

Communication and Teamwork

1. You and me

- An **aggressive** person thinks and behaves as though he/she has rights, wisdom and power, but the other person does not.
- An **assertive** person thinks and behaves as though his/her rights and powers are balanced by those of the other person. (Oxford Dictionary for Advanced Learners: assertive means “expressing opinions and needs with confidence, so people take notice”. In this context, you could add the words: “.....but not aggressively”)
- A **non-assertive** person thinks and behaves as though he/she has no rights, wisdom or power, but the other person does.

	...aggressive person	...assertive person	...non-assertive person
Aggressive person with...	War! Most powerful person wins...for now	You won't be able to push this person around	Bullying....but be careful! He may find a way of getting back at you
Assertive person with...	Strategy to stop being bullied	 This is what I need, and this is what you need. This is what I can do, and this is what I'd like you to do. Let's discuss and find a solution	Helpful, kindly strategy to get this person to realise he has rights, too
Non-assertive person with...	You will go under!	I would like to believe you...but I'm not a strong person like you	Nothing much is going to be achieved here.

See also: behaving like a

	...parent	...child	...adult
parent to...	They should do as we tell them	Do as you are told!	Will get response from adult of: "Don't treat me like a child...do you think I'm stupid or something?."
child to...	I should do as I am told.	We are powerless	
adult to...	"Let's look at the facts...let's look at what is actually happening here"		

And:

	You're not OK	You're OK
I'm not OK	X	X
I'm OK	X	☺

2. “Do as I tell you”, or “Do what the situation requires”?

Rather than push for personal control, Mary Parker Follett (1868-1933) told us that that working pairs, and teams of all sizes, should seek out and agree the “**authority of the situation**” This approach is relevant to many situations, but especially when jobs and situations need to be prioritised and completed to deadlines.

“Personal Control” approach.

- “**Do as I tell you**”. – dictatorial prioritising.
- “I think – you do”. Not a good system in a well-educated society.
- Good for emergencies where there is no time for a debate.
- May be helpful for the “receiver” doing something for the first time or where he/she has limited skills of language or analysis.
- Where the “giver” of the control knows confidential things about the situation that the “receiver” cannot be allowed to know.
- I **tell** you the deadline.

“Authority of the Situation” approach

- “**We need to do what the situation requires**” – this leads to superior analysis and authentic prioritising.
- More than one brain on the job. Giver and receiver agree what is actually required.
- Encourages people to anticipate intelligently, rather than wait “dumbly” to be told. This gives more time for analysis, potential to take prompt action to avoid problems, better work-flow planning. Better time management. Fewer surprises. Fewer panics.
- Less resentment and frustration: “You didn’t tell me that”. Fewer situations of : “...if I’d known that”
- Enables the receiver to mix work and non-work tasks more flexibly

Boje and Rosile (2001) suggest that Follett was seeking to temper scientific management with her own science of the situation, 'one in which management and workers together cooperated to define not only productivity but situations of social justice'. Exploring 'the science of the situation' involved both management and workers studying the situation at hand together. Boje and Rosile (2001) argue that she was 'the first advocate of situation-search models of leadership and cooperation'. This was not to some surface activity: 'the willingness to search for the real values involved on both sides and the ability to bring about an interpenetration of these values' (Follett 1941).

3. All that Jazz (with thanks to Jo Ouston & Co)

“Here’s a paradox. *How is it that jazz players – the spontaneous individualists of the music world – are at the same time the most gifted at merging their individuality into a group?*

Even when they’ve hardly met, jazz players seem to have a sixth sense that makes playing together the most natural thing in the world. But it’s more than that – they seem able to bring the best out of each other and to find new themes and new ideas for making music together that emerge from the collaboration.

Collin Wood, jazz pianist at the top level for over thirty years, was asked to share some of the secrets.

“I think it’s mostly about trust,” Colin says. “And funnily enough, the person you have to trust most is yourself. So if you know you’re good at what you do, you don’t have to push. The rest of the guys trust you, and it’s mutual.”

But isn’t every group different, with people you haven’t necessarily played with before? “To an extent, yes, but when I am asked to do a gig, it’s going to be by someone I know, and I can assume he’s only called people who can perform. Usually I know some of them anyway. It depends on the size of the group, but in a band of, say, seven, I’d be pretty sure to know at least two of the others. They might each know some of the rest, so together we have a shared experience.”

This faith in the ‘shared experience’ is important to Wood. Jazz, he explains, may look free–and–easy, but there are conventions that good players know and observe, basic patterns and techniques for playing together. You have to be able to rely on everyone working in the same frame.

Colin Wood elaborated: “For example, there are certain set patterns in jazz. In the classic trio of piano, bass and drums, the piano always leads, with bass and drums as accompaniment. Nowadays, with more skilled and sophisticated bass players around, the bass too will often take a spell in the lead while the piano goes over to accompaniment. In larger groups, with maybe trumpet, one of the wind instruments will always have session in the lead. So roles switch and change. There is no hierarchy, no boss.

“Jazz is the boss. Every good musician knows a good sound when he hears it, and he contributes any way he can – by dropping back in a support role, or contributing an improvisation, or building on someone else’s idea. Only the music matters.”

Are there lessons in this for management? In a world where we need individual inspiration but can’t get anywhere without collaboration, jazz musicians provide a powerful example. Non-hierarchical rapport within a creative group pursuing excellence can lead to inspired results.

4. Consensus, compromise or

5. Intercultural differences in leadership and decision-making

6. Action-Centred Leadership

7. Objectives – and the dangers of “Top Down”

Etc.

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