

## G.R.A.F.T. – WITHOUT THE TOIL!



Graft is an old word. In the modern world, we don't do it anymore. Thanks to modern technology and modern management techniques, we work smarter not harder. Graft has an image of sweat and toil; something our grandparents took for granted and were proud of. However if I suggested to you that using **GRAFT** would help you manage difficult people, without becoming one yourself, would you be interested? You would....well read on!

**GRAFT** stands for: **G**et **R**eal **A**nd **F**ollow **T**hrough

### GET REAL

To get real, you need to recognise that some people, usually a small minority, do not live in the real world. They live in a world they have created for themselves, because it is easier for them –not easier for you or anyone that works alongside them.

The real world is full of contradictions and challenges, surprises and disappointments. It can be fun and awe-inspiring as well as harsh, sad and unpredictable – just like the people who live in it. They can excite, disappoint, entertain, enrage, help and hinder us.

So we make friends and allies with those we are drawn to and make compromises with those we have to. In other words we modify our behaviour to cope with a world full of people different to ourselves.

### SPOT THE UNREAL PEOPLE

For some, the normal rules of behaviour don't seem to apply. They have decided to live in their own "bubble" and cocoon themselves from the impact of those around them. They tend to be uncooperative, unchanging in their views and beliefs, unwilling to accept change or compromise and are unpleasant to work with. But as the writer John Donne wrote (hundreds of years ago): ***"No man is an island, entire of itself."***

### THREE CLUES TO SPOT UNREAL PEOPLE

Listen to what they say. The following lines are a real giveaway:

"If only....we could turn the clocks back."

"Why can't...everyone see my point."

"I can't change....that's the way I am."

Are you beginning to get images of people who work for you? Worse still are you are beginning to think there is absolutely nothing you can do about it? Don't despair – there is an answer. Here are three easy steps to help you.

### HELP THEM GET REAL

Encourage them to look around and see the world as it is now. Invite them to describe the world they grew up in compared to now.

Back then a wireless was a radio with valves in it and was tuned by a hand-turned knob. The crackles and whistles came free. Wireless now describes advanced computerised technology, capable of making connections with its component parts, without connecting wires –and is crystal clear.

The first time you have evidence that the behaviour has changed from the old way, recognise it and praise them for their effort. Remember also that you are not asking them to change their personality, just their behaviour.

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## HELP THEM SEE THEMSELVES

One of the problems with “problem people” is that they rarely see themselves as others see them. Instead of constantly telling them that they need to change their attitude (always dangerous territory which usually **ends up with people becoming very defensive**), **get them to tell you how their *behaviour* affects; You, your team, your company, your customers/clients**

If they find this hard (some people find it impossible), then you can tell them. Ask them how they think their behaviour impacts on the people they work with or people who are close to them.

You might also tell them how *they* react, when they are on the receiving end of the behaviour they exhibit to others. This is known as “holding up a self-mirror.” When some people are forced to take a good look at themselves, they often do not like what they see. So don’t be surprised if they find it easier to deny what is obvious to you and everyone else around them.

## STEP 3. FOLLOW THROUGH

This is where most managers fail. Having the conversation is a good start but if both of you do not “Follow Through”, the change will not take place. Do not expect an overnight change in behaviour. Remember this person has spent a lifetime perfecting their current behaviour - they will probably find the change hard, but not impossible. Remind them of the words of Henry Ford: **“Whether you think you can or think you can’t, you are probably right.”** Remember also that you are not asking them to change their personality, just their behaviour. **“Catch them doing something good and tell them!”** as Ken Blanchard exhorts us. Recognise that for them this has been a big leap forward, even though it looks like a small step to you.

## WHAT IF THEY DON’T “BUY –IN”?

For the 1% who, despite all your efforts, chose to stay in their own world, ‘Follow Through’, again. Alert them to the consequences of their chosen behaviour. And remember this – the choice is their’s. You cannot force them to change but you can - and must make it very clear to them of the consequences of their continued behaviour which potentially threatens;

**Your role as manager, the team you manage, the company you work for, the customers you rely on**

No doubt your organisation has a well-drafted procedure on the steps that must be followed when dealing with sustained non-performance. My advice to you is to follow it to the letter of the law and take the time to make sure you do. If you don’t, you may find it difficult to impress the distinguished members of an Industrial Tribunal – a learning experience in itself but I wouldn’t recommend it.

In summary: Let **GRAFT (Get Real And Follow Through) take the toil out of managing people who make problems for you and your people.**

**Good luck!**

Gerry Lynch

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Gerry Lynch specialises in helping managers to get better performance from their people. If you are interested in finding out more about how he can help the people in your organisation become more effective people managers, please contact him at:

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