

Blocking Techniques

Habitual Behavior Patterns of a Person

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The behaviors described here prevent communication and contribute to conflict. These blocking techniques also create difficulty in resolving conflicts. They are not behaviors, which exhibit leadership. The credibility of a leader can be negatively affected by the person participating in these blocking techniques.

Most blocking techniques by a person are an effort to "run the show" on their own terms. People may shift from being mean, egotistical, selfish and dishonest about what they are doing to being virtuous, kind, considerate, patient, generous and even modest and self-sacrificing. This shift back and forth shows the manipulation of the person, the lack of awareness of self, the denial about the behavior and lack of clarity about how the behaviors impact others. The person is not consistent and does not know what it truly means to be emotionally connected to another. Therefore, the individual does not know how to resolve conflict that will be honoring of everyone in the situation. Often, this individual will not get what he or she wants in a situation and will decide to exert more of the previous behaviors. He or she may become more demanding or gracious. The person may become angry, indignant and self-pitying. The selfishness, which is being described here, is often an attempt to hide fear and to delude the self. Outstanding leaders do not exhibit this kind of behavior.

A list of blocking techniques can assist each of us first to be aware and second, to develop ways to not be trapped by another's behavior. We can learn and know more about ourselves and how we block, prevent or stop communication. Individuals may combine two or more blocking techniques to avoid looking at their behavior. Self-development is essential for leaders, and this means to stop doing these behaviors. If the leader does not model effective and emotionally connected communication, then their followers will not. The leader may need to give feedback or responses to followers so they can develop as leaders. Since the most effective way to change behavior is being emotionally connected to what the behavior does to the self and others, it is essential that the person feels remorse or some feeling that will motivate them to change. Here is a list and short description of some of these behaviors: As you read through the list, use the column next to the description to give examples of how you participate in the blocking technique.

Blocking Techniques

1. Rationalization/Justification

Using data to build or support behavior which the individual has done and ignoring the impact of their behavior on others.

2. Excuses

Giving information in an effort to "try" to lessen the blame attached to the self; this is an effort to mitigate or justify an offensive behavior or attitude.

3. *Defensiveness/Deflecting*

Being in an attitude or position of defiance. An effort to prevent hearing feedback or responses and impacting the self. This is an effort to move away from the issues. Humor can be a form of deflecting and can turn to sarcasm. Sarcasm is a blocking technique.

4. *Changing the Subject*

Being on a specific subject, asking the person to look at their behaviors or attitudes, and the person, moves to another subject. The individual is deflecting as they change the subject.

5. *"Pick up the marbles and go home"*

Being angry, defensive, and refusing to talk about a subject, canceling an appointment out of anger, "stomping out", etc. The person may remain in the room; yet, will not do what is being asked of them.

6. *Void of feelings*

When asked what the person feels, the individual does not know, is numb or names a feeling and yet it is apparent there is no feeling connected to the words named. It is important for people to know how they feel. Knowing feelings helps people to connect to what they are experiencing.

7. *Manipulation*

Managing (a person, situation, etc.) to one's own advantage, especially unfairly or unscrupulously. Often justification or rationalization will relate to manipulation. (Any of the blocking techniques are a form of manipulation.)

8. *Dependency*

One example is when a person has placed him or herself in a victimized position and says, "Just tell me what to do." Wanting other people to take care of him or her or do the job for them.

9. *Focus on others*

Blaming others for what is happening and avoiding looking at how he/she has contributed to the situation.

10. *Avoid the here and now*

Person talks about anything to avoid having someone address them about their past or future behaviors. This allows the person to avoid the subject being discussed in the moment of time. Prevents having to be emotionally present in the here and now.

11. *Focuses on word or phrase in a response* Picking a word, phrase or section of a conversation to argue or debate without listening, appreciating or emotionally processing the whole conversation.

12. *Disorganization*

Staying confused and being able to rationalize the lack of ability to do their work, etc.

13. *Control*

A desire to restrain the efforts of others and being unaware that they have no power or control over what others do. (I may be able to influence someone; however, this is even limited.) One example may be controlling one's time by withholding making commitments to projects or meetings, which asks the person to look at the self or requires commitment and organizing their time to fulfill the responsibilities of the project/job.

14. *Scripting*

Selectively listening and creating a script in their mind for the response. They prepare statements to debate what the person is saying. While the other person is talking, they are preparing their answer, and they are not listening to what is being shared with them.

15. *Judgmental*

Condemning or criticizing without processing one's feelings about situations. This is often based on inadequate data.

16. *Playing the "devil's advocate"*

Picking a fight to shift the subject or "just to pick a fight." Giving a reason for shifting the subject in a meeting and then bringing up subjects which take the discussion off the current item.

17. *Hidden agenda*

Issues are not named. Hidden agendas occur in other blocking techniques. They can lead to a collusion process between two or more people.

18. *Address only or overemphasize the positive*

An effort to avoid looking at one's behaviors and attitudes that are harmful to self and others and only considering what is perceived to be positive.

19. *Distorting the facts*

Misrepresenting what happened. Changing words that were used. Leaving out information.

20. *Denial*

The act of denying. This means a desire to not see reality or accept reality.

21. *Avoidance*

Efforts to keep away from, escape, or evade. A lack of willingness to own one's own behavior and to do whatever is necessary to avoid taking responsibility.

22. *Lying*

To be deceitful or false. Lack of willingness to tell the truth or be honest about my behavior.

23. *Unilateral Decision Making*

One person having a conversation and making a decision that involves another person and never having the conversation with the other person.

24. *Multilateral decision Making*

Two people having a conversation and making a decision that involves another person and never having the conversation with the other person. This is a form of collusion.

This is not an exhaustive list. All these blocks are costly to the person, the family or the organization the person works for. These behaviors are tiring to the self and others. In an organization, teams are severely impacted and these blocking behaviors mar relationships. Efficiency, productivity and profitability do not exist. They hinder work, having a meaningful life and having an honoring place to work.

What is needed in relationships is emotional connection that is genuine, "heart-felt" and authentic. Authenticity develops over a long period of time. Years of showing the authentic self in attitude and behavior determine the trustworthiness of the person. When a person is authentic, they are excellent leaders. They can help develop others to be leaders.