

# ♦ Showing Interest ♦ and Expressing Appreciation

## Section 1 ♦ Starting Point: Treating people well



**A. Warm Up:** Discuss the following questions with a partner.

1. Do you have a good relationship with your family and friends? How about with your co-workers and the people you do business with?
2. Do you treat others the way you want to be treated? Explain your answer.
3. Do you think respect, politeness, and good manners can help build and maintain long-term business relationships? Why or why not?

**B. Group Work:**

First underline the words you are not sure of and clarify their meanings with your classmates. Then circle the five most important things to you. If there is something you value that is not on the list, write it in the margin.

Adaptability	Honesty	Respect
Being articulate	Humor	Responsibility
Commitment	Imagination	Self-discipline
Contribution	Integrity	Spontaneity
Creativity	Knowledge	Success
Decisiveness	Logic	Taking risks
Dignity	Optimism	Talent
Efficiency	Orderliness	Tolerance
Excellence	Peace	Truth
Friendship	Politeness	Wealth
Having courage	Quality	Wisdom
Helping others	Reliability	Working hard

Now answer the following questions.

1. Why are these five things important to you?
2. Why is it important to recognize and respect the values that other people hold?
3. How do differences in values lead to problems in communication and conflicts with other people at work?

**C. As a Class:** Answer the questions below.

1. What does it mean to “save face”?
2. Have you ever been in a position where you had to save face?
3. In a business context, what are the potential consequences of not saving face?

## Section 2 ♦ Communication Strategies: Showing Interest

⊙ CD 1 track 7

**Part 1:** Read, listen to, and say these sentences and phrases.

### Showing interest

What are you working on?  
How's it coming along?  
I think you did a nice/great job with/on \_\_\_\_.  
What's going on with you?

### Asking about thoughts and feelings

Are you OK?  
What's on your mind?/Is something on your mind?  
What are you thinking about?  
You seem a little preoccupied with something.  
Is there anything you want to talk about?  
Is something bothering you?

### Making sure something is fine

Is that OK/all right?  
Are you sure/positive?

### Being understanding

No problem. I understand.  
Take your time. There's no rush.  
That's not your fault.  
I'd be happy to \_\_\_\_ if you like.

### Expressing appreciation

Thanks for all your help.  
Thanks for everything you've done.  
Thanks a million. I owe you big time.  
I really appreciate your help (with that).  
You've been very helpful.  
I couldn't have done it without you.

### Responding to appreciation

You're welcome.  
(It was) My pleasure.  
Don't mention it.  
Anytime.  
If you need \_\_\_\_, just let me know.  
No problem.  
Not at all.

**Part 2:** Fill in the blanks with the phrases in **bold** type. When you're finished, read the dialogs with a partner. Then switch roles and read the dialogs again.

⊙ CD 1 track 8

**I owe you big time    appreciate    I thought you did a great job**  
**Don't mention it    Thanks    What's going on    a million**  
**Seriously    What are you working on**

A: \_\_\_\_\_ ?

B: Some visual aids. I have to give another presentation next week.

A: Really? \_\_\_\_\_ with the last one.

B: \_\_\_\_\_. I really \_\_\_\_\_  
 that. \_\_\_\_\_ with you?

A: I'm finishing up the report we were working on.

B: Hey, thanks \_\_\_\_\_. \_\_\_\_\_ .

A: No problem.

B: \_\_\_\_\_! I don't think I could get this presentation  
 done without your help.

A: \_\_\_\_\_ .

**Are you sure    stressed out    I'd be happy to**  
**Is there something on your mind    That's not your fault**

A: You seem a little \_\_\_\_\_. \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_?

B: I just got off the phone with a client who's really upset.

A: What happened?

B: Something with the delivery. The package was damaged when it arrived.

A: \_\_\_\_\_ .

B: I know, but he's blaming us.

A: \_\_\_\_\_ call the delivery company if you like.

B: Thanks, but I'll take care of it this afternoon.

A: \_\_\_\_\_ ?

B: Yeah. This is something I have to deal with.

**I couldn't have done it without you    Are you positive    Take your time**  
**just let me know    rush    My pleasure    thank you for all your help**

A: When do you need me to check the sales figures?

B: \_\_\_\_\_. There's no \_\_\_\_\_ .

A: \_\_\_\_\_ ? Isn't there a deadline?

B: Usually there is, but not this time. Just check them when you can.

A: OK. Oh, I wanted to \_\_\_\_\_ at  
the orientation for new trainees. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_.

B: \_\_\_\_\_ . If you need help again next  
month, \_\_\_\_\_ .

**Part 3:** With a partner, create and practice a dialog based on the following flow chart. Use business communication strategies from this chapter to help you. When you are finished, switch roles. Create and practice a similar dialog **without** using the flow chart.

A1: Show interest by asking what  
your partner is working on.

B1 Say that you are working on a report. Ask  
your partner what's going on with him or her.

A2: Say that you are killing time  
before a meeting.

B2: Use a rejoinder. Then ask if your partner is  
feeling okay (as you notice that she or he  
looks tired).

A3: Respond by saying you're fine.  
You're tired because you stayed  
up late finishing the contract for  
the meeting.

B3: Thank your partner for his or her hard work  
(as you worked on most of this together).

A4: Respond to appreciation. Then  
tell your partner that she or he can  
leave early today.

B4: Make sure this is fine.

A5: Say there's no rush with the report.

B5: Express appreciation.

A6: Use a conversation closer (you  
have to go to the meeting).

B6: Respond to the conversation. Tell your  
partner to have a great weekend.

A7: Respond to your partner.

**Part 4:** Use role play to act out the following situations. When you are finished, switch roles and practice again.

### ***Situation 1***

Your partner (who feels a lot of stress at work) doesn't look good. Ask if s/he is okay.

### ***Situation 2***

Express appreciation for something your partner has done to help you.

**Part 5:** Do you help build self-esteem in others by regularly showing interest and expressing appreciation? With a classmate, ask and answer the following questions to find out.

- ☞ When was the last time you paid someone a compliment?
- ☞ Do you make an effort to check in on people and see how they are doing (whether in person, over the phone, or via email)?
- ☞ Do you offer someone help when you see that they need it?
- ☞ Do you usually focus on the positive in others rather than finding fault or criticizing?
- ☞ Are you receptive to and open-minded about other people's thoughts, ideas, and opinions?
- ☞ Do you make sure to show gratitude for any help others have given you?

## **Section 3 ♦ Reading: When your boss is difficult to deal with**

*Having a bully for a boss can cause you a lot of anxiety at work. With the following exercises and article, you will have an opportunity to examine this issue and express your opinions about it.*

**A. Activate:** What type of people have you had to work for in the past? Describe their personal qualities.

**B. Discuss:** Below are some descriptions of difficult people to work for. What are some effective strategies for dealing with each one? Write your ideas in the box.

**Bullies:** They know what your weak points are and how to exploit them. Teasing, sarcasm, and humiliation are their weapons of choice – all of which affect your performance on the job, your ability to concentrate, and your overall confidence.

**Controllers:** They want to micromanage every part of your job and control everything that goes on in the office.

**Tyrants:** There is one way do to things – their way or the highway. “Shape up or ship out” seems to be their motto.

**Avoiders:** They have a habit of putting things off until a deadline looms, because they are both unorganized and fearful about making the wrong decision. They are open to ideas but paralyzed to act on them in a timely manner.

**Blockheads:** They don't know what they are doing – and everybody knows it. Decisions are often made that baffle employees. This comes from a lack of experience, a lack of knowledge, and/or inadequate information.

Can you think of any other types of difficult bosses and how to handle them?

**C. Read:** Read the following article.

Dealing with a difficult boss is never easy. Everyone has a story or two to tell. And more often than not, it is a feeling of being treated disrespectfully that affects us the most deeply. This cuts to the core of our ego and makes us feel a range of negative emotions on and away from the job.

Rather than letting your boss get you down, however, there are a few things you can do to improve your situation at work. First of all, because being a difficult person is part of their personality, it is highly unlikely that you will be able to affect how your boss acts. Instead, change the way you view and respond to their behavior. Try to understand the reasons why your boss is hard to deal with and devise tactics that will reduce your frustration and anger. One immediate thing you can do is adjust the way you view criticism. Instead of being baited and reacting defensively as if it is a personal attack, acknowledge what your boss is saying and see criticism as useful information to improve your performance on the job. If your boss criticizes your work, it clearly means that they have their own idea on how something should be done. So why not ask them for their advice on how your work can be improved? If you take this a step further and be proactive, you could prevent potential problems before they arise. Well-timed discussions in advance with your boss can minimize their negative actions later when things go wrong.

A second thing you can do is make sure that you are professional at all times. Be the model employee, someone they can always count on. You may not like your boss, but you are being paid to get the job done and carry out what they ask you to do in a dutiful manner. Exceed expectations and gain respect in return. You can also help yourself by reflecting on your own job performance. Regularly check to see where you can make improvements and act accordingly. This will show your boss how seriously you take your job and how devoted you are to doing the best you possibly can.

Finally, positively communicate any issues or concerns you may have. This can lead to successful resolution of the matter. One way to do this is arrange to meet with your boss several times in order to find out what they expect and need from you, and then discuss how you can meet those expectations and needs.

If for some reason making the changes above does not help, you may want to see if other people in your office feel the same way you do. The adage “power in numbers” holds true here. You could also keep a detailed written record of any unpleasant and difficult interactions. This could prove useful if you feel that your job is in danger or you need to explain what is going on to someone higher up on the management chain.



**D. Comprehension Check:** Are the following statements true (T) or false (F)? If a statement is false, rewrite it to make it true.

1. \_\_\_ The feeling of being treated disrespectfully by our boss affects us the most deeply.
2. \_\_\_ It is not difficult to change the way your boss acts toward you.
3. \_\_\_ Changing the way you view criticism can help reduce the amount of frustration and anger you feel.
4. \_\_\_ If your boss criticizes your work, it means that they do not have an idea about how something should be done.
5. \_\_\_ Discussions in advance of a problem could save you a lot of difficulties later.
6. \_\_\_ In order to be professional, you will have to learn to like your boss.
7. \_\_\_ By going beyond what you are asked to do, you will likely earn the respect of your boss.
8. \_\_\_ Regularly reflecting on your own job performance is a waste of time.

Using these statements as a guide (both the correct and corrected ones), try to summarize the article in your own words.

**E. Rethink:** The “Focus” section describes some difficult people to work *for*. It also gives each type a name. Can you think of some difficult people to work *with*? Draw on your own experiences in the workplace. Think of a name for each one. Can you apply the same strategies for dealing with a difficult boss to dealing with an unpleasant co-worker?

## Section 4 ♦ Activity: Johari Window

**Background:** The Johari Window is a model that helps us understand relationships and interactions among people. It was developed by American psychologists Joseph Luft and Harry Ingham in the 1950s while researching group dynamics. It looks like this:

<b>Arena</b>	<b>Blind</b>
<b>Hidden Area</b>	<b>Unknown Area</b>

- ☞ The **arena** contains information you know about yourself and that others know about you (e.g. family, job, hobbies).
- ☞ The **hidden area** contains information you know about yourself but do not tell to other people (e.g. life experiences, hopes, dreams).
- ☞ The **blind area** represents what you do not know about yourself but what others know about you (e.g. attitudes, prejudices, weaknesses).
- ☞ The **unknown area** is the undiscovered part of you. It contains information about you that neither you nor others know (e.g. unremembered experiences or undiscovered talents).

**Exercise:** Copy the Johari Window on a blank piece of paper. Then choose six adjectives from the list below that describe your personality. On a separate sheet of paper, write them down. Keep your list hidden.

able	extroverted	mature	self-assertive
accepting	friendly	modest	self-conscious
adaptable	giving	nervous	sensible
bold	happy	observant	sentimental
brave	helpful	organized	shy
calm	idealistic	patient	silly
caring	independent	powerful	spontaneous
cheerful	ingenious	proud	sympathetic
clever	intelligent	quiet	tense
complex	introverted	reflective	trustworthy
confident	kind	relaxed	warm
dependable	knowledgeable	religious	wise
dignified	logical	responsive	witty
energetic	loving	searching	

Using the same list of adjectives, ask your classmates (as many as possible) to select six words that they think describe your personality. Have each person you ask anonymously write their list on a small piece of paper, fold it up, and give it to you.

When everyone is done, unfold all of the small pieces of paper. In the *arena pane*, write down the adjectives that are on your list and at least one of your classmates' lists. If an adjective appears on several lists, make a note of it (e.g., "able IIII" - four times). In the *hidden area pane*, only write down adjectives you selected and no one else did. In the *blind area*, only write down adjectives your classmates selected and you didn't. All of the adjectives not selected by you or your classmates remain in the *unknown area pane*.

If you have more adjectives in the arena pane, this means that you practice self-disclosure (*i.e.*, you are comfortable sharing appropriate information about yourself in give-and-take relationships with other people) and are willing to accept and learn from feedback (positive or negative). If you have more adjectives in the blind pane, you should take a critical look at how other people see you and reflect on possible changes you can make to improve how you interact with others. If you have more adjectives in the hidden pane, you should consider opening yourself up to other people more than you do now. This will lead to better understanding, cooperation, and trust, while minimizing the potential for confusion, misunderstanding, and poor communication.

**Reaction:** Was the Johari Window revealing in any way? Did any of the adjectives selected by your classmates surprise you? Did the exercise make you think about how others perceive you? What did you learn about yourself?