

Six Reasons People Struggle at Work

Below are the **six reasons why people struggle at work**. Unresolved, these are like subtle poisons that drain the life out of our teams and hinder the work of Christ through us. Often we fail to identify the root issue. Our attempts to fix things then may leave things even worse than before. Use this tool to help you identify and understand the nature of the root issue impacting performance. As much as it depends on you, then, free people from that what binds them and create an environment in which they can thrive!

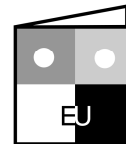
<p>1. ABILITY:</p> <p>The employee is struggling because there is a mismatch between his natural talents or giftedness and the requirements of the job. The employee is not being paid to do what he or she does well. This can lead to boredom, frustration, discouragement or sometimes, an oblivious continuation of sub-standard performance.</p>	<p>2. WILLINGNESS:</p> <p>The employee's performance is unacceptable because he lacks some basic internal motivation for the job/task. He knows what has to do to fix a performance issue, and he has the ability and support to do it. But he is unwilling to change. Many factors impact motivation: personal issues, boredom, stress, interest, distraction, etc.</p>
<p>3. DIRECTION & SUPPORT:</p> <p>A manager must provide clear direction and emotional and practical support. Effective managers know to provide these according to the needs of the individual employee relative to the task at hand. Not done well, employees will struggle with too little direction (unclear performance expectations) or too much (micromanagement) coupled with the discouragement and insecurity that comes from a lack of support. The answer to this is Situational Leadership™ which calls for a flexible leadership style to meet the needs of each situation.</p>	<p>4. INHERENT JOB FLAWS:</p> <p>The employee is struggling because she is locked in an impossible situation (or perceives it as such). The expectations are clear and the manager supportive, but flawed expectations or processes will eventually doom her to failure. Often blame is then assigned to the employee, rather than the flawed environment.</p>
<p>5. STYLE DIFFERENCES:</p> <p>The employee is struggling because differing styles have resulted in strained relationships at work. An employee may endure for long periods of time, but left unresolved, can become locked in a "death spiral" of second-guessing, cynicism and unfair value judgments about a colleague or boss.</p>	<p>6. INTERPERSONAL CONFLICT:</p> <p>The employee is struggling because he perceives that he has been mistreated, and this mistreatment is unresolved and possibly unacknowledged. Unlike "differences" in #5, here it is a question of honesty, integrity, fairness, or malicious intent in a key work relationship.</p>

THESE factors can show up alone or in concert with each other. One factor may cause another, compounding the problem. **Identifying the root issue is critical** to finding a remedy.

BOTH the employee and the manager bear responsibility for recognizing a problem and seeking a solution.

NEED HELP? The Training & Development has tools to help diagnose and address these common issues.

2 Two Complicating Factors...



Question: So what do I do to help someone who is struggling?
Answer: It all depends on “Awareness” and “Accuracy”

There are two complicating dynamics that surround the Big Six issues that radically influence one’s ability to “fix things up.” They are the dynamics of AWARENESS, and ACCURACY.

AWARE	BLIND
REALITY	PERCEPTION

AWARENESS: Until a person can actually see and describe their problem, it is difficult for them to take steps to resolve it. If one does not understand the root cause(s) of the issue, one must start by paying attention to the noticeable results of it.

AWARENESS	If no...	If yes...
<p>IS there awareness of the results of the problem (or the symptoms that there is a problem <i>(Such as frustration, poor productivity, exhaustion, lack of initiative, low energy, stress, etc.)</i>)?</p> <p>CAN he/she describe them? Does he/she understand their impact?</p>	<p>Describe the symptoms as you see them. Test for agreement on the symptoms.</p>	<p>Exploring what is causing these symptoms to occur? Test for agreement.</p>
<p>IS there awareness of the root causes of the problem (one of the Big Six)?</p> <p>DOES he/she understand and take ownership for his/her role in creating or feeding the root cause?</p>	<p>Reflect on the dynamics that led to the problem. Test for agreement on possible root causes.</p>	<p>What steps can we take to fix this situation? What can I do? What can you do?</p>

WITHOUT awareness of the issue(s) or its impact, it is quite difficult to work on a solution. Very closely linked to awareness is desire. Both the manager and the employee must possess an honest desire to get things back on track.

ACCURACY: One must distinguish between what is really happening from what is perceived as happening. This is messy, imprecise business. Focus your questions on measurable, observable behaviors first, and the emotions next.

FACT:	INTERPRETATION:
<p>What actually transpired. Measurable, observable, behaviors (<i>what someone does or says</i>).</p>	<p>What I assume to be the motivation and intent behind the facts.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • She was a ½-hour late for work 4 days in a row. • He struggles with Microsoft Excel • I didn't get promoted. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • She doesn't care about work. • Data analysis must not be his strength. • My manager has been unfair.

It is often very difficult to wade through emotions and accusations and get a clear picture of what is really going on. **Asking questions** to identify fact and expose interpretation is a powerful technique that most people, often in retrospect, will find helpful.

Tell me what happened (fact)? How did that make you feel (interpretation)? What are you seeing this person do (fact)? What do you make of it (interpretation)? Are there any other explanations? (challenging the interpretation)