

Values

One of the most important things to remember in life is that we are all different. At times differences can cause difficulties, but if we understand why people are different and what's driving an individual's behaviour, then this will make it easier for us to value the differences. This will help us avoid difficulties and adapt our behaviour and build good relationships. Just because someone is different to you or has values which are dissimilar to yours, it does not mean that you are 'better' than them or that your values are more important than theirs.

In our personal life we choose our friends and who we mix with, although we do have less choice with our family. Common sense and behavioural models, tells us that two people working together, in the same environment, toward the same goal, should behave similarly and in harmony. However, we have all witnessed such situations that, instead, are filled with argument and tension. This can also apply to our family life, although we may have had the same nurturing, our siblings and extended family, can be very diverse.

In the work place whilst the external forces and the goal are still the same, what the individuals are striving to achieve for themselves is quite different. We should never condemn or criticise another person because of their difference to us. We need to ensure that we treat people in the way we want to be treated and respect another person's values and beliefs. If you are not prepared to express your view about a person to their face, then you should not be expressing that view, as it will usually be hurtful and harmful.

If we cannot appreciate another person's situation by simply putting ourselves in their shoes – we tend to bring our own value systems with us. We need to first accept the possibility that their wants may be quite different to our own and so must try to understand their behaviour in terms of their motivation rather than ours.

By understanding someone's values it will help us:

- Understand where we're coming from
- Understand where others are coming from
- Communicate more effectively
- Improve rapport and relationships
- Avoid conflict
- Move from conflict to co-operation

Perception and Borrowing

Your perception of yourself is subjective and hence, likely to be inaccurate in terms of how others may see you. Therefore, the way you see other people is

also likely to have some inaccuracies. No one is better or superior than another person, we are all just different. The way we are is just a different way of being. If we can respect other people's differences, ideals, opinions and values, it will make our communication with them easier. We should never force or manipulate another person as there is no long-term benefit for you.

There are times where we might need to mask our approach so that we can gain the right result. If you want to build rapport and minimise the opportunity for conflict, it's important to notice what's important to the other person and ensure that you recognise that in the way you communicate with that person.

We may even borrow some of their behaviour. This isn't about changing your personality or sacrificing what gives you a sense of worth or value. It's about making yourself more attractive to the other person. When borrowing, always borrow the other person's strengths, never their weaknesses. If the other person is angry, you reflect assertiveness, not aggression, as assertiveness is the strength behind aggression.

This likely to feel a little uncomfortable but if we can adopt and borrow at least some of the other persons approach it will mean greater harmony. We need to see the borrowing the style the same as using a new or different set of skills. To discover how people like to be treated, observe or listen to how they treat others. The clues are usually there - those who show appreciation like to be appreciated. Those who don't show appreciation may not require it for themselves. Those who are alone may prefer to be alone.

Motives

An individual's motives may be clear to them, but quite puzzling to others. At other times both the individual and those affected by their behaviour can clearly understand what is driving them. In some situations, especially where stress is involved, the individual concerned may be completely unaware of their motives, while others may see them quite clearly.

It is important to be aware of these issues and to take account your own prejudices. This is because our efforts to understand others are coloured by our attitudes towards them and the assumptions we make about their behaviour.

Recognition and Respect

If we truly value another person, then they will value us. Recognise and respect what makes you different. Do not make value judgements about them or prejudice your views. Think about what you want to say and the way you want to say it, that way you will gain success. Remember the saying 'I ain't better than anyone else, but at least I am just as good'. For true diversity,

equality and respect ensure that you recognise the importance of difference, and treat others, and therefore yourself, in the right way.

Ensure that you spend time to recognise and respect others at this very important time of year and ensure you continue this forward in your life – stay focused on the important things, that way you will reap what you sew.

