You might go to the office in the New Year with a smile on your face, but there are people who seem determined to _____ it _____. I'm talking about _____ people.

Every office has them. They might be uncooperative, rude, _____, _____ competitive, or just _____ unpleasant. Whatever the case, they're a _____ in the _____ to deal with. These problem people test our patience and _____ our _____. But they don't have to. You just need to _____ to a few basic principles and you'll have better success in dealing with these situations.

Today I want to talk about how to deal with specific _____ with these difficult people. Maybe you're in a meeting and someone is screaming and shouting at everyone and everything. Or maybe a _____ colleague walks up to your desk and wants to start an argument. Or maybe someone on your project team is in a really bad mood. These are the kinds of incidents I'm talking about.

So how do we deal with them? Firstly, try not to judge the person. Don't _____ you know what's going on. The source of the person's behavior might be completely _____ to you or work. It might simply be coming out in your presence. The other thing you need to realize is that difficult people are often difficult because of _____ or fear. For both of these reasons, reacting in ways that increase _____ are going to be _____. Instead, you need to find ways to _____ anxiety.

This means, _____ _____ _____, remaining cool, calm and collected. Stay _____ rather than becoming emotional. Even if the person seems to be _____ you, try not to get involved in an argument. _____ the _____ and, even if the person is getting personal, don't stoop to their level. In many cases, remaining calm and refusing to involve yourself in an argument can _____ the situation relatively quickly. So, if someone says to you "Hey Jack, your idea stinks. That would never work in a million years," _____ the _____ to_____, "Yeah, well your idea isn't so hot either."

If the person _____, one technique you can use is to repeat back what he or she is saying. Like this: "So, you think my idea stinks and it would never work?" Or you can rephrase it, like this: "So, you think my idea is terrible and I don't know what I'm talking about?" Just be careful not to _____ too much. You might cause a bigger argument if you _____ what someone says. But if you repeat

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back the basic idea or words, sometimes people will realize what they've just said and how it must sound.

Now, sometimes people cause problems because they don't feel understood. A solution for that is very simple: listen. Hear what the person has to say, invite him to explain more, and ask questions about his opinion. Just remember to focus on the ideas, not the personal attacks or issues. If you _____ a difficult person the _____, rather than taking it away from him, you will sometimes see him turn a corner and become more positive.

And let's not forget some direct techniques. In some _____, you can simply tell someone directly that his behavior is _____ or disrespectful and ask him very kindly to change. Remember to focus on behavior, not character. It's okay to say, "Brad, everyone would feel more comfortable if you would lower your voice and focus on the task at hand." That's much better than saying "Brad, you're a terrible grouch and we can't stand being around you," even if that's what you really want to say.

Great. So remember to keep your cool, to listen and understand as well as possible, and to show or tell someone the effects of their behavior. If you follow these principles, you'll have much better success with those difficult people.

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