The 7 Habits of Highly Dysfunctional Leaders

American Public Works Association

APWA Leadership & Management Committee Member

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Jim Proce

- City Manager, Anna Texas
  - ACM
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- ICMA-CM - credentialed manager
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- Harvard University Senior Executive in State and Local Govt Program

- APWA
  - APWA Leadership & Management Committee
  - APWA Professional Awards Committee
  - APWA Top Ten Award Committee
  - TPWA Award Committee
  - VP of the NCTB-TPWA
  - APWA 2016 Top Ten Leader
  - APWA 2011 Community Involvement
- NCTCOG
  - PWERT, PWC, REPAC
- FEMA
  - Subcommittee to NAC

APWA Leadership & Management Committee

- The Seven Habits of Highly Dysfunctional Leaders
- Covey's inspiration but with a look in the mirror
- Ted talks format in initial efforts
- Articles in December 2018 Reporter
- Training module on APWA
- Might be a book deal in our future…

- Jonathan Gano, Public Works Director, Des Moines
- Chas Jordan, Principal, Radiant Consulting LLC
- Jim Proce, City Manager, Anna
- Elia Twigg, Project Manager, Target Engineering (Knowledge Team Member)
- Laura Kroeger, Program Manager, Urban Drainage Flood Control District, Denver CO
- Harry Lorick, Principal, LA Consulting Inc.
- Bill Stogsdill, Public Works Director, Fairway KS
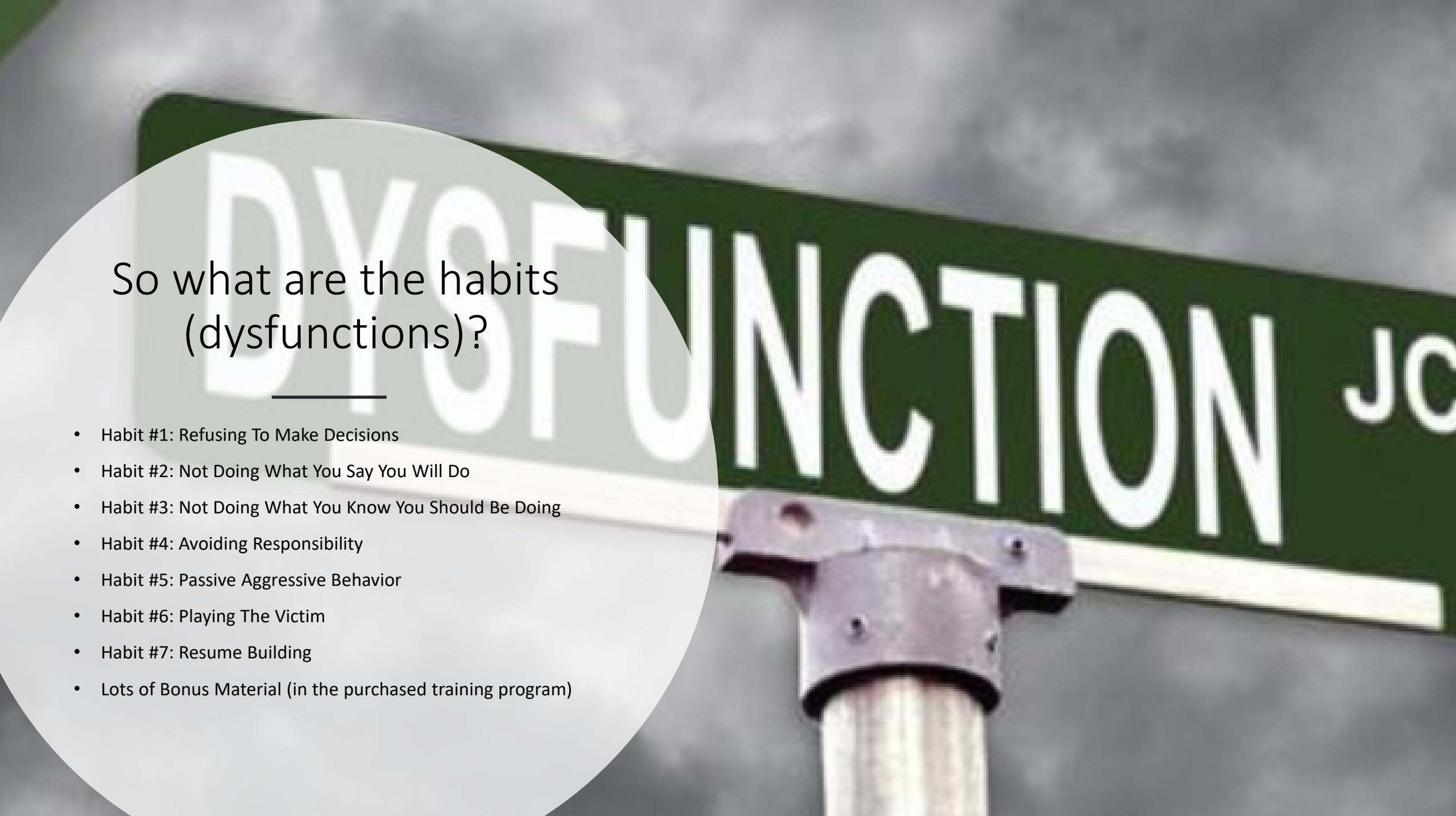
So what are the habits (dysfunctions)?

- Habit #1: Refusing To Make Decisions

- Habit #2: Not Doing What You Say You Will Do

- Habit #3: Not Doing What You Know You Should Be Doing

- Habit #4: Avoiding Responsibility

- Habit #5: Passive Aggressive Behavior

- Habit #6: Playing The Victim

- Habit #7: Resume Building

- Lots of Bonus Material (in the purchased training program)

Inspiration… or what the?

#1: Refusing to make a decision
- how often is the finished product of a meeting "let's have another meeting"
- unwilling to accept risk
- "This isn't the right time"
- ask for more data
- from living in the very short term

#2: Not doing what you say you will do
- cutting bait on a promise
- don't be a phony
- questions one's credibility in the long run

#3: Not doing what you know you should be doing
- basic leadership tasks and higher order leadership:
- strategic planning
- performance measurement/monitoring
- checking in with the team
- maintain morale

#4: Avoiding responsibility:
- not my job
- ignoring basic problems

#5: Passive/aggressive behavior:
- badmouth direct reports or the boss when they're not around
- insecure leaders
- no direct feedback, good or bad
- instructions are vague
- critical of unimportant things
- hoarding of knowledge or information

#6: Playing the victim
- be willing to be the bearer of bad news, "this is what we're going to do" not "You're not going to like this, but we have to because the boss said so." Big difference.
- common in junior leaders, particularly those promoted out of the workgroup they now lead
- basic motivation is that everyone wants to be liked and it's easy, in the moment, to blame "the boss" for unpopular instructions, policies, etc.
- critical to earning the trust of employees; increases insecurity
- Niccolo Machiavelli advised, "Princes should delegate to others the enactment of unpopular measures and keep in their own hands the means of winning favors."   Good for a would-be 'prince', but bad for a leader.

#7: Resume building
- thinking we are indispensable
- empire building, even if it doesn't make sense. Bigger for the sake of bigger, not necessarily better
- not in the best interests of the organization or community
- "it's hard to get a man to understand something when his salary depends on his not understanding it."

Not Doing
What You Know
You Should Be Doing

#3 of the 7 Habits of Dysfunctional Leaders

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Not Doing What You Know You Should Be Doing - Ideas?

- This is an interesting topic and one most of us would not admit we have done

- So, for the sake of this discussion let's just assume we are talking about people we have observed in another organization.

The Not Doing What You Know You Should Be Doing List

Passive resistance

Procrastination

Over-commitment

Mediocre work product

Prioritization

Execution

Planning

Evaluating

Celebrating

Passive Resistance

THIS PROJECT ASSIGNMENT OR TASK IS DUMB

THIS IS NOT WORTHY OF MY TIME

I AM REALLY BUSY ON OTHER PRIORITIES

HE WON'T REMEMBER, SO I WON'T
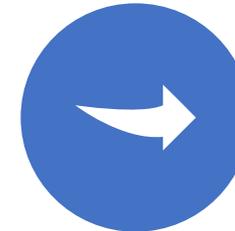
IF ITS REALLY IMPORTANT HE'LL ASK ME AGAIN

Better approach to Passive Resistance

GET CLARIFICATION ON DELIVERABLES

SET SPECIFIC EXPECTATIONS

EXPLAIN YOUR CHALLENGES

SEEK AGREEMENT CONSENSUS FOR COMPROMISE

THE ALTERNATIVE WON'T LIKELY BE YOUR DESIRED OUTCOME

Procrastination
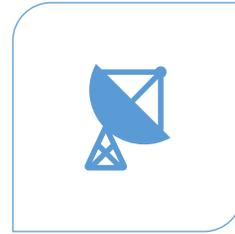
DELIVERY OF BAD NEWS
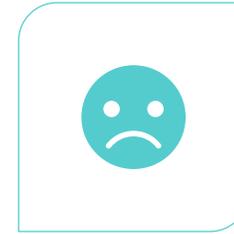
BAD NEWS DOESN'T GET ANY BETTER WITH TIME
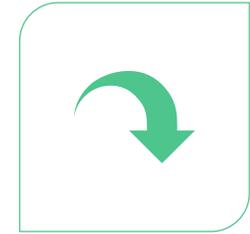
IN SOME CASES IT MAY GET WORSE

PROBABLY BEST TO DO THIS ASAP

BETTER IF YOU CRAFT THE STORY AND DELIVER A POSITIVE SLANT ON A BAD SITUATION

Procrastination

WAITING UNTIL THE LAST MOMENT, OR WORSE YET BEING LATE
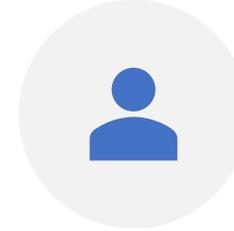
PROCESS INTERRUPTION; DERAILS OTHERS IN PROCESS

DEPENDENCIES FAILED

REPUTATION BUILDING (IN A BAD WAY)

IF YOU'RE IN THIS TRAP YOU NEED TO DIG OUT

GET SOME WINS TO REBUILD

Over-Commitment

- This is inadvertent procrastination
- When you can't say no to anyone or anything
- When you are involved in too many things
- When you are actually good at what you do and everyone knows it and you get loaded down
- When you are otherwise distracted by other things in your life

Mediocre Work Product

- This is where you do what you should be doing
- But you just do the bare minimum, enough to get by, but certainly not your best and what is otherwise expected
- Good engineer/bad manager story

- You need to give things your best effort
- At worst get help and enlist others who may like the undesirable task

Prioritization

Understanding what is important is important

If you are busy you need to have prioritization skills a process and a regiment

Leaving things to chance results in the wrong things getting done

Make lists, use technology, white board things

Planning

This is likely the most obvious

As a manager or someone striving to be a manager you have to think ahead

You have think strategically and predictively

As a former public works director I made decisions for things that may not occur for years

If you are going to need a tree, you need to plant the seed today

Those who need the tree today, failed to plan

Execution

FOLLOW THE PLAN

BE PREPARED FOR CHANGING CONDITIONS
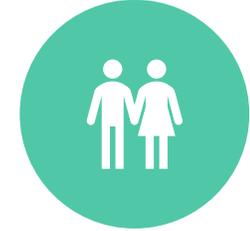
DO WHAT YOU PROMISED

DO WHAT YOU PROMISED WHEN YOU PROMISED

SO TELL ME, HOW LONG WILL THIS TAKE?

HOW DID I FIX THIS GUY?

Evaluating

- You should be measuring what you do and evaluating the results

- Many agencies measure tons of stuff

- Monthly reports that no one reads

- Lets pick no more than a half dozen things that are important and track those, with a strategy to overcome a challenge or deficit

- Failed inspections? Good or bad?

- Work orders? Good or bad?
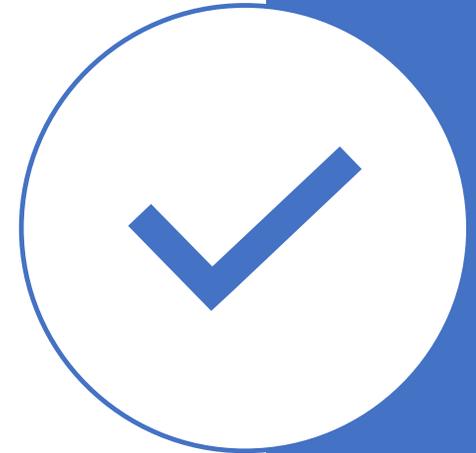
Evaluating

- Debriefing/ after action reports
  - What went well?
  - What went poorly?
  - What could we have done better?
  - What did we learn from this?
  - What actions do we need to plan for follow up?

Celebrating

- When you do all those other things and good things happen

- Celebrate

- Show folks you care

- Show folks you notice

- Show folks you are paying attention

- Which lead to one last items I didn't have on the list

Fostering Relationships-Keys to the Vault

- **Strategic Priorities**
  - Community
  - City Council
  - Management Team/Peers
  - Staff
  - Self

- **Tactical Priorities**
  - City Manager's Office (CEO)
  - Budget
  - City Secretary
  - Payroll
  - Purchasing
  - Human Resources

- **Operational Priorities**
  - Employees
  - Projects
  - Maintenance
  - Expenditures
  - Variance Analysis
  - Productivity
  - Best Practices

Summing it up #3
The **Not Doing What You Know You Should Be Doing** List

- Passive resistance
- Procrastination
- Over-commitment
- Mediocre work product
- Prioritization
- Planning
- Execution
- Evaluating
- Celebrating
- Relationships!

Tools That Allow For Success

HABIT #3: DOING WHAT YOU KNOW YOU SHOULD BE DOING

Note: You do not need to be the top-level administrator to incorporate many of these items into your leadership plan. Even as a team leader you can be consistent about your vision for the team, set clear focus areas and operational goals for your team, etc. While it is certainly nice for top-level administrators "to do what they know they should do" as a leader, if they fail to do so, it does not negate your ability to use many of these tools.

HAVE CLEAR END GOALS

It is important to have foundational documents in place, that tell your team what the priorities and direction are. It is important that these items align with one another and are not just there but are pointed to and used on a regular, even daily basis. These items empower team members to make decisions and take ownership over their work. Some foundational items might include:

a. Clear consistent vision
b. Strategic Plan
c. Operational Activities
d. Consistency of Priorities

ASSESS

How do you know if you've reached the outlined goals if you aren't assessing your work? It is important to assess both the people you lead and the organization in which you operate. You likely are not maximizing your team's capabilities or being consistent in words and action if you are not consistently assessing.

a. Assessment of People
   i. Motivation: What is the motivation level of your team members? What excites them? What motivates them to do their job?
   ii. Skill Level
   iii. Strengths and Challenge Areas: What do they do well? What are areas of challenge?
   iv. Match between job responsibilities and strengths: Are they in a position that allows them to share their strengths with the team? Do their job responsibilities extenuate their areas of challenge? If there are no changes that can occur in their job responsibilities, are their informal ways they can share their strengths? Are there stop gaps that can be put in place, so their challenge areas are not detrimental to their success or that of the team?
   v. Regular performance feedback/coaching

ASSESS

b. Team/Department/Organization
   i. Culture: What is the current culture of your team? What do you want it to be?
   ii. Policies and Procedures: Do the policies and procedures of the team/department/organization support the kind of culture you want to develop? Make sure you are assessing both written policy and procedures as well as unwritten. Many times, the unwritten policies and procedures have greater impact than those that are "on the books."
   iii. Environment: Does the physical environment support the culture you want to create within your team? This may be an area you have little control over if you are a team leader, but something you should strongly consider and work with your team leaders on if you are a department or organizational leader. As an example, if collaboration is important, does your physical environment encourage that behavior or deter it?
   iv. Effectiveness and Alignment: What is the effectiveness of the above items in creating the team you want? Do these items align with your team priorities and with the kind of team you want to develop?

DEFINE AND MEASURE SUCCESS

In order to celebrate successes, you must be able to identify when a success has been achieved. It is important to have a clear definition of what success looks like with regards to:

a. People: The people on your team and their growth and contribution.
b. Programs: The programs you oversee, including the alignment of their purpose and impact.
c. Team/Department/Organization: What does success look like for your team, organization or department? How do you know when this unit has been successful?

Questions to consider:
- Does everyone in your organization define success in the same way?
- Are you using all the tools for measuring success that are available to you?

GENERAL DECISION MAKING FLOW CHART

Identify the Problem ····> **Is the outcome risky or likely to have meaningful long-term consequences?**

No ····> **Identify Options** — Select option that addresses need or issue given major priorities (time, resources, etc.)

Yes ····> **Gather Information** > **Identify Options** > **Identify Pros/Cons of each option** > **Select Option** > **Gather feedback from others**

Do others agree with selected plan?

Develop implementation plan with checkpoints and change matrix. **Yes** <····> **No** — If you feel concerns raised are valid, return to identifying options and involve others.

Implement Plan ····> **Review Decision**

Confrontation

7 Steps of Positive Confrontation

1. **Initiate Contact**
   - Where are good places to initiate confrontation?
   - What about bad places?
   - How many confronters should be included?
   - Are you the best person to confront?

2. **Establish Rapport**
   - Be authentic and friendly.
   - This step may require more or less time depending on your relationship.

3. **Identify Issue/Problem**
   - Use "we" or "I" statements versus "you" statements
   - If the problem is not identified by confrontee, return to step 2.

4. **Problem is Agreed Upon**
   - If agreement connot be reached, return to step 2 or 3.

5. **Obtain Attainable Commitment**
   - Provide the person with an opportunity to succeed; don't set them up to fail.
   - Pledge your support.

6. **Keep Commitment**
   - Establish a regular schedule to check in together and evaluate progress.

7. **Evaluate Progress/Praise Success**
   - Be a supporter as much as possible!
   - Be ready to return to previous steps if success is not being achieved.

Confrontation Do's and Don'ts

Confrontation Do's
- ✔ Confront in private: praise in public.
- ✔ Show respect for the person.
- ✔ Indicate "I care about you."
- ✔ Carefully involve others.
- ✔ Pick a confronter who is respected and admired by the person being confronted. Sometimes who confronts is not an option, it is your job as the supervisor. This may require more effort within Step #2 if you don't have a good relationship with whom you are confronting.
- ✔ Condemn the behavior/action, not the individual.
- ✔ Keep to the issue.
- ✔ Before confronting, get the facts about what happened.
- ✔ Help the person identify the impact and consequences of his/her actions.
- ✔ Clearly define repercussions for the act.
- ✔ Listen to what is being said.
- ✔ Handle silence appropriately.
- ✔ Cool off before confronting.
- ✔ Time the confrontation as close as possible to the inappropriate behavior.
- ✔ Be sincere.
- ✔ Language should reflect that "we have a problem" rather than "you have a problem."
- ✔ Follow through on any agreements made.
- ✔ Show empathy, not sympathy.
- ✔ Be firm in the standards you set.

Confrontation Don'ts
- ✖ Don't attack the individual, physically or otherwise.
- ✖ Don't be condescending or sarcastic.
- ✖ Don't excuse behavior.
- ✖ Don't get trapped by the person's excuse for his/her behavior.

Myths of Confrontation

The 10 Myths Of Confrontation

Myth #1: Confrontation is negative.
Confrontation is merely a means to face something or someone head on, directly, and purposefully. Confronting someone is an attempt to forge a solution, seek a remedy, or simply stay on top of a situation. There's nothing inherently negative or positive about it. Confrontation is essentially neutral.

Myth #2: Confrontation is synonymous with conflict.
Whereas confrontation is a neutral concept on its face, conflict is defined as a state of open, often prolonged fighting; a battle or war or a state of disharmony between incompatible or antithetical persons, ideas, or interests; a clash. Conflict has a clear negative connotation.

Myth #3: Confrontation only occurs when there is conflict.
This is where some of the confusion and misunderstanding about confrontation occurs. People are socialized to avoid confrontation when it's really conflict they're afraid of. Not being direct about their wants and desires, they talk about everything but what needs to be confronted until a conflict erupts. At that point, the confrontation can't help but be associated with conflict.

Myth #4: Confrontation can be avoided.
Confrontation is inevitable. It's up to you to decide if it will be constructive or deconstructive. An old Fram oil filter TV commercial featured a mechanic holding a new oil filter in one hand and a ruined piston assembly in the other saying, "You can pay me now or pay me later." If important issues and expectations aren't confronted sooner, in a positive way, they'll need to be confronted later, when everything is negative.

Myth #5: There is nothing constructive about confrontation.
When confrontation is used as part of a deliberate, intentional, and systematic approach to personnel and organizational productivity, it is immensely constructive. Confronting issues that both parties agreed to address on a predetermined and consistent schedule is a powerful tool for replacing confusion with clarity, which helps everyone feel better.

Myth #6: Clear communication and consistent follow-up are easy for leaders.
It should be simple and straightforward for leaders to communicate clearly and follow up consistently. However, most leaders were made leaders based on mastery of their craft, not communicating and facilitating the progress of others. Therefore, even simple-sounding tasks like communicating effectively are difficult for non-people-oriented leaders. The constructive confrontation process is structured so simple concepts are easily executed.

Myth #7: Continuously confronting progress is micro-managing.
What people commonly call micromanagement is what Ken Blanchard calls seagull management. Managers fly in unannounced, flap their wings loudly, crap on everybody's head, and fly out again. People would rather be left alone than to be dive-bombed. Nevertheless, lack of clear direction and consistent leadership involvement draw the loudest complaints. We've known since the Western Electric Company's Hawthorne studies of the 1920s that people work better when management takes an active interest in what they're doing.

Myth #8: People push back and resent their work being monitored.
Resentment is a direct result of unfulfilled expectations. When people are burdened with excessive responsibility and not granted enough authority to get things done right, they're set up for a fall. When people are made part of setting expectations, and realistic expectations apply to the manager as well as the team member, people are empowered. The efforts become collaborative and the regular reporting becomes a way to ensure that work is being recognized and rewarded. Rewarded behavior is repeated behavior.

Myth #9: Effective leadership requires the courage of a lion.
If leaders follow a prescribed course of continuous communication, securing commitment from team members, confronting noncompliance with the agreed-upon expectations, adjusting expectations accordingly, and celebrating progress, they'll be effective beyond their wildest imaginations. Courage has nothing to do with it. Resolve to faithfully follow the constructive confrontation process is required. The rest will take care of itself.

Myth #10: Confrontation never results in anything positive.
Confrontation has spelled the difference between mediocrity or obscurity and greatness throughout history. Just ask Helen Keller, Bill Walton, and the stockholders of General Electric. Were it not for the unimaginable resolve of Annie Sullivan to confront Helen Keller, the latter would have never been able to speak or write, much less be nominated for a Nobel Prize. If basketball coach John Wooden had not resolutely and consistently confronted his players about the basics of the game, there wouldn't have been a series of great UCLA national championship teams.

Leaders…

- Lead by Example
- Act with Honesty & Integrity
- Get & Stay Organized
- Communicate Effectively
- Are Consistent
- Empower Others

HIGHLY EFFECTIVE & FUNCTIONAL LEADERS

EMPOWER OTHERS
Good leaders empower their teams to achieve maximum success.

LEAD BY EXAMPLE
Lead by example, your employees will look to you for model behavior.
Act with engagement, commitment and responsibility.

ACT WITH HONESTY & INTEGRITY
Good leaders are authentic and have integrity.
Honesty and a good moral compass help to instill trust and a sense of security.

ARE CONSISTENT
Inconsistency causes uncertainty, frustration and distrust.
Good leaders strive to be reasonable and consistent in their acts, behaviors, moods and expectations.

COMMUNICATE EFFECTIVELY
Good communication is key to effective leadership.
It is important to communicate in an honest, diplomatic and straightforward way.

GET AND STAY ORGANIZED
Disorganized leaders set a poor example for others and are often reactive rather than proactive.
Organize your workspace for efficiency and expedience. Walk the talk.

Resources

- The "dysfunction" videos are available here on the APWA YouTube channel:
  - https://youtu.be/flcXUzYQfMk?list=PLbTAQf0hXtkr9Eoh0bJentNleQZnggpsw
- The 7 articles are found here (they are awesome & you should read them!)
  - https://www.slideshare.net/JimProceMBAPWLF/apwa-reporter-december-2018-the-7-habits-of-highly-dysfunctional-leaders
- The entire program, should you want to get the entire program, can be found here:
  - https://www.apwa.net/MYAPWA/Events/MyApwa/Apwa_Public/Education_and_Events/Habits_of_Dysfunctional_Leaders.aspx
- The 3rd habit presentation can be found here:
  - https://www.slideshare.net/JimProceMBAPWLF/not-doing-what-you-know-you-should-be-doing
- The closing act:
  - https://youtu.be/Csk7dZGQtZc