**PEOPLE SKILLS**

**SCRIPT**

**Harriette Walters**

**Introduction**

Amazing to think about the different roles directors have…the different hats we wear, the different skills we need. We are a musician, a voice teacher, a coach, a CEO, a personnel manager, a long range planner, a cheerleader, a social worker, counselor, and psychologist. Sometimes we feel like we need to be Superwoman/ Superman! We can improve all of these skills.

Definition of People Skills = understanding ourselves and moderating our responses

Listening and speaking effectively and empathizing accurately

Building relationships of trust, respect, and productive interactions

Businesses define “hard skills” vs. “soft skills”

Hard Skills = tangible, teachable, skills and abilities that allow you to perform your job

Soft skills – emotional intelligence, managing behavior, getting along with others

Harder to measure but just as important

Can you think of someone who excels at some skill or ability but doesn’t seem to get the promotion or achieve in their job or hobby because of minimal people skills.

True of directors also.

Filling Our Tool Boxes

Some people have empty tool boxes where people tools are concerned. Or they have one tool: a sledge hammer…and try to address every personal situation with the same tool. Just like you need different tools for different household projects – we could all benefit from filling our tool box with more people tools.

**Techniques for Improved People Skills**

1. Respect their right to have differing ideas, values, opinions. Even embrace the value of having different temperaments around you. Describe Florence Littauer’s study on the personality temperaments: sanguine, melancholy, choleric, and phlegmatic
2. Accept that there will always be critics. Even Noah had critics while building the ark. We won’t please everyone, no matter what.
3. Find common ground. Create a shared experience that reduces the differences between you.
4. Emphasize the positives. “Catch” someone doing something well and lavish praise on them.
5. Validate the feelings that are revealed. Isn’t it frustrating when people say “you shouldn’t feel that way.” People want to be heard. Try: “I promise you I will think about that.”
6. Stick to the facts –especially in conflict. Be rational. Emotions can get in the way of communication.
7. Discuss the behavior, not the behaver. Never put up with personal attacks and never dish them out.
8. Practice good listening skills. Describe three common non-listening behaviors: interrupting, the me-too syndrome and instant advice giving. Then share the acronym to remember good listening habits: FAD – focus, accept, and draw out.
9. Try an I Feel Statement When you…..name a specific behavior, I feel…name a feeling, Because…explain the reason for your feeling. Works for pleasant situations as well as conflict.
10. Diffuse the anger. Describe the call from the angry parent and Sally Egleston’s vacuum cleaner complaint situation. Describe aikito – martial arts form where you reduce the conflict instead of stepping into it. Tell story about the substitute teacher.
11. Don’t lose your cool. Use the RID message of managing anger: recognize your anger signals, identify something positive about the situation, do something constructive to calm down
12. Think before you speak. We are judged by what we say…not what we meant to say. Allow others to speak. When you’re talking, you’re not learning anything new. Mark Twain’s quote: If we were supposed to talk more than we listen, we would have been given two mouths and one ear!” Beware of: hogging, frogging, flogging, bogging, or fogging Hogging = monopolizing the conversation, talking too much. Frogging = jumping from one topic to another without any resolution, leaving others’ frazzled. Flogging = attacking a person rather than differing with the idea. Sometimes we don’t accept an idea instantly because we don’t like the person. Opposite can also be true – we accept an idea too readily just because we like the person. Bogging = discussing something to death, beating an issue into the ground. Fogging = evading issues, avoiding topics, being vague, insincere, defensive.
13. Be aware of volatile language and body language. Should, have to, must….people react strongly to these words. Same with aggressive body language like pointing or backing someone against a wall.
14. Keep your duties clear. The good of the many outweighs the needs of the few.
15. Admit when you are wrong.
The easiest way to eat crow is while it’s still warm. The colder it gets, the harder it is to swallow.” Forgive others. “Forgiveness is a funny thing. It warms the heart but cools the sting.” “She who forgives ends the quarrel.” Honesty really IS the best policy.
16. Use specific praise. Studies show we tend to be very specific with our criticism but vague with our praise. Vague: You look nice. Specific: I love the way that color brings out your eyes. Vague: This was a good rehearsal tonight. Specific: Have audience fill in.
17. Never underestimate the personal touch. Go out for a cup of coffee, a card, a flower, a hug.

**CLOSURE**

Looking back at the 17 techniques:

What are two techniques that you use easily and readily?

What are two techniques that you might want to put in your toolbox and try sometime?

When I was new director:

I wanted everyone to like me.

I wanted everyone to be like me.

I didn’t want to hurt anyone’s feelings.

I had my own feelings hurt easily.

I was a coward.

Hopefully we’ve opened up that tool box and looked at a few, dusted off a few old ones, and possibly put a few new ones in there that we’ll try this year.