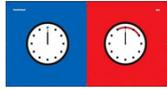
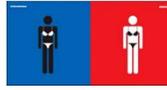
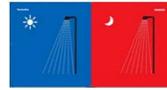
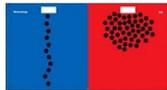
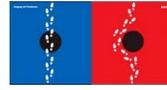


## Dealing with Difficult Situations

Nick Yinger  
US Embassy Soft Skills Series

<http://vietnam.usembassy.gov/presentations.html>

Westerners	Asians	
		
Westerners: on time. Asians: in time	What is Sexy?	What time do you shower?
		
Westerners: Queuing in an orderly manner. Asians: Queuing?! What's that?	Westerners: The logic is: rain is pain. Asians: More rain, more prosperity	Westerners: Take any steps to solve the problems. Asians: Try to avoid conflicts, and if can, don't leave any trail
<small><a href="http://www.terminaljunkie.com/wp/2010/10/19/western-vs-asian-culture-a-pictorial-perspective/">http://www.terminaljunkie.com/wp/2010/10/19/western-vs-asian-culture-a-pictorial-perspective/</a></small>	<small><a href="http://www.asiaquest.com/2009/07/asian-vs-western-cultures-pictorial.html">http://www.asiaquest.com/2009/07/asian-vs-western-cultures-pictorial.html</a></small>	

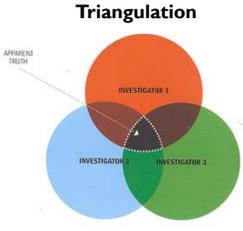
## Agenda

- ▶ Steps for overcoming difficulty
- ▶ Your Difficult situations
- ▶ Hypothetical situations
- ▶ Difficult people personalities
  - ▶ Diffusing their difficulty

## What's the first step in handling a difficult situation?

## Establish the facts

- ▶ Do not seek out opinions
- ▶ Avoid hearsay
- ▶ How do you find the truth in a sea of lies?
  - ▶ Ask a lot of questions
  - ▶ Short, powerful questions



**Triangulation**

<http://sustranbleresources.files.wordpress.com/2008/05/triangulation-method.jpg>

## Know how to listen

- ▶ Why ask good questions if you can't listen?
- ▶ Listen to more than just words
  - ▶ What are the people's motives?
  - ▶ Is this the real issue?
  - ▶ What are they really saying?

**L** = Look interested - get interested

**I** = Involve yourself by responding

**S** = Stay on target

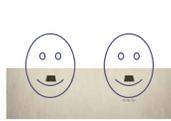
**T** = Test your understanding

**E** = Evaluate the message

**N** = Neutralise your feelings

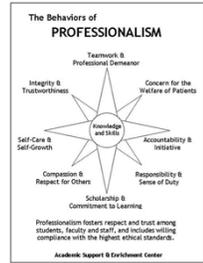
### Avoid prejudgment . . . Or at least try

- ▶ Impossible to avoid
- ▶ Don't let it stand in the way of the truth
- ▶ See beyond your pre-conceptions
- ▶ How?



### Act professionally

- ▶ Calm down
- ▶ Take your ego out of the situation
- ▶ How would you like to be dealt with in this situation?



### Aim for the win-win

- ▶ Both parties should feel like they win
- ▶ Careful negotiation here is key
- ▶ Compromise
  - ▶ Not always possible



### Be creative

- ▶ Every situation is unique
- ▶ There is no panacea
- ▶ There are no real written rules
- ▶ One size DOES NOT fit all



### Difficult situations & Difficult people

- ▶ Never blame the person
  - ▶ Blame the process (if you have to)
- ▶ Be specific
- ▶ Avoid name calling
- ▶ Use your communication skills
- ▶ Confront in private – praise in public



What Difficult Situations Have you Dealt With?

# Hypothetical Situations

## What do you do when . . .

- ▶ Your co-worker takes off his shoes at the office and his feet smell bad
  - ▶ Small problems build up over time
- ▶ Do you have any similarly distracting habits?
- ▶ Can you block it out?
- ▶ Ask them to stop
  - ▶ You get distracted easily



[http://farm1.static.flickr.com/37/118244931\\_899c76c2ed.jpg](http://farm1.static.flickr.com/37/118244931_899c76c2ed.jpg)

## What do you do when . . .

- ▶ A co-worker or boss makes an inappropriate physical advance
  - ▶ Can lead to gossip, discomfort, or danger.
- ▶ Don't ignore it
  - ▶ It will not stop
- ▶ Confront the person
  - ▶ How does it make you feel?
  - ▶ What will you do if it continues?



<http://www.womenandit.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/04/sexual-harassment-office.jpg>

## What do you do when . . .

- ▶ A co-worker incites you to participate in some nasty gossip
  - ▶ Lose people's trust
- ▶ Try changing the conversation
- ▶ Say something nice about the person
- ▶ Simply avoid those gossipers



## What do you do when . . .

- ▶ Someone is stealing your food from the refrigerator
  - ▶ Label your food
  - ▶ Ask around about it
    - ▶ Be non-accusatory
  - ▶ Take other necessary steps



## What do you do when . . .

- ▶ You get involved in a relationship with a co-worker
  - ▶ What could happen?
- ▶ Be professional about it
- ▶ Don't talk about it
- ▶ If it goes wrong -
  - ▶ Be civil
  - ▶ Maybe ask for a transfer



# Difficult Types of People

### The Bulldozer

- ▶ Know it all
- ▶ Threatening
- ▶ Sarcastic
- ▶ Intimidating

Ask him/her questions  
Focus on the solution  
Do not confront this person



### Bullies

- ▶ Loud & hostile
- ▶ Abusive
- ▶ Overwhelming

Let them run down  
Get their attention  
Be direct but non-aggressive  
Don't allow interruptions  
Ask them to leave



### Fire Hose

- ▶ Dampen enthusiasm
- ▶ "It's hopeless"
- ▶ Negative
- ▶ Complaining

Don't be dragged down  
Don't argue  
Listen – ask for alternatives  
Do not agree or apologize  
Switch the focus to problem solving  
Lead by example



### Silent Types

- ▶ Silent/unresponsive
- ▶ Never offer input
- ▶ Pretend like nothing happened

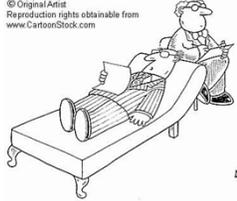
Meet with them individually  
Give them time  
Ask open-ended questions  
Wait for a response  
Try to comment on what's happening



### Control Freak

- ▶ Get into everyone's business
- ▶ Undermine abilities
- ▶ Lack trust
- ▶ Render subordinates ineffective

Build trust  
Work toward authority  
Focus on solution  
Speak your point of view  
Don't let yourself be abused



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"Agenda item 1 : My obsessive need to control"