

[TACKLING DIFFICULT PEOPLE]

THURSDAY MAY 13, 2004

Dealing with difficult people needs tact, great communication skills and a leaf out of Lord Krishna's book!

WORK WISE - A fortnightly column by Rahul Kapoor

In our everyday life we come across a lot of people some are easy to get along with and some are very difficult. We give our best to handle these difficult people and often give up on them. We live with these people or work with them but maintain our distance and normally play it safe. Deep inside we have this feeling that this person should change or work on his personality. Very often we even criticize them or avoid them if we can't handle them and even let them spoil our mood!

Very often when people ask me - what the best way to deal with difficult people is, my answer has always been - Commitment to deal with the difficult person will help you to bring out the best in him.

Lord Krishna is considered to be the best communicator ever to have lived on earth. He had the ability and tact to deal with most complex situations and handle the most difficult people. His judgement about people and understanding of human nature is considered par excellence. It's no secret at all that the Pandavas couldn't have won the war of Mahabharata without Lord Krishna backing them.

Let's see how Lord Krishna handled difficult people and difficult situations. On the first day of the war, Arjuna refused to fight against his own brothers and other relatives. He was totally disturbed and lost all the confidence. It's then that Lord Krishna gave him a discourse - the essence of which was that Arjuna should carry on with his job and leave the rest to God. The result of this talk kept Arjuna motivated till the end of the war. Krishna had used **spiritual style** in dealing with Arjuna.

Bheesma Pitamaha, was a very wise man. His maturity, wisdom, loyalty made him a complete man. As Cauravas had his support, no opposition could win any war against them. Krishna knew this fact well and had his own approach in dealing with him. One evening he walked into his camp and spoke with him. At the end of their conversation he asked Pitamaha, whose side are you in - the truth or the evil? This question got Pitamaha thinking the whole night and he finally decided to sleep on the bed of arrows laid by Arjuna. It was Krishna's **brevity of speech**, which helped him dealing with Pitamaha.

Bheema also had trouble defeating Jarasandh. Despite giving his best, Bhima found that Jarasandh was almost impossible to defeat. He turned to Krishna for help. Krishna picked up a stick and broke it into two and threw them in opposite directions. Bheema took a cue from this and tore Jarasandh into two and followed what Krishna directed. The War was won. Krishna used **directive style** in dealing with Bheema.

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Duryodhan, was perhaps the most difficult to deal with. In the last stage of the war when Duryodhan had lost all his brothers, Gandhari asked him to take a dip in the lake and meet her, sans clothes. The idea was that she wanted to take her blind fold off after over 30 years and pass on all the positive energy to make Duryodhana's body that of steel. Krishna was aware of the fact that this will make Duryodhan invincible. So, he waited patiently until Duryodhan had a dip in the lake and asked him how he could meet his mother without clothes on his body. This did Duryodhan in and he wrapped himself with a Banana plantain and the rest as we know is history. Krishna used **diplomacy** in dealing with Duryodhan.

These show how successful Krishna was in adopting different styles to deal with different people. Often in our lives when we come across difficult people we expect them to change and thus rarely succeed with such people. The catch really is that we need to change our strategy to suit the other person and the situation.

So, next time you come across a difficult person, ask your self a question: Are you acting on a complaint or are you acting out of your commitment for dealing with people sensitively, and trying to understand their behavioral patterns. If you are coming from commitment then you will look at the other person as a challenge and deal with him in a unique way and succeed.