

Chapter Management: Tips for Problem Solving

1. Speak up when the discussion is in progress: don't gunnysack for later.
2. Don't interpret the other person's motive or label him/her. This puts others on the defensive and he/she won't listen to you with an open mind.
3. Stick to the specific issues. Don't over-generalize. Be very concrete.
4. Don't use the occasion to bring out your museum of resentments. Don't let others do that either. Solve one problem at a time.
5. Never apologize for asserting your rights.
6. Nonverbal cues should be consistent with verbal language. Voice, facial expressions and body language should back up the message, not negate it.
7. Overkill is unnecessary; the mark of the insecure! Use only the amount of force necessary to get the message across.
8. If necessary, take additional steps or bring others in. Don't threaten. . . state what you are going to do and follow through.
9. Look the person in the eye.
10. Don't hit below the belt.
11. Do not collude! (To collude is to pretend to agree when you don't or pretend to be something you aren't.)
12. Avoid a fight. If the problem solving process degenerates into an insult exchange or becomes a repetitive, stale argument, then it is obvious the problem has stalled.