact on the life of your protégé.

SKILL-BUILDING EXERCISE 12-3

Selecting a Protégé

To be a successful mentor, it is necessary to select protégés who will respond well to your advice and coaching. Since the mentor-protégé relationship is personal, much like any friendship, you must choose protégés carefully. In about 50 words (in the space provided), describe the type of person you would like for a protégé. Include cognitive, personality, and demographic factors in your description (refer to Chapter 2 for ideas).

Indicate why you think the characteristics you chose are important.

My Ideal Protégé

As many class members as time allows can present their descriptions to the rest of the class. Look for agreement on characteristics of an ideal protégé.

mentoring. In preparation for more advanced mentoring, it is helpful to think of the type of person you would prefer to have as a protégé. Skill-Building Exercise 12-2 is designed to help you think through this issue. Be prepared for a potential protégé seeking you out because many people serious about advancing their careers search for potential mentors with whom they have rapport. Similarly, if you are looking for a mentor, take the initiative to establish contact with someone you like and whom you think could help you.

Mentoring is designed to help another individual grow and develop; yet, mentoring can also help your employer at the same time. A key way in which the company benefits from coworker mentoring is that the mentor passes along, or transfers, valuable knowledge to the protégé.^[12] For example, the mentor might share with the protégé a few good tricks for collecting money from a delinquent debtor. Workers who receive mentoring are likely to feel more satisfied about their jobs and stay with the organization longer. A study of more than 1,300 U.S. Army officers showed that officers who were mentored felt more emotionally committed to the Army than did their nonmentored counterparts. Furthermore, mentored officers felt more likely to stay in the Army, and were less likely to leave the military voluntarily.^[13]

As business has become highly internationalized, mentoring people from different cultures has become more frequent. In general, to engage in cross-cultural mentoring effectively, you need to follow the principles described in Chapter 8 about cross-cultural relations.

COACHING AND TRAINING OTHERS

LEARNING OBJECTIVE 3

Two direct approaches to helping others in the workplace are coaching and training. In the traditional organization, managers have most of the responsibility for coaching and training, with some assistance from the human resources department. In the new workplace,

team members share responsibility for coaching and training. High-tech companies, such as Google and Microsoft, heavily emphasize workers sharing knowledge with each other. Open workspaces, including the presence of whiteboards, are used to facilitate workers exchanging ideas and passing along information. Although coaching and training are described separately in the following subsections, recognize that the two processes are closely related.

Coaching Skills and Techniques

Most readers probably have some experience in coaching whether or not the activity was given a formal label. If you have helped somebody improve his or her performance on the job, on the athletic field, in a musical band, or on the dance floor, you have some coaching experience. In the workplace, coaching is a method of helping workers grow and improve their job competence by providing suggestions and encouragement. The suggestions for coaching are generally easier to implement if you have formal authority over the person being coached. Nevertheless, with a positive, helpful attitude on your part, coworkers are likely to accept coaching from you.



Ideal Characteristics of Peer Coaching. Considerable workplace coaching is performed by professional coaches who specialize in helping managers improve their interpersonal skills.^[14] Our focus here is coaching by workers themselves rather than by paid professionals. Peer coaching is a type of helping relationship based on qualities, such as high acceptance of the other person, authenticity, mutual trust, and mutual learning. According to researchers Polly Parker, Douglas T. Hall, and Kathy E. Kram, peer coaching has five critical qualities, to be described next. These qualities, however, tend toward being an ideal state and we cannot realistically expect all peer coaching to attain this high status.

coaching

A method of helping workers grow and develop and improve their job competence by providing suggestions and encouragement.

peer coaching

A type of helping relationship based on qualities, such as high acceptance of the other person, authenticity, mutual trust, and mutual learning.

1. **Equal status of peers.** The equal status of peers eliminates the power relationships found in many other relationships, such as superior-subordinate relationship. Peers are able to plan and initiate their learning opportunities and work toward a shared goal of mutual learning.
2. **Personal and professional development of both peers.** Peers strive to obtain an in-depth understanding of the subjective experiences, including the worldview of the other peer. Each person attempts to make sense of the other person's worldview. Each participant chooses issues of personal interest to express and explore.
3. **Integration of reflection and practice.** Effective peer coaching requires personal reflection on one's own actions and behaviors. Through reflection, the peer coach builds awareness of cognitive, emotional, and spiritual dimensions of himself or herself.
4. **Importance of attention to process.** Peer coaching provides a medium for peers to learn a process for how to do a better job of attending to other people. The focus is on understanding the self and other people rather than acquiring content or facts.
5. **Accelerating career learning.** Peer counseling helps people learn rapidly and continually, which helps them succeed in the modern world.^[15]

We emphasize again that these characteristics of a peer coach are ideals to strive for. You can still be an effective peer coach by learning the coaching skills and techniques described next without attaining all the five characteristics described above.

Suggestions for Coaching. Coaching other employees requires skill. One way of acquiring this skill is to study basic principles and then practice them on the job. Another way is to coach under simulated conditions, such as role-playing and modeling an effective coach. Here are 11 suggestions for effective coaching, as outlined in Figure 12-1. For the best results, combine them with the suggestions for effective listening presented in Chapter 4.

1. **Build relationships.** A starting point in being an effective coach is to build relationships with coworkers before coaching them. Having established rapport with coworkers or subordinates facilitates entering into coaching relationships with them. The

FIGURE 12-1 Coaching Skills and Techniques

1. Build relationships.
2. Provide specific feedback.
3. Make criticism pain-free and positive.
4. Encourage the person you are coaching to talk.
5. Ask powerful questions.
6. Give emotional support.
7. Give some constructive advice.
8. Coach with "could," not "should."
9. Interpret what is happening.
10. Allow for modeling of the desired performance and behaviors.
11. Applaud good results.

suggestions below about giving encouragement and support are part of relationship building. Another vital aspect of relationship building is to be trusted by the people you coach.^[16] For example, the person being coached has to believe that the coach is trying to help rather than undermine him or her.

2. **Provide specific feedback.** Instead of making generalities about an improvement area for another person, pinpoint areas of concern. A generality might be, "You just don't seem as if you're interested in this job." A specific on the same problem might be, "You neglect to call in on days that you are going to be out ill. In this way, you are letting down the team." Sometimes it can be effective to make a generalization (such as not being "interested in the job") after you first produce several concrete examples. Closely related to minimizing generalizations is to avoid exaggerating, for example, by saying such things as, "You are always letting down the team." Specific feedback is sometimes referred to as **behavioral feedback** because it pinpoints behavior rather than personal characteristics or attitudes. "Neglecting to call in" pinpoints behavior, whereas "not into the job" focuses more on an attitude.

behavioral feedback

Information given to another person that pinpoints behavior rather than personal characteristics or attitudes.

3. **Make criticism pain-free and positive.** To be an effective coach, you will inevitably have to point out something negative the person you coach has done, or is planning to do. It is helpful to come right to the point about your criticism, such as "In our department meeting this morning, you acted so angry and hostile that you alienated the rest of the group. I know that you are generally a positive person, so I was surprised. My recommendation is that you keep your bad days to yourself when in a meeting." The positive aspect is important because you want to maintain good communications with the person you coach, whether you are the person's supervisor or coworker.^[17]

4. **Encourage the person you are coaching to talk.** Part of being a good listener is encouraging the person being coached to talk. Ask the person you are coaching open-ended questions. Closed questions do not provide the same opportunity for self-expression, and they often elicit short, uninformative answers. Assume that you are coaching a coworker on how to use the intranet system properly. An effective open-ended question might be, "Where are you having the biggest problems using our intranet?" A closed question covering the same topic might be, "Do you understand how to use the intranet?" The latter question would not provide good clues to specific problem areas faced by your coworker. A useful technique is to begin each coaching session with a question to spark the other person's thinking.^[18] An example is to ask, "What new ideas do you have for decreasing turnover among our teenage cashiers?"

5. **Ask powerful questions.** A major role for the coach is to ask *powerful* or *tough* questions that help the protégé think through the strengths and weaknesses of what he or

she is doing or thinking. The powerful question is confrontational in a helpful way. The person being coached might be thinking of selling management on a program of distributing free ginkgo baloba (a food supplement believed to stimulate mental energy) to every employee to enhance productive thinking. Your powerful question might be, "What kind of figures are you going to use to support your expensive idea?"

6. Give emotional support. By being helpful and constructive, you provide much-needed emotional support to the person who needs help in improving job performance. A coaching session should not be an interrogation. An effective way of providing emotional support is to use positive rather than negative motivators. For example, as a team leader you might say to a team member, "If you learn how to analyze manufacturing costs, you will be eligible for an outstanding performance review." A negative motivator on the same topic might be, "If you don't learn how to analyze manufacturing costs, you're going to get zapped on your performance review."

Workers who are performing well can also profit from praise and encouragement, often so they can perform even better. Also, even the best performers have flaws that might be preventing them from elevating their performance.^[19] As a team leader or coworker, you can therefore make a contribution by giving emotional support to a star performer.

7. Give some constructive advice. Too much advice-giving interferes with two-way communication, yet some advice can lead to improved performance. Assist the person being coached to answer the question, "What can I do about the problem?" Advice in the form of a question or suppositional statement is often effective. One example is, "Could the root of your problem be that you have not studied the user manual?"

8. Coach with "could," not "should." When instructing somebody else to improve, tell the person he or she *could* do something rather than he or she *should* do it. *Should* implies the person is doing something morally wrong, such as "You should recycle the empty laser cartridges." *Could* leaves the person with a choice to make: to accept or reject your input and weigh the consequences.^[20]

9. Interpret what is happening. An interpretation given by the person doing the coaching is an explanation of why the person being coached is acting in a particular manner. The interpretation is designed to give the person being coached insight into the nature of the problem. For instance, a food service manager might be listening to the problems of a cafeteria manager with regard to cafeteria cleanliness. After a while the food service manager might say, "You're angry and upset with your employees because they don't keep a careful eye on cleanliness. So you avoid dealing with them, and it only makes problems worse." If the manager's diagnosis is correct, an interpretation can be extremely helpful.

10. Allow for modeling of the desired performance and behaviors. An effective coaching technique is to show the person being coached an example of what constitutes the desired behavior. A customer service representative was harsh with customers when facing heavy pressure. One way the supervisor coached the service representative was by taking over the manager's desk during a busy period. The representative then watched the supervisor deal tactfully with demanding customers.

11. Applaud good results. Effective coaches on the playing field and in the workplace are cheerleaders. They give positive reinforcement by applauding desired results. Some effective coaches shout in joy when the person coached achieves outstanding results; others give high-fives or clap their hands in applause.^[21]

Many people are concerned that if they offer too much coaching and feedback to others, they will be perceived as interfering with their work, or being a *micromanager*. In reality, the majority of workers believe that they do not receive enough coaching and guidance on the job. RainmakerThinking Inc. has conducted long-term research suggesting that the undermanaged worker struggles because his or her supervisor is not sufficiently engaged to provide the needed direction and support.^[22]

One implication of the coaching suggestions just presented is that some people are more adept at coaching than others. Self-Assessment Quiz 12-2 provides insight into the

Characteristics of an Effective Coach

Directions: Following is a list of traits, attitudes, and behaviors of effective coaches. Indicate under each trait, attitude, or behavior whether you need to improve on it (e.g., "Yes, patience toward people"). Then in the right column, prepare an action plan for improving each trait, attitude, or behavior that you need to develop. Sample action plans are provided.

<i>Trait, attitude, or behavior</i>	<i>Action plan for improvement</i>
Empathy	<i>Sample:</i> Will listen until I understand the person's point of view. <i>Your own:</i>
Listening skill	<i>Sample:</i> Will concentrate extra hard to listen. <i>Your own:</i>
Ability to size up people	<i>Sample:</i> Will jot down observations about people upon first meeting, then verify in the future. <i>Your own:</i>
Diplomacy and tact	<i>Sample:</i> Will study a book of etiquette. <i>Your own:</i>
Patience toward people	<i>Sample:</i> Will practice staying calm when someone makes a mistake. <i>Your own:</i>
Concern for welfare	<i>Sample:</i> When interacting with another person, will ask self, of others, "How can this person's interests best be served?" <i>Your own:</i>
Self-confidence	<i>Sample:</i> Will attempt to have at least one personal success each week. <i>Your own:</i>
Noncompetitiveness	<i>Sample:</i> Will keep reminding myself that all boats with team members rise with the same tide. <i>Your own:</i>
Enthusiasm for people	<i>Sample:</i> Will search for the good in each person. <i>Your own:</i>
Work on my personal development thereby leading by example	<i>Sample:</i> Overcome projecting the attitude that people who disagree with me are really stupid. <i>Your own:</i>
Develops trust and respect ^[23]	<i>Sample:</i> Consistently tells the truth to people. <i>Your own:</i>

right stuff for being an effective coach. After doing that exercise and reading the suggestions, you will be prepared for Skill-Building Exercise 12-4 about coaching.

Training Others

A direct way of helping others in the workplace is to train them. Training is the process of helping others acquire a job-related skill. The emphasis on continuous learning by employees to keep up with changes in technology and work methods has helped elevate the importance of on-the-job training.^[24] Another training opportunity for some workers is to assist in the remedial learning of lesser-skilled employees. According to a Conference Board report, nearly half of 217 employers surveyed indicated that they provide remedial training to strengthen employees' writing, math, and problem-solving deficiencies.^[25] Even

training

The process of helping others acquire a job-related skill.

Coaching a Mediocre Performer Role-Play

Visualize a busy sports medicine clinic, and you are the chief administrator. You recognize that many of your patients urgently need the medical help your clinic offers because they have been injured substantially while participating in sports. Yet, a good proportion of your patients are visiting the clinic for rehabilitation exercises that they can do on their own or learn from downloaded videos. As a consequence, being pleasant and hospitable is a requirement for all staff members, physicians, physical therapists, and support personnel alike. You want to keep your practice thriving through the rehabilitation patients.

One of your intake specialists, Tanya, goes about her work in a bland, mechanical manner. She makes relatively few errors in processing patient information, but she expresses very little warmth and appreciation toward patients. You have frequently observed

patients appearing perplexed and displeased when Tanya deals with them. You have decided to get started coaching Tanya this afternoon toward becoming a warmer, more cheerful intake specialist.

One student plays the role of the chief administrator, and one student plays the role of Tanya who has not clue as to why you want to coach her. To your knowledge, you are a thoroughly professional sports medicine intake specialist.

For both scenarios, observers rate the role players on two dimensions, using a 1-to-5 scale from very poor to very good. One dimension is "effective use of coaching techniques" (for the chief administrator). The second dimension is "acting ability." A few observers might voluntarily provide feedback to the role players in terms of sharing their ratings and observations. The course instructor might also provide feedback.

if employees lacking basic skills do receive classroom instruction, they may still need the assistance from workers at a higher skill level.

Supervisors and trainers are responsible for much of the training in organizations. Yet as mentioned at the outset of the chapter, to save money more responsibility to training has shifted to workers themselves. Also, as organizations operate with fewer managers, coworkers have more responsibility to train each other.

While training others, keep in mind certain time-tested principles that facilitate learning—and therefore training. Applying these principles consistently will increase the chances that the people you are training will acquire new skills. A considerable amount of training has shifted to e-learning (also referred to as distance learning and online learning), especially for acquiring cognitive knowledge and skills.^[26] Traditional training principles apply to e-learning, and you will still have opportunities to help the trainee. Many e-learners still need to ask a coworker a question, such as "I've been studying the metric system, and I can figure out how to convert Celsius to Fahrenheit, but I'm still having trouble going in the opposite direction. I'm doing something wrong. Can you help?" Then training principles are as follows:

1. **Encourage concentration.** Not much learning takes place unless the trainee concentrates carefully on what is being learned. Concentration improves the ability to do both mental and physical tasks. In short, encourage the person you are training to concentrate.
2. **Use motivated interest.** People learn best when they are interested in the problem facing them. Explain to the trainee how the skill being taught will enhance his or her value as an employee, or relate the skill to the person's professional goals. Trainees can be encouraged to look for some relationship between the information at hand and their personal welfare. With this relationship in mind, the person will have a stronger intention to learn.
3. **Remind learners to intend to remember.** We often fail to remember something because we do not intend to commit it to memory. Many executives are particularly effective at remembering the names of employees and customers. When one executive was asked how she could commit so many names to memory, she replied, "I look at the person, listen to the name, and try hard to remember." An example of reminding a protégé to remember would be to advise him or her to memorize the company mission statement.
4. **Ensure the meaningfulness of material.** The material to be learned should be organized in a meaningful manner. Each successive experience should build on the other. In training another person how to process a customer order, you might teach the skill in terms of the flow of activities from customer inquiry to product delivery.

5. **Give feedback on progress.** As a person's training progresses, motivation may be maintained and enhanced by providing knowledge on his or her progress. To measure progress, it may be necessary to ask the trainee questions or ask for a job sample. For example, you might ask the person being trained on invoices to prepare a sample invoice.
6. **Ask the trainee to reflect on what he or she has learned.** Research indicates that if you think carefully about what you have learned, your retention of the information increases. The idea is to step back from the experience to ponder carefully and persistently its meaning to you.^[27] After participating in a team development exercise involving white-water rafting, a person might reflect, "What did I really learn about being a better team player? How was I perceived by my teammates in the rubber raft? Did they even notice my contribution? Or did they think I was an important part of the team success?"
7. **Deal with trainee defensiveness.** Training is sometimes retarded because the person being trained is defensive about information or skills that clash with his or her beliefs and practices. The person might have so much emotional energy invested in the status quo that he or she resists the training. For example, a sales representative might resist learning how to use e-commerce because she believes that her warm smile and interpersonal skills have made her an excellent communicator. She is concerned that if she communicates with customers exclusively through e-mail or a company Web site, her human touch will be lost. Sensing this defensiveness, the trainer is advised to talk about e-commerce as being a supplement to, but not a substitute for, in-person communication. (However, the sales rep might also be worried that her position will be eliminated.)
8. **Take into account learning style.** Another key factor that influences training is learning style, the way in which a person best learns new information. An example of a learning style is passive learning. People who learn best through passive learning quickly acquire information by studying texts, manuals, magazine articles, and Web sites. They can juggle images in their mind as they read about abstract concepts such as supply and demand, cultural diversity, or customer service. Others learn best by doing rather than studying—for example, learning about customer service by dealing with customers in many situations.

Another key dimension of learning styles is whether a person learns best by working alone or cooperatively in a study group. Learning by oneself may allow for more intense concentration, and one can proceed at one's own pace. Learning in groups through classroom discussion allows people to exchange viewpoints and perspectives.

Because of differences in learning styles, you may decide to design training to fit these differences. For example, if your trainees prefer cooperative learning you could combine learning from reading books, articles, and online information with discussions in a conference room.

To start applying these principles of learning to a training situation, do Skill-Building Exercise 12-5.

learning style

The way in which a person best learns new information.

SKILL-BUILDING EXERCISE 12-5

Designing a Training Program

The class organizes into training design teams of approximately six people. Each team sketches the design of a training program to teach an interpersonal skill to employees, such as being polite to customers or interviewing job candidates. The teams are not responsible for selecting the exact content of the training program they choose. Instead, they are responsible for designing a training

program based on the principles of learning. Two examples here would be (a) how to encourage the trainees to concentrate and (b) developing a mechanism to provide feedback to the trainee.

The activity should take about 15 minutes and can therefore be done inside or outside the class. After the teams have designed their programs, they can compare the various versions.

HELPING DIFFICULT PEOPLE

A challenge we all face from time to time is dealing constructively with workers who appear intent on creating problems. For a variety of reasons, these difficult or counter-productive people perform poorly themselves or interfere with the job performance of others. A **difficult person** is an individual who creates problems for others, yet has the skill and mental ability to do otherwise. The difficult person may meet or exceed attendance and performance standards, yet has a toxic personality.^[28] Here we will discuss briefly various types of difficult people, and then emphasize methods for helping them behave more productively. To pretest your skill in dealing with and helping difficult people, do Self-Assessment Quiz 12-3.

LEARNING OBJECTIVE 4

difficult person

An individual who creates problems for others, even though he or she has the skill and mental ability to do otherwise.

Helping Difficult People

Directions: For each of the following scenarios, circle the letter of what you think is the most effective way to handle the situation. There may be more than one correct method listed.

1. A coworker in the cubicle next to you is talking loudly on the phone about the fabulous weekend she and a few friends enjoyed. You are attempting to deal with a challenging work problem. To deal with this situation, you
 - a. get up from your chair, stand close to her, and say loudly, "Shut up, you jerk! I'm trying to do my work."
 - b. slip her a handwritten note that says, "I'm happy that you had a great weekend, but I have problems concentrating on my work when you are talking so loudly. Thanks for your help."
 - c. get the boss on the phone and ask that she please do something about the problem.
 - d. wait until lunch and then say to her, "I'm happy that you had a great weekend, but I have problems concentrating on my work when you are talking so loudly. Thanks for your help."
2. One of your coworkers, Olaf, rarely carries his fair load of the work. He forever has a good reason for not having the time to do an assignment. This morning he has approached you to load some new software onto his personal computer. You deal with this situation by
 - a. carefully explaining that you will help him, providing he will take over a certain specified task for you.
 - b. telling him that you absolutely refuse to help a person as lazy as he is.
 - c. counseling him about fair play and reciprocity.
 - d. reviewing with him a list of five times when he has asked other people to help him. You then ask if he thinks this is a good way to treat coworkers.
3. In your role as supervisor, you have noticed that Diane, one of the group members, spends far too much work time laughing and joking. You schedule a meeting with her. As the meeting opens, you
 - a. joke and laugh with her to establish rapport.
 - b. explain to Diane that you have called this meeting to discuss her too-frequent laughing and joking.
 - c. talk for a few moments about the good things Diane has done for the department, then confront the real issue.
 - d. explain to Diane that she is on the verge of losing her job if she doesn't act more maturely.
4. As a team member, you have become increasingly annoyed with Jerry's ethnic, racist, and sexist jokes. One day during a team meeting, he tells a joke you believe is particularly offensive. To deal with the situation, you
 - a. meet privately with the team leader to discuss Jerry's offensive behavior.
 - b. catch up with Jerry later when he is alone, and tell him how uncomfortable his joke made you feel.
 - c. confront Jerry on the spot and say, "Hold on Jerry. I find your joke offensive."
 - d. tell the group an even more offensive joke to illustrate how Jerry's behavior can get out of hand.
5. You have been placed on a task force to look for ways to save the company money, including making recommendations for eliminating jobs. You interview a supervisor about the efficiency of her department. She suddenly becomes rude and defensive. In response, you
 - a. politely point out how her behavior is coming across to you.
 - b. get your revenge by recommending that three jobs be eliminated from her department.

(Continued)

- c. explain that you have used up enough of her time for today and ask for another meeting later in the week.
- d. tell her that unless she becomes more cooperative, this interview cannot continue.

Scoring and Interpretation: Use the following key to obtain your score:

- | | | | | |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 1. a. 1 | 2. a. 4 | 3. a. 1 | 4. a. 2 | 5. a. 4 |
| b. 4 | b. 1 | b. 4 | b. 4 | b. 1 |
| c. 2 | c. 3 | c. 3 | c. 3 | c. 2 |
| d. 3 | d. 2 | d. 2 | d. 1 | d. 3 |

18–20 You have good intuition about helping difficult people.

10–17 You have average intuition about helping difficult people.

5–9 You need to improve your sensitivity about helping difficult people.

Types of Difficult People

Dozens of types of difficult people have been identified, with considerable overlap among the types. For example, one method of classifying difficult people might identify the dictator, while another method might identify the bully. A major challenge in classifying types of difficult people is that some of the types are manifestations of a severe underlying problem referred to as a **personality disorder**. (Such a disorder is defined as a pervasive, persistent, inflexible, maladaptive pattern of behavior that deviates from expected cultural norms.) One of these 10 different disorders is the narcissistic personality whose behavior includes being grandiose, needing admiration, and lacking empathy. As a difficult person, the narcissistic personality might be labeled a “high-maintenance person,” “a me-first,” or a “know-it-all expert.”

Another important consideration about classifying difficult people is that most of them are a mixture and blend of various types, rather than being a pure type.^[29] For example, a bully might be really a blend of a bully, a know-it-all, and an exploder. (Watch out for that guy or gal!)

For our purposes, I will list a sampling of the many types of difficult people found in the workplace and as customers. As you read the following list, look for familiar types.^[30]

- *Know-it-alls* believe that they are experts on everything. They have opinions on every issue, yet when they are wrong they pass the buck or become defensive.
- *Blamers* are workers who never solve their own problems. When faced with a challenge or a hitch, they think the problem belongs to the supervisor or a group member.
- *Gossips* spread negative rumors about others and attempt to set people against each other.
- *Bullies* cajole and intimidate others. They are blunt to the point of being insulting, and will sometimes use harsh, vulgar language to attain their goals. Bullies constantly make demands on workmates.
- *Exploders* readily lose self-control when something important or trivial does not go their way such as having their creative suggestion rejected by the group or being informed that their cubicle will be reduced in size. The loss of self-control frequently takes the form of a temper tantrum.
- *Repulsives* are people whose poor personal hygiene, eating habits, appearance, or foul language disrupts the tranquility of others.
- *Yes-people* agree to any commitment, promise any deadline, but rarely deliver. Although sorry about being late, they cannot be trusted to deliver as promised.
- *No-people* are negative and pessimistic and quick to point out why something will not work. They are also inflexible, resist change, and complain frequently.
- *Jekyll and Hydes* have a split personality. When dealing with supervisors, customers, or clients, they are pleasant, engaging people; yet, when carrying out the role of supervisors, they become tyrannical.

personality disorder

A pervasive, persistent, inflexible, maladaptive pattern of behavior that deviates from expected cultural norms.

- *Whiners* gripe about people, processes, and company regulations. They complain about being overworked and underpaid, or not receiving assignments up to their true capabilities.
- *Backstabbers* pretend to befriend you and encourage you to talk freely about problems or personality clashes you face. Later, the backstabber reports the information—often in exaggerated form—to the person you mentioned in a negative light. Or, the backstabber simply says negative things about you behind your back to discredit you to others.
- *High-maintenance types* require considerable attention from others in such forms as demanding much of the supervisor's time, making unusual requests to the human resources department, and taking the maximum number of sick days and personal days allowable. High-maintenance types are often a combination of several of the previous types described above.
- *Clods* are master procrastinators who can find plenty of excuses as to why a project has not been started. When the clod finally gets started on a project, the work proceeds so slowly that other people who need the clod's input fall behind schedule and become stressed.
- *Minimalists* are apathetic and low-performing, and do just enough work to avoid being fired. They do the bare minimum, are thrive on being mediocre.
- *Office cheats* take claim for the ideas of other people, and benefit from these ideas, leaving the originator of the idea without receiving deserved credit, and feeling frustrated because of the stolen ideas.

Tactics for Dealing with Difficult People

How one deals most effectively with a difficult person depends to some extent on the person's type. For example, you might need more time to get through to a passive person than to a bully. Figure 12-2 presents specific ideas for dealing with a bully. (You will recall that bullying was described in Chapter 9 as a source of workplace conflict.) The following techniques have wide applicability for helping difficult people change to a more constructive behavior pattern. This general approach should prove more helpful than being concerned with specific tactics for each type of difficult person you encounter. A principle to keep in mind in dealing with difficult people is that they vary in their amount of personality disturbance. Workers classified as difficult people whose behavior is propelled by a personality disorder will be the least amenable to change.

FIGURE 12-2 How to Be a Bully Buster

Christine Pearson, a management professor at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, says that employees can take steps to keep uncivil behavior out of the workplace.²⁵

- ① The first step is to admit to yourself that you are being bullied and that the bullying is unfair and unjustified.
- ② If the bully is affecting you physically, see your doctor.
- ③ Stand up for yourself and be confident.
- ④ Check out your body language. If you stoop, hang your head, or hunch over, you may be giving off victim signals.
- ⑤ Try not to show that the bully has upset you; the bully may get bored and leave you alone.
- ⑥ Don't suffer in silence; tell someone you trust.
- ⑦ Find out about your rights, consider using any complaints procedure available in your company, and if necessary, consult a lawyer.

The problems difficult people (sometimes referred to collectively as *office jerks*) create have received considerable attention in recent years from managers. The precise definition of an office jerk is someone who consistently leaves people feeling demeaned, belittled, and de-energized. In addition, the office jerk typically targets people of lesser power than he or she possesses.^[31] (Despite the frequent use of the term, labeling people as *jerks* tends to exclude constructive thinking about dealing with the problem, and is not good human relations practice.)

Such companies as Google and Southwest Airlines have taken many of the steps described next to minimize the negative impact difficult people have on productivity and job satisfaction. Another problem is some positive contributors will quit when forced to work permanently with a difficult person. Many difficult people are also being fired instead of counseled because of the problems they create.^[32]

Stay Calm. A good starting point in dealing with many types of difficult people is to stay calm so that you can confront the other person in a professional manner. Staying calm also helps you think of a useful approach on the spot. Imagine that an exploder is upset because the new chair she was assigned has a broken height adjustment. You might calmly say to her, "I can imagine that having a chair that does not adjust is inconvenient, but what would you like me to do?" When you are calm, the difficult person's anger will often simmer down, and the problem that triggered the person can be solved.

Give Ample Feedback. The primary technique for dealing with counterproductive behavior is to feed back to the difficult person how his or her behavior affects you. As in other forms of feedback, be clear about what you want. Focus on the person's behavior rather than on characteristics or values. If a *repulsive type* is annoying you by constantly eating when you are working together, say something to this effect: "I have difficulty concentrating on the work when you are eating." Such a statement will engender less resentment than saying, "I find you repulsive, and it annoys me." As in coaching, it is better to avoid *should* statements because they often create defensiveness instead of triggering positive behavior. Instead of saying "You shouldn't be eating when you are working," you might try, "Could you find another place to eat when we are working together?"

Feedback will sometimes take the form of confrontation, and it is important not to lose emotional control during the confrontation. If the difficult person has criticized you unjustly in your eyes, attempt not to be defensive. Ask the difficult person exactly what he or she is upset about rather than argue. In this way, the burden of responsibility is now back on the antagonist. For example, if a bully was swearing at you during a meeting, later ask for the reason behind the outburst. Following the technique of disarming the opposition described in Chapter 9, you might agree with at least one of the bully's points. This will help establish rapport.^[33] An example here would be, "Yes, I should have consulted you before making the final report. I apologize for the oversight."

Criticize Constructively. Feedback sets the stage for criticism. It is best to criticize in private and to begin with mild criticism. Base your criticism on objective facts rather than subjective impressions. Point out, for example, that the yes-person's lack of follow-through resulted in \$10,000 in lost sales. Express your criticism in terms of a common goal. For example, "We can get the report done quickly if you'll firm up the statistical data while I edit the text." When you criticize a coworker, avoid acting as if you have formal authority over the person.

Help the Difficult Person Feel More Confident. Many counterproductive employees are simply low in self-confidence and self-efficacy. They use stalling and evasive tactics because they are afraid to fail. Working with your manager or team leader, you might be able to arrange a project or task in which you know the difficult person will succeed. With a small dose of self-confidence and self-efficacy, the person may begin to complain less. With additional successes, the person may soon become less difficult.^[34] Self-confidence building takes time. However, self-efficacy can build more quickly as the person learns a new skill.

Use Tact and Diplomacy. Tactful actions on your part can sometimes take care of annoying behavior by coworkers without having to confront the problem. Close your

door, for example, if noisy coworkers are gathered outside. When subtlety does not work, it may be necessary to proceed to a confronting type of feedback.

Tact and diplomacy can still be incorporated into confrontation. In addition to confronting the person, you might also point out one of the individual's strengths. In dealing with a know-it-all, you might say, "I realize you are creative and filled with good ideas. However, I wish you would give me an opportunity to express my opinion."

Use Nonhostile Humor. Nonhostile humor can often be used to help a difficult person understand how his or her behavior is blocking others. Also, the humor will help you defuse the conflict between you and that person. The humor should point to the person's unacceptable behavior, yet not belittle him or her. Assume that you and a coworker are working jointly on a report. For each idea that you submit, your coworker gets into the know-it-all mode and informs you of important facts you neglected. An example of non-hostile humor that might jolt the coworker into realizing that his or her approach is annoying is as follows:

If there is ever a contest to choose the human being with a brain that can compete against a Zip file, I will nominate you. But even though my brain is limited to human capacity, I still think I can supply a few facts for our report.

Your humor may help the other person recognize that he or she is attempting to overwhelm you with facts at his or her disposal. You are being self-effacing and thereby drawing criticism away from your coworker. Self-effacement is a proven humor tactic.

Work Out a Deal. A direct approach to dealing with problems created by a difficult person is to work out a deal or a negotiated solution. Workers who do not carry their load are successful in getting others to do their work. The next time such a worker wants you to carry out a task, agree to it if he or she will reciprocate by performing a task that will benefit you. For working out a deal to be effective, you must be specific about the terms of the deal. The worker may at first complain about your demands for reciprocity, so it is important to be firm.

Reinforce Civil Behavior and Good Moods. In the spirit of positive reinforcement, when a generally difficult person is behaving acceptably, recognize the behavior in some way. Reinforcing statements would include "It's fun working with you today" and "I appreciate your professional attitude."

SKILL-BUILDING EXERCISE 12-6

Dealing with Difficult People

In both of the following scenarios, one person plays the role of a group member whose work and morale suffer because of a difficult person. The other person plays the role of the difficult person who may lack insight into what he or she is doing wrong. It is important for the suffering person to put emotion into the role.

Scenario 1: A Bully. A bully is present at a meeting called to plan a company morale-boosting event. Several students play the roles of the group members. One student plays the role of a group member who suggests that the event center on doing a social good, such as refurbishing a low-income family's house or conducting a neighborhood cleanup. Another student plays the role of a bully who doesn't like the idea. The group member being intimidated decides to deal effectively with the bully (or dictator).

Scenario 2: A No-Person. One student plays the role of a worker with a lot of creative energy whose manager is a no-person. The energetic worker has what he or she thinks is a wonderful way for the company to generate additional revenue—conduct a garage sale of surplus equipment and furnishings. The worker presents

this idea to the no-person manager, played by another student. If the manager acts true to form, the worker will attempt to overcome his or her objections.

Scenario 3: A Repulsive. Your team is so busy that you are having a working lunch today in a company conference room. This is the first time the team has had lunch with the newest member of the team. She talks loudly while eating, slurps her beverage in a loud manner, and interrupts the flow of conversation twice with vile descriptions of airplane lavatories being overloaded. As the team leader, you know that criticizing workers in public is poor human relations, but you have to do something to salvage the meeting that the repulsive member is interrupting.

For the three scenarios, observers rate the role players on two dimensions, using a 1-to-5 scale from very poor to very good. One dimension is "effective use of human relations techniques." The second dimension is "acting ability." A few observers might voluntarily provide feedback to the role players in terms of sharing their ratings and observations. The course instructor might also provide feedback.

Ask the Difficult Person to THINK Before Speaking. Human relations specialist John Maxwell suggests that you ask the difficult person to THINK before he or she speaks, with "THINK" referring to the acronym:^[35]

- T Is it true?
- H Is it helpful?
- I Is it inspiring?
- N Is it necessary?
- K Is it kind?

Although Maxwell's suggestion is aimed at difficult people, it would be a helpful rule of thumb for building relationships with people in many situations.

Have a Job Description That Disallows Difficult Behavior. When difficult behavior is prohibited by the job description, the difficult person can be reminded that his or her behavior is out-of-bounds. A legalistic approach like this must be executed tactfully. Employment law specialist David Wimmer encourages employers to add like similar to the following to job descriptions:

Employee must be able to relate to other people beyond giving and receiving instructions: (a) can get along with coworkers without exhibiting behavior extremes; (b) perform work activities requiring negotiating, instruction, supervising, persuading, or speaking with others; and (c) respond appropriately to criticisms from a superior.^[36]

Using this legalistic approach, you might say to a coworker who keeps swearing at teammates, and telling them to shut up when he or she disagrees with them, "You are getting your work done, and that pleases me. Yet, I think your behavior is not in line with the complete job description that we all have to work by."

The tactics for dealing with the difficult people just described require practice to be effective. When you next encounter a difficult person, try one of the tactics that seems to fit the occasion. Role-plays, such as those presented in Skill-Building Exercise 12-5, are a good starting point for implementing tactics in dealing with difficult people.

Self-Assessment Quiz 12-1, Attitudes toward Helping Others, deals with perhaps the most humanistic topic in the book. If you truly believe in helping others you will be a better coworker, team leader, supervisor, manager, coach, or mentor. If your attitudes toward helping others are not so positive, perhaps this might be an area for improvement so you can be more effective in the various roles just mentioned. Self-Assessment Quiz 12-2, Characteristics of an Effective Coach, takes you one step further into self-reflection in relation to helping others. You will notice that the characteristics of an effective coach are similar to good interpersonal skills in general, such as using diplomacy and tact and being enthusiastic. Self-Assessment Quiz 12-3, Helping Difficult People, prompts to think about the most demanding interpersonal skills of all—dealing effectively with work associates who are uncooperative and often unpleasant.

nurturing person 255
toxic person 255
mentor 257
protégé 257

coaching 261
peer coaching 261
behavioral feedback 262
training 264

learning style 266
difficult person 267
personality disorder 268

Workers have a responsibility to help each other learn, grow, and develop. A major strategy for helping others grow and develop is to be a nurturing, positive person. A toxic person stands in contrast to a nurturing person because he or she dwells on the negative. Nurturing people are positive, enthusiastic, and supportive. Three actions and attitudes that support being a nurturing person are to (1) recognize growth needs in others, (2) use the buddy system, and (3) be a role model.

Being a mentor is another way to help others. As long as you are experienced and wiser than a coworker in some important aspect of the job, you can be a mentor. Virtual, or online, mentoring is possible. Mentors can be selected by the company or chosen informally. To be a mentor, a person engages in a wide range of helping behaviors. Among them are sponsoring, coaching, protecting, sharing challenging assignments, and being a referral agent. Mentors also help protégés solve problems and learn the ropes of an organization. Mentoring can sometimes help the organization by helping workers become more committed to the firm.

Coaching and training are direct helping roles. Coaching is a method of helping workers grow and develop by providing suggestions and encouragement. The five ideal characteristics of peer coaching are (1) equal status of peers, (2) personal and professional development of both peers, (3) integration of reflection and practice, (4) importance of attention to process, and (5) accelerating career learning.

Suggestions for effective coaching include the following:

1. Build relationships.
2. Provide specific feedback.
3. Make criticism pain-free and positive.
4. Encourage the person you are coaching to talk.
5. Ask powerful questions.

6. Give emotional support.
7. Give some constructive advice.
8. Coach with "could," not "should."
9. Interpret what is happening.
10. Allow for modeling of the desired performance and behaviors.
11. Applaud good results.

Training involves helping people acquire job skills. To facilitate training, apply principles of learning such as the following: (1) encourage concentration, (2) use motivated interest, (3) remind learners to intend to remember, (4) ensure the meaningfulness of material, (5) give feedback on progress, (6) ask the trainee to reflect on what he or she has learned, (7) deal with trainee defensiveness, and (8) take into account learning style.

Dealing with difficult people is a major challenge in helping others. Some difficult people have a personality disorder. The many types of difficult people include know-it-alls, blamers, gossips, bullies, exploders, repulsives, yes-people, no-people, Jekyll and Hydes, whiners, backstabbers, high-maintenance types, and office cheats. Companies are concerned about the damage difficult people create, and sometimes fire them.

Workers classified as difficult people whose behavior is propelled by a personality disorder will be the least amenable to change. Tactics for dealing with difficult people include (1) giving ample feedback including confrontation, (2) criticizing constructively, (3) helping the difficult person feel more confident, (4) using tact and diplomacy, (5) using humor, (6) working out a deal, (7) reinforcing civil behavior and good moods, (8) asking the person to THINK before speaking, and (9) having a job description that disallows difficult behavior.

Questions for Discussion and Review

1. What is your opinion on whether workers have a responsibility to help each other grow and develop?
2. What is your opinion of the potential effectiveness of the buddy system in your career?
3. Visualize yourself in a full-time professional job working for a company that believed strongly in mentoring. Explain whether you would prefer to find a mentor for yourself, or be assigned a mentor by the company.
4. In what way does a coach in the workplace function much like an athletic coach?
5. Describe any constructive advice you have received from anybody who has coached you. What was the impact of this advice?
6. Many career-minded workers today hire their own coach, much like a personal trainer for solving job problems and advancing. Explain whether you would be willing to invest money to hire a "business coach" for yourself.
7. What might be a problem in relying heavily on "FAQs (frequently asked questions)" to help in training employees?
8. How might one employee coach or train another employee by use of Twitter and text messaging?
9. Many human resource professionals believe that training employees is the best method of enhancing organizational productivity. Why do you think this might be true?
10. How might humor help you deal with the repulsive type of difficult person? Supply an example of a witty comment you might use.

The Web Connection

<http://www.jobshadow.org/>

(Job shadowing as a form of mentoring)

<http://www.BlueSuitMom.com/career/management/difficultpeople.html>

(Strategies for dealing with difficult people)

<http://www.mygroup.com/coaching.html>

(Coaching for various stages in a person's career)

Internet Skill Builder: Mentoring Online

As mentioned in the chapter, many mentors stay in touch with the people they mentor primarily through e-mail

and Web sites, including company and social networking Web sites. Such virtual networking has advantages and disadvantages. Search the Internet for three useful ideas about how to mentor effectively online. Try the search terms "virtual mentoring" and "online mentoring" as well as other terms you think might work. Think through which of these ideas you would use as an online mentor.

Human Relations Skills

The Reality Coach

Kara was excited about her new position as Internet sales manager at a food supplement company. The company's dozens of products included pills and liquids for improving skin health, lowering blood pressure, improving digestion, and improving vision. Many of the company's sales were in bulk to supermarkets, pharmacies, and health food stores. In addition, many orders came in over the Internet and by toll-free numbers. Kara's responsibilities included revitalizing the company Web site periodically, and finding ways to direct more Internet traffic to the site.

During Kara's first week on the job, she was assigned a coach and mentor, Malcolm, the manager of order fulfillment. Malcolm was to act in the dual role of coaching and mentoring Kara, in addition to assisting in her *onboarding* (getting oriented into the company). During their first meeting, Malcolm was friendly and constructive, saying that his role was to help Kara in any feasible way.

The second meeting between Kara and Malcolm was quite brief, with Malcolm asking Kara if she were yet having any problems he could provide assistance with. Kara replied that all was going well so far.

One week later, Malcolm dropped by Kara's cubicle, and said to her, "I've noticed that Internet sales have been flat since you came on board. What is it that you are doing that is adding value to the company?" Kara replied that enhancing Internet sales takes considerable time.

Ten days later, Malcolm sent Kara an e-mail asking that she meet with him in his cubicle at 4 p.m. Malcolm asked Kara how she was doing, and then said he had some advice for her as her coach and mentor. "Quite frankly, I think you could make a more professional appearance. Your hair is too long, and you wear too much dangling

jewelry. I think that you need to tone down your appearance a little to be successful as an Internet sales manager."

Kara replied, "Nobody else has complained. Besides, most of my important interactions are over the Internet, and not with customers face to face. So long hair and dangling jewelry should not be a problem."

Kara was beginning to wonder if Malcolm was really a help or just an irritant. She then devoted most of her energies the next couple of weeks in revamping and modernizing the company Web site. Her boss, as well as several coworkers, made approving comments about the new Web site. Malcolm, however, had his own opinion of the revamped Web site. He said to Kara in person, "I have heard that a few people like the changes you made to the Web site. But Kara, I am disappointed. You just tweaked the site instead of making radical changes that would increase sales substantially. I know that you can do better."

Kara replied, "Malcolm, isn't there anything I can do to please you? Are you my coach and mentor, or just my heckler?"

Malcolm retorted, "Do you think you might be too thin-skinned to succeed in business? As your coach and mentor I have to be frank. Otherwise I can't help you."

Case Questions

1. How effective do you think Malcolm is in his role as Kara's coach and mentor?
2. What suggestions can you offer Malcolm to be more effective in his role?
3. What suggestions might you offer Kara so that she can benefit more from the coaching and mentoring the company is providing her?

What to Do about Brian?

Brian is one of 10 home mortgage refinance specialists working in his department of Cypress Finance, a substantial size financial services firm. Most of the customer contact

work of the mortgage refinance department is conducted over the telephone (using a toll-free number), even when potential customers initiate their inquiry through the company Web site. Each refinance specialist does considerable

individual work, including interacting with customers and potential customers and evaluating the mortgage applicant's credit worthiness. Credit checks are made with computerized databases, but occasionally clarifying information is sought.

Refinance specialists have to cooperate with each other on complex cases. The cooperation often takes the form of asking a teammate's opinion on the creditworthiness of the risk. A member of management, however, gives final approval to all but the most routine refinance applications.

At times, the supervisor of the group, Nina, makes assignments to balance the workload among the specialists. However, the work piles up so quickly that the specialists are supposed to look for ways to spread the work out evenly among themselves to prevent delays in processing refinance applications.

Nina perceives Brian to be a superior performer. His most recent performance evaluation stated that he was an outstanding refinance specialist with potential for promotion to a supervisory position in the future. Nina also rated Brian's sales performance to be outstanding. A "sale" means that an inquiry over the telephone or Web site is converted into an application to refinance that becomes approved. Despite his outstanding performance, Nina did mention that Brian could strengthen his teamwork skills. She specifically mentioned that Brian was sometimes so busy with his individual cases that he neglected to help out other team members.

During a recent team meeting, Nina told the group, "Once again I am pleased to announce that Brian has been the outstanding producer in the department. I know that we work together as a team yet still have our individual goals. Brian is great at closing applicants with good credit risks, and he still contributes his share as a team player."

Kenny, one of the other refinance specialists, gave a gentle nudge with his elbow to Cindy, a specialist seated to his right. Kenny murmured, "What a kiss-up this guy is. Nina should know what an annoyance Brian is in the office."

After the meeting, Kenny, Cindy, and Lindsay, a third specialist, were standing together near the elevator. Lindsay said while giggling, "Did you see the look on Brian's face? All smiles, like he was voted the MVP of the Super Bowl. Brian sometimes forgets that we help him with his trickiest applications, and then he grabs the glory. But ask Brian for

a little help, and he will say something to the effect that he is too busy closing a major deal. You would think he was refinancing the Empire State Building." Kenny, Cindy, and Lindsay giggled simultaneously.

The next workday at Cypress was one of the busiest ever. Newspaper and television reports throughout the country announced that mortgage rates were expected to climb by one and one-half percent the following month. The number of applicants for refinancing doubled as many home owners were eager to lock in the present low rates for refinancing. The refinance specialists were asked to put in 60-hour weeks until the workload drifted back to normal.

During the lunch break on one of the peak-load days, Brian approached the three other specialists taking the break at the same time as he with this proposition, "As everyone in this office knows, I am really talented at closing deals. And the more deals we close as a group, the bigger will be the group bonus at the end of the year. So I'm suggesting that when I have a couple of big deals on the hook, I send my minnows over to you. [Minnows refer to small deals.] Also, I would like your cooperation in doing some of the detail work, such as a lengthy credit inquiry for a major deal. My time is better invested in reeling in the big deals."

One of the specialists said, "Sounds good to me." Cindy took an opposite approach, as she told Brian, "Happy fishing, but you're not my boss. Why should I volunteer to help you when you never volunteer to help me?"

Brian retorted, "Cindy, you may be a nice person, but I think you're a rotten team player. We have to divide up responsibilities for the good of the team."

Later that day, Cindy chatted with Kenny and Lindsay about the incident during the lunch break. She said, "We've got to do something about Brian, but I don't know what. It's tough when you have to do battle with the boss's pet."

Questions

1. Is Brian a *difficult person*? Explain.
2. What steps should the refinance specialists take who object to Brian's work style?
3. How might a system of peer evaluation (workers contributing to the evaluation of each other) help Nina in her supervision of the department?
4. Do you think Cindy is being a rotten team player?

