



Empathize with **Difficult Patients & Families**™

How you can say to the most difficult patients and families "I'm here to help."



Brian Lee CSP
Healthcare's Mr. Loyalty



Empathize with Difficult Patients and Families™

How you can say to the most difficult patients and families “I’m here to help.”

Em-Pa-ty

*“The ability to **understand** and **share the feelings** of another.”*

- Oxford Dictionary

Agenda

1. Design a Personal Winning Strategy
2. What Difficult is Not
3. Three Primary Causes
4. Six Secrets of Empathizing with Difficult Patients and Families

Addenda

- Hot Button Diary
- Empathize-at-a-Glance
- Evaluation Form

*“Create a **relationship first**, then get down to business in **reverse**.”*

- Brian Lee, CSP

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Defining Difficult

What “Difficult” Is Not

- Chronic Behavior:**
- Alcohol or drug abuse
 - Psychological disorder
 - Serious physical problem

Symptoms of

- Chronic Behavior:**
- Poor and inconsistent work results
 - Memory lapse
 - Poor physical condition
 - Delusions and hallucinations
 - Low self-esteem
 - Irregular attendance, tardiness
 - Inappropriate behavior
 - Improper diet
 - Low motivation
 - Poor reasoning

- Recommendations:**
1. Don’t feel the need to **play psychologist**.
 2. Potentially disengage and consult with an **alternate faculty member**.

The “Paradox” of Difficult People

There **are** no difficult people ...
and we are **all** difficult people.

Three Primary Causes of Difficult Behavior

1. Stress.
2. Lack of Flexibility.
3. Chemistry.
4. Poor Health.

*“The last **human freedoms** – the ability to **choose one’s attitude** in a given set of **circumstances**.”*

- Victor Frankl

Defining Difficult (cont'd)

❑ **Secret #1: We Do Have Choices**

“If the only tool is a hammer, you treat everything as a nail.”

- Abraham Maslow

1. **Resolve** the situation
2. Stay and **do nothing***
3. Stay and **behave badly***
4. Change **them***
5. Change the **situation**
6. Change **your** attitude
7. **Accept** them
8. **Vote** with your **feet***
9. P.S. _____

Question: Which options do **you** need to better utilize to be **more effective** and **why?**



My Take-Away:

Recommendation:

Be **proactive** with frustrated, difficult/angry family members and **take control**.

“Whatever I hold in my mind tends to manifest itself in my life. What we believe and assume creates most of our reality and our experience.”

- David Emerald

Defining Difficult (cont'd)

❑ **Secret #2:** Practice the World's **Two Most Powerful Skills** for **Gaining Control** in Difficult Situations

Ask _____ and _____ !

- Never **tell** when you can **ask**, because asking makes people feel important and creates a **sense of control**.
- Take control by asking;
 - “*May I ask you a question?*”
 - “*Do you have any questions I can answer for you?*”
- Practice **mindful listening** with eye contact, verbal attends and restating.
- Listen as if you **Plan To Report**, and **avoid** emotional deaf spots.
- **Paraphrase:**
 - “*Let me see if I understand...*”
 - Use their **name**
 - **Empathize**. Be **present**.
- Practice the **Golden Rule of Listening**
 - “*Listen the way you want to be listened to.*”
- **Two powerful words** to use when confronted with challenging and illogical questions are “*I’m curious.*” The tone of the voice must be **non-judgmental**.
- Avoid the **three traps** of **lousy listening:**
 1. We **don’t** listen.
 2. We _____.
 3. We **talk** too much.

Caution – Watch your:**Verbal – Tone and Words**

Verbal expressions of negativity often sound:

- Condescending
- Angry
- Rude

Behavioral – Observable

- Eye rolling
- Refusal to do work other than own
- Impatient with employees or customers

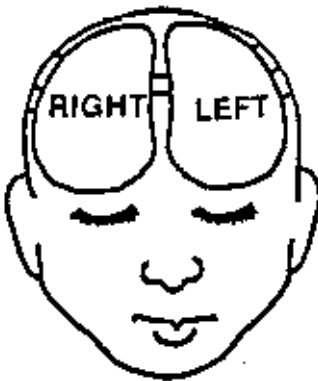
Here’s the question to ask yourself: *Are you really listening, or are you just waiting for your chance to speak?***My Take-Away:**

“Simple human presence is the cornerstone of empathy, and the foundation of what it means to be human.”

- Marcus Engel

Defining Difficult (cont'd)

❑ **Secret #3: Master the Science and Art of the “Two Brains”**

<p>Left Brain is LOGICAL</p> <p>Verbal <input type="radio"/> Logical <input type="radio"/> Naming <input type="radio"/> Sciences <input type="radio"/> Mathematical <input type="radio"/> Reading, writing <input type="radio"/> Rational, controlled <input type="radio"/></p>		<p>Right Brain is EMOTIONAL</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Artistic <input type="radio"/> Nonverbal <input type="radio"/> Musical, songs <input type="radio"/> Face recognition <input type="radio"/> Intuitive <input type="radio"/> Creative <input type="radio"/> Understand humor</p>
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Observations:

- The brain is divided into **two hemispheres**.
- The **left** brain controls the **right** side of the body.
- The **right** brain controls the **left** side of the body.

*“I’ve learned that people will **forget what you said**, people will **forget what you did**, but people will **never forget how you made them feel.**”*

- Maya Angelou

Please Note:

- When we’re **angry**, we’re **not very logical** --- when we’re logical, we’re **not very emotional**.

Recommendations:

1. *“When arguing with a fool, don’t make ignorance the rule.”* – Brian Lee, CSP
2. Stay **balanced** in both brains.
3. Be prepared for and **anticipate** a **“right brained”** response.
4. Deal with your patient’s emotions first by controlling your own.

**My Take-Away:**

Defining Difficult (cont'd)

 Secret #4: Retain Emotional Self-Control by Taking the Problem Seriously...Not Personally

- Check your **self-talk**.
- Keep a 21-day log of **hot buttons** in order to learn your “**early warning signals**” and gain self-control. (see page 12)
- **Acknowledge hot buttons** in difficult people by utilizing the “**feel, felt, found**” communication skill.
 - “*I understand how you feel*”, “or “*I can’t imagine*”
 - “*I felt the same way when...*”
 - “*I found out...*”
- Don’t take the **bait**.

**My Take-Away:**

- Avoid emotional **trigger words** like, “*I can’t*”, “*No*”, “*It’s policy*”
- Use “*I*”, and “*me*” not “*they*”

 Secret #5: Calm Down Angry People by Using the “E-Word”. “E_____”

- Find **common ground** by either **agreeing** or **acknowledging** their position.
- Use **three little words**

- Avoid using “**Yes, but**”. Replace “**but**” with “**and**”
- A **great way** to introduce **new information** “*Are you aware that...*”
- **Empathize**. Let them get it out of their system. **Don’t interrupt**.
- If they choose not to **calm down**, politely **turn them over to someone else**.
- **Try**, “*I’m sorry --- forgive me!*”

**My Take-Away:**

Defining Difficult (cont'd)

❑ **Secret #6:** Keep Your Sanity by Answering the “**One Million Dollar Difficult Person Question**”

“What difference will this make _____ from now?”

P.S. Three tips for handling the **stress** of dealing with difficult people.

1. It is **doubtful** anyone can **win them all**.

*“God grant me -- the **serenity** to accept the thing I cannot change,
the **courage** to change the things I can, and the
wisdom to know the difference.”*

2. Be certain **you** aren't the difficult person.

3. Use **stress reducing tools** (such as):

- Exercise
- Laughter
- Pictures
- An aquarium
- Mood Music



My Take-Away:

Hot Button Diary	Name:
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Directions:

- Make a note of events, experiences, subjects that **you allow** to cause you emotional distress.
- Make **three copies** of this log and keep current for **21 days**.
- **Analyze results** to develop your **own personal strategy**.

Date	Event, Experience, Problem, Subject

"You cannot do all the good the world needs, but the world needs all the good you can do."

- Jana Stanfield

Empathize at a glance...

Empathize with Difficult Patients and Families™

Mission

How you can say to the most difficult patients and families "I'm here to help."

Strategy

1. Be aware that difficult behavior is **caused** by:
 - Stress
 - Lack of flexibility
 - Chemistry
2. Do not confuse difficult with chronic **behavioral problems**, i.e. alcohol or drug abuse, mental disorders, or physical disability.
3. We have **choices**:

1. Resolve the situation	6. Change your attitude
2. Stay and do nothing	7. Accept them
3. Stay and behave badly	8. Vote with your feet
4. Change them	9. Pray
5. Change the situation	• Above all, make certain your behavior is not the cause

People Awareness

4. Never **tell** when you can **ask**, because asking makes people feel important and it creates a **sense of control**.
5. Practice **mindful listening** with eye contact, verbal attends and restating. **Listen** as if you **plan to report**, and avoid emotional deaf spots.
6. Practice the **Golden Rule of Listening**: Listen the way you want to be listened to.

Avoid the three traps of serving people:

- a. We don't listen
- b. We assume
- c. We talk too much

Questions + listening + common sense + persistence = understanding.

Left Brain/Right Brain Thinking

7. When arguing with a **fool**, make sure **they're not doing the same**. Deal with other people's **emotions** first by controlling **your own**.

Emotional Self-Control

8. Check your **self-talk**. Take the problem **seriously** not **personally**. **Don't** take the bait. Keep a 21 day log of hot buttons in order to learn your "**early warning signals**" and gain **self-control**.
9. Acknowledge angry people by utilizing the **feel, felt, found technique**.
10. Find common ground by either agreeing or acknowledging their position: "**Maybe you're right.**" Empathize. Let them **ventilate**. **Don't** interrupt.
11. If angry people choose not to calm down, turn them over to someone else or terminate the contact. Try, "**I'm sorry. Please forgive me!**"

Sane Living

12. Remember - you **can't win 'em all**.

Now it's Your Turn...

PLEASE PRINT

Empathize with Difficult Patients and Families™

Group/Event: 21st Annual Rural Health Conference and Annual General Membership Meeting

Client: Indiana Rural Health Association

Location: French Lick, IN

Date: June 27, 2018

You've just heard from me, now I'd like to hear from you. Evaluation is the "genius" of growth – and I sincerely value your comments about this presentation, so that I can improve in the future. Thank you.

We employ # staff _____ at _____ locations.

1. For me, the most **valuable** idea I learned and **intend to use** is:

2. Presentation **improvements** I would **suggest**:

3. What I would tell others about the **quality of the presenter and content**:

_____ OK to quote me: YES NO

4. On a scale of **1-5, I rate** this presentation as: (Valuable) 5 4 3 2 1 (Poor)

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First Name: _____ Last Name: _____
Organization: _____ Position: _____
City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____
Direct Phone: (_____) _____ Ext. _____ Cell: (_____) _____
Email: _____

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