CONCEPTS OF INDIVIDUALITY

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Dr. Norman R. F. Maier, professor of psychology at the University of Michigan, was born in Sebewaing, Michigan in 1900. He was a student at Wayne University from 1919 to 1921, and received his A.B. degree from the University of Michigan in 1923, his A.M. in 1925, and Ph.D. in 1928. In 1926-27 he did graduate work at the University of Berlin. He began a teaching career as an assistant professor at Long Island University in 1928; was a fellow of the National Research Council, University of Chicago, from 1929 to 1931; an instructor of psychology, University of Michigan, until 1935; an assistant professor until 1939, at which time he became an associate professor, attaining full professorship in 1945. He has done extensive research on reasoning, animal behavior, brain physiology, frustration, industrial psychology, and human relations. He has worked intensively as a consultant for the Michigan Bell Telephone Company, the Ohio Bell Telephone Company, the Detroit Edison Company, the Dow Chemical Company, and the Hammermill Paper Company. Presently, he is working with three small companies on problems in companies in which all levels of management can be brought in one group. He was awarded the American Association for the Advancement of Science $1,000 prize in 1938, and the Henry Russell award by the University of Michigan in 1939. He is the author of: "Psychological Approach to Literary Criticism" (with Reninger), 1933; "Principles of Animal Psychology" (with Schneirla), 1935; "Studies of Abnormal Behavior in the Rat," 1939; "Psychology in Industry," 1946; "Frustration: the Study of Behavior Without a Goal," 1949; and "Principles of Human Relations," 1952. In addition, he has contributed many articles to science journals.

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CAPTAIN CARLSON: General Greeley and gentlemen: I am sure that Friday's discussion impressed us all with the importance of evaluating individual behavior in the work situation. Perhaps all too frequently we make decisions based on the merits of the question involved without considering the feelings and the viewpoints of the individuals concerned. This morning we are particularly fortunate in having Dr. Maier to discuss this subject in human relations with us.

He has had considerable experience in the field of understanding people, as a professor of psychology at the University of Michigan and as a consultant with industry. He is the author of several books, as you must have noted from his biographical sketch. He has contributed to scientific journals and has done intensive original research.

Gentlemen, it is a real pleasure for me to present Dr. Norman R. F. Maier.

DR. MAIER: Captain Carlson, faculty and students of the Industrial College: I see as my subject the problem of dealing with people, especially under the difficult circumstances when you find that people are different. But today, before I get into that, I would like to give you what I would call my philosophy of human relations.

A good many of the things you do, depend upon your outlook. So I am going to make a rather naive assumption at the outset, and that is to say that all the problems we have with people are not due to the fact that people are bad, but that we misunderstand them. In other words, a natural implication would be that if we understood all people, there would be no bad people.

If I assume that my problems with another individual are because he is a bad person, then the only thing I can do is to sit and wait until he changes, and that might be a long wait. If we want to solve a problem, we have got to think in terms of what we can do about it; and as long as it is the other fellow's fault, I can't think of anything to do but sit around and wait.

If, on the other hand, we assume that the problems with people are due to misunderstandings, then we can think in terms of what we can do to prevent or clear up misunderstandings. We can think in terms of various kinds of things we can do. Then this notion of getting even with someone or showing him up drops out of the picture.

What are some of the sources of misunderstanding? I want to talk about four of those today. First, we in psychology, recognize that behavior is not only a function of the organism or the individual, but also of the environment or stimulating conditions, that is, the organism is always interacting with his environment. In other words, the same organism under a different situation behaves differently, which means that the situation is making a contribution.

It also means that if I assume that the behavior of an individual is entirely dependent upon his nature, I have misunderstood him, because his behavior is not only a matter of his nature, but also of the kind of situation in which he finds himself.

Furthermore, I am in a position where I can alter, change, or influence another's behavior by doing things to the situation. Take the simple case of trying to reduce highway accidents, head-on collisions in particular. Without training people, without talking to people, let us put a white line down the center of the highway. That makes a big change in the driving behavior of people. It is natural for people to go down the middle of something. So the people going north drive down the middle of this road and the people going south drive down the middle of the road, and that creates difficulties. When you have a line down the middle, you in effect make two roads. Without training the people, they go down the middle of their halves. And that has done more to reduce head-on collisions than anything else you could do in training people.

I can go right down the line and mention a great variety of situational controls that have been introduced to change behavior. If certain kinds of errors have been made in an office, what can be done to modify the work procedure so that these errors will not recur? If a supervisor says: "The trouble with the men who report to me is that they don't have enough responsibility. They have no initiative. I always have to be Johnny-on-the-spot to see that a thing gets done. If I only had more responsible people, I could get along much better. The trouble is, my men aren't responsible." So he sits around wishing there were a greater number of responsible people.

On the other hand, what can you do to create responsible behavior? Well, one of the simplest ways to make people responsible is to give them responsibility. The whole problem is, doing a good job of delegating. In other words, the leader who delegates creates more responsible people than the leader who hangs on to as much as he can and merely delegates part of the job, but reserves the right to pass judgment and to criticize.

That is a large area, and we could spend the rest of the morning talking about what you can do to control behavior by doing things to

the situation. But today I just want to mention that as one of the factors that leads to misunderstanding. A failure to recognize the situational contribution is to misunderstand people.

The next source of misunderstanding is the kind of misunderstanding that results from differences in attitude. I am going to draw something in the air here. I hope you can see it. Suppose I drew this, V and then something like this Λ , (drawing with his finger). Then the figure would be W . What is it? If you looked at the figure, what would it be for you? (Pauses for audience responses and interaction.) Is it overlapping Z's? What else might it be? A couple of X's? What else might it be? A diamond? It appears we don't all agree.

Now, we could get into an argument as to who is right, couldn't we? If I see myself writing a W on top of an M, and I insist that that is right and that you people who see X's are wrong, then, of course, I can say you are wrong because anybody can see it is a W on top of an M. And I say anybody can see that because I can see it; and, if I can see it, even a stupid man ought to be able to see it.

If you insist you see X's, the whole issue now becomes a question, Who is right? We can get into an argument about the way we see it. Well, if we see it our way, it is very easy to say that we can't see how anybody else can be so dumb as not to see it. Then we start degrading each other. And it doesn't seem to occur to people, particularly when they are talking about politics or something of that sort, that the way you see it is determined by what you make out of it. What it really is, is quite apart from what you make out of it. In other words, the same situation, the same set of facts, the same realities, can be viewed in quite different ways; and if we expect other people to see things our way, we are doing one of the best things we can do to keep them from seeing it our way.

That is the sort of thing we mean by "attitude." An attitude is a tendency to interpret a certain way. People with different attitudes or with opposed attitudes are in the poorest position for changing each other.

One of the best ways of changing another fellow's attitude is to first find out what his attitude is, find out the way he sees something. If you can understand how somebody else sees something, you have already started to influence him and also will be better able to understand how he feels, and so on.

You will always have attitude differences when you have differences in backgrounds, differences in group membership. So you would expect people in different countries to see things differently. You would

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expect management and labor to see things differently. You would expect officers of different ranks to see things differently.

And just because somebody says, "I agree with you," doesn't mean that he does. As a matter of fact, I am always suspicious when people agree too much, because it may mean that they are afraid to disagree.

The fact is that whatever we look at we also interpret. Part of what we see depends upon what a thing is and part of what we see depends upon how we interpret it, that is, what we make of it. And so there will always be an individual or personal factor included in the way people see things. Thus, attitudes necessarily will make for differences in outlook. What a thing really is, is something that people will argue about.

Let us say that management in a plant wants to do what is right for their employees and give them a better attitude. So with the best intentions in the world the managers say, "We will give them rest pauses. We will make the pauses long enough to permit them to get coffee." Just to see that no employees miss the rest pause, supervisors ring a bell. Then, of course, so employees don't forget to come back to work, they ring the bell again.

The employees are still irritated. They speak of the new plan as regimentation. The bell, instead of letting them know that it's time to take the rest pause, becomes a kind of ordering about. It tells them when to go and when to come back. So they get very irritated. "Regimentation" they call it.

With complete misunderstanding management says: "Employees nowadays are so disagreeable. We give them something, and they don't even appreciate it." Maybe if the company had some other way of letting employees know when to take a rest, it would be all right. You see, it all goes back to when these employees were youngsters and went to school. They rang a bell when it was time for recess and again when it was time to come back in. When they finished school they went out and got jobs and they thought they were all grown up. What did they find?--control by bells again. That gets them down. You see, when we understand what is back of this behavior, the employees don't seem to be so disagreeable after all.

A third source of misunderstanding arises because of our misunderstanding of what frustration does to us. When we become frustrated--that means, when there are obstacles in our path, but we can't overcome the obstacles; and when there is pressure making us feel we must overcome the obstacles--we become emotional creatures and stop behaving intelligently. Thus the state of frustration makes people stop their problem-solving behavior. Different individuals become frustrated at

different stages of the problem-solving pressures, but they all eventually can reach a point where problem-solving behavior ceases and frustrated behavior takes over. Most frustrated behavior is characterized by attack or aggression. When you become frustrated, you have got to slap something around.

The important thing that makes for misunderstanding is that the person who is frustrated just has to slap something around. What he slaps around doesn't make so much difference to him, but the fellow who gets slapped around misunderstands. He thinks the frustrated person is mad at him. For example, you have had a hard day at the office, because you have been under pressure, so you go home and kick your wife and kids around. She misunderstands you when she asks, "What are you mad at me for?"

Maybe you think you are mad at her. Maybe you feel you at least must explain to her what she did wrong, so that you can appear to be an intelligent person. As a matter of fact, usually you think that it is her fault, which at least helps to save your face and makes you feel like a logical person. But the fact remains, when you become frustrated, you are not a logical person; you are a hateful person. You have to have something to push around and you aren't very particular what it is.

If you are frustrated at home, then you come to work and find somebody there to push around, somebody that is handy. A person who is higher in rank than you are, I would say, isn't very handy. So your inclination is to push around those men who have ranks below yours, and then they misunderstand you.

Another thing that frustration does is to make you more simple. We call it regression, which is just the opposite of growing up. A child that has already been housebroken, when frustrated because the affection has been given to a new arrival, may at the age of five begin wetting the bed again. That is an example of regression, simplification in behavior.

Sometimes we act more like children--for example, we sometimes engage in name calling. We start calling all people who belong to a certain group by names; and, combining regression with aggression, these are usually uncomplimentary names. When we generalize and say, "All people who belong to a certain group are of such-and-such quality," we are acting like the child who is calling every animal by the name of "Doggie."

Persons who show regression don't make essential distinctions, the kind of distinctions that are requisite to constructive problem-solving behavior. Growing up and thinking critically means an ability to make distinctions, or at least we make fewer distinctions. That is the kind of thing we mean by "regression."

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As with aggression, it has been experimentally demonstrated that when we are placed in a frustrating situation, we act more like children. So when somebody is not acting his age, we are not understanding him if we assume that he hasn't the ability to act his age. He just doesn't have the ability now.

Another kind of behavior that appears during frustration is a kind of rigidity. We might call it stubbornness. When you become frustrated, you become stubborn. We call it fixation. Call it what you will, it has been experimentally demonstrated that when frustration occurs, people begin to repeat behavior that doesn't solve problems. We can get animals to bang their heads against a wall over and over and over; the more they get hurt, the more they do it.

In this Boston night club fire, observers wondered why the people didn't behave more intelligently. Why did they keep banging away at a locked door when they couldn't get through? That was just the opposite of problem-solving behavior, which introduces variability. When you vary your behavior you try out different things. Why didn't they try the back entrance? Why didn't they break the plate glass window? Why didn't they do something intelligent? You should not expect that kind of behavior under frustration. A panic situation is a frustrating situation, and behavior is senseless and repetitive.

We could say, for example--and it has been experimentally demonstrated--that if you introduce frustration into a learning situation, you also slow down the learning. You slow it down markedly, for the simple reason that learning means that you have undergone a change. If you learn something, you must change. When you haven't changed, you haven't learned. Final frustration makes you rigid. You are going to be harder to change than when not frustrated.

So, under frustrating conditions we really do not have good training conditions. And, of course, right through industrial training the important thing is to have relaxed people. Instructors have to do what they can to avoid producting frustration in those who must learn.

Now, these behaviors--rigidity, regression, and aggression--all appear in one degree or another during a state of frustration. They are frustrations that are produced and misunderstandings that arise, and you don't recognize them for what they are. So when your child tells you that he hopes your plane tips over the next time you go some place, don't assume that he wants you to be killed. He is just angry with you. And one of the best ways of getting him over his anger is to allow him to express his hateful feelings. Maybe that is why they say that an army that doesn't gripe is not a good army. If your men have the opportunity to gripe, you are already doing something to let frustrated behavior be expressed. It is when people are not allowed to gripe that you have something to worry about.

Another source of misunderstanding is the difference in needs that people have. Take, for example, the kinds of needs that are required; such as your boy's need for a bicycle, or your daughter's need for lipstick, or your wife's need for a new hat. Do we respect such needs? We hear remarks: "People don't need television sets. They ought to buy food first."

When we refer to needs in that way we are likely to be misunderstanding others, because we tend to assume that what somebody else needs must make sense to us. When your boy says he needs a bicycle and it doesn't make sense to you, you explain it to yourself by saying that he only thinks he needs it. With a bicycle he is exposed to an accident hazard. So you think he doesn't need one and decide for him.

But if he needs one very badly, and if you refuse to understand him, you are already on the way to losing your son. He is going to cheat; he is going to ride other kids' bicycles; he is going to ride on the handlebars of other boys' bicycles. When you refuse to face a bicycle need, maybe you have actually increased the hazard for your son.

You say your wife doesn't need a new hat. She doesn't discuss whether her old hat is worn out, and so on. It is too obvious to her that you don't understand. You are judging in terms of how many years you have worn your hat and thinking that she should wear hers the same length of time. Of course, that is perfectly ridiculous.

You see how quickly we can misunderstand people. Whenever you say that I don't need something I want, that I don't really need it, you pass a judgment and you have failed to understand me. When people want something, they need it. If I created a situation where I had food on the right and water on the left, if I put an animal in that situation, and he went to the left, could you conclude which of his needs is greater? You could say that his thirst is greater than his hunger. The next day when you have food over here and water over there and he goes over to the food, you say, "Today he is more hungry than he is thirsty." In terms of the choices he makes you could judge the need. This is a method for measuring needs. On the other hand, when your wife goes without certain things in order to have a new hat, and when your daughter goes without her lunch in order to buy lipstick, it would be fair to say that your wife has a fairly strong need for a hat and your daughter needs lipstick more than she needs food.

I don't mean that people should have everthing they want. But when people can't have everything they want, what is the best way of satisfying some of the things that they do want? In other words, let's suppose they can have some things. Now, which of the things that they want should they have, and who is in the best position for deciding that?

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What can we do to influence those needs, so that they become more intelligent? Your son says he needs a car. He is only seventeen or eighteen but he thinks he needs one. If you disagree and try to prove he doesn't need a car, you are going to have a persistent problem on your hands. If, on the other hand, you ask him to talk about why he needs a car, if you have him go with you to look at some of the cars that are in his reach--he has seventy-five dollars saved up--and if you discuss what it would cost to maintain a car, and so on, he might arrive at a very intelligent solution, which would be the one you knew all the time, but which he wouldn't buy.

Suppose there is a new job opening. Who is going to get it? A lot of people say, "I want it." They may want it for very different reasons. One wants it because he is afraid he is being by-passed. He doesn't really want it, but an offer represents recognition. He feels he has been overlooked. If we could get him recognition in some other way, so he wouldn't feel he was overlooked, if he could be made to feel that we kept him in mind when a job opened up, we would find that there are a good many jobs that he would not want. We find this happens over and over in industry--that the fellow we thought we were going to have difficulty with, really doesn't want the job. He just doesn't want to be overlooked.

Sometimes a man wants the new job because he doesn't like the work he is doing. He wants an escape. Somebody else wants it because he feels it is going to give him a little more power. He is hungry for power. Is that reason enough for giving it to him? Still someone else may want the new job just because it is going to give him a certain amount of prestige.

In other words, many people seem to be after the same thing, but for very different reasons. And ordinarily we assume that, because a particular fellow wants the job, we have to explain to him why we didn't give him the job. We feel we have to tell him all the things that are wrong with him and say: "That is why we didn't give it to you. You haven't been producing as much or as efficiently as you really can." We go on the defensive. We attack a fellow because we didn't give him the job, or because we didn't give him his promotion. That sort of talk happens over and over in interviewing.

Another important thing that I would like to mention in passing is the problem of saving face. So often our disputes are face-saving problems. Examples are labor disputes.

So often we actually try to fix the situation so a person can't save face. We fix it so he hasn't any out. It is very natural to do that, because I derive satisfaction by degrading someone else, and he derives satisfaction by degrading me.

Let me illustrate with a little story. An American was living in China. He had been going to a particular town frequently. He was insisting that the fare had been a dollar. His friend said, "It is 80 cents." They kept arguing, until finally his friend said, "I will tell you what the trouble is. You have been buying your ticket on the train. In China, if you buy a ticket on the train, it costs more than if you buy it at the station." The American said: "That is just exactly what I have been doing. I have been paying a dollar for my ticket when I could have gotten it for 80 cents."

So the next time that the American took this trip, he went to the station to buy his ticket. The window was closed. He tapped on the window. Nothing happened. He listened. There were people back there. He tapped a little harder. Nothing happened. He listened. It always got quiet for a while after he tapped. He listened and he realized that the boys were having some kind of gambling game in the back. So he banged a little harder. (He was becoming frustrated now, you see.) So he hammered at the window. Nothing happened.

Finally the train pulled in and a voice behind the window said: "It is too late to buy your ticket now. You might as well buy the ticket on the train." So he stalked out.

On the train when the conductor came around, he said, "I want to go to so-and-so" and he laid 80 cents in the conductor's hand. The conductor said, "Fare one dollar." He said, "The fare is 80 cents." The conductor said, "Fare 80 cents if you buy ticket at station; one dollar if you buy ticket on train."

He said: "I got down to the station a full three quarters of an hour early. I begged and pleaded with them to sell me a ticket. They refused even to open the window. Now, am I to be penalized 20 cents because of the miserable service this railroad gives?"

A very good case. Practically all the passengers on the car shook their heads indicating that the American was right. But the conductor said: "If I sell you a ticket for 80 cents, I must pay the company one dollar. Am I to be penalized 20 cents because of the miserable service this railroad gives?"

And so it was the conductor versus the American. And, of course, the whole carload of people were in on it. Finally one of the Chinese took the American off to one side and said: "I am so and so. I run the tailor shop on the corner and often see you go by. Will you come in and have tea with me sometime?" "Sure. Very glad to." The Chinese said, "By the way, would you loan me 20 cents?" The American said, "Of course." He fished in his pocket and handed his friend 20 cents. The friend handed it to the conductor and the problem was solved.

What can we do to create face-saving situations? I would like to go a little further. What can be done to become aware of the situational factors in behavior, with the problems of differences in need, and the problems of frustration? Are there any techniques that I can mention that might be helpful, so that we, at least, have one thing we can do to reduce these many misunderstandings?

I would like to submit one general method that is effective in dealing with all these misunderstandings. Not that this is the only method, but it is one that I have frequently tried. That is to try to find out how the other fellow views something, how he feels about it.

Life is not a matter of logic. Logic is important, but we don't live entirely by logic. We live by feeling, too. When you get into arguments with people, you always throw logic at them. You throw hard facts at them and you hurt them.

These factual things are important, but so are feelings. With the kind of intellect that we have in a civilized country, we begin to worship intellect and we begin to lose respect for feelings. As a matter of fact, if you are placed in a situation where you say "I don't like olives," and you are asked, "Why don't you like olives?," then you have to prove why you don't like them.

In situations of that kind, where we cross-examine people in search for some logical reason, what we are doing is forcing them to rationalize. They have to give reasons that sound intelligent, not which are the real reasons. Sometimes you don't like olives because you just don't like their taste, but you can't prove it. So you say that it is because they have pits and you are wearing store teeth. Then they go and get you some olives that don't have pits, and you have another problem.

We have recommended to supervisors that the next time they have trouble with a person about a difference of opinion, the thing to do is to listen and draw the person out, get the person to talk. A certain supervisor whom I know was one of these delightful individuals who always tried something when we suggested it. And if all of you would try this and see how it would work for you just once, I would be more than delighted. I am sure some of you have already tried it, but I would like you to try it with malice aforethought. Most of us stop listening too soon. We stop listening when the thing begins to make sense. We usually stop short.

I chose a case to illustrate this, a case taken from industry. It deals with a woman employee who had had some 20 years service in the company. She was single. Her progress in the company was about average. Her performance was about average, maybe a little bit less. One day she skipped one rank and barged into the office of the manager and said, "I would like to talk to you." He asked her to be seated,

and she went on complaining about a number of things. (He had a slip of paper under the desk and he jotted down the points she made.) I would just like to give you the highlights of the kind of arguments she presented.

She started off with: "The only pay increases that I have had in the past 15 years are those where the ceiling has been raised. Everybody got those increases. I think I should get an increase once in a while that is not because the ceiling was raised."

Of course, he had a very good answer to that--"Look, how can we give you an increase when you are getting the ceiling wage, without raising the ceiling?" She wanted a raise that was not due to the ceiling being raised. She was at the ceiling rate. How could that have been done? But he was going to listen. He said, "Sit down and tell me more about it."

She went on, "A girl with a good attendance record should be given an increase for that reason alone." He could have said: "Look, we pay you for coming to work. Now you want extra pay for coming to work." But again he said nothing, even in the face of all these things. As a matter of fact, he grew angry but he didn't show it. That is what makes listening really hard. Let us stick to the case and see what he did next.

Her next point was, "These new girls that came to the office lately have gotten increases whether they were any good or not." Notice, aggression coming in--"New girls coming in have gotten increases whether they are any good or not." She was attacking some of the other girls. But he still listened. He didn't debate the point.

"Then she said, "Lots of girls working for the company get more money than I do, and I am just as good as they are," He thought: "Are you sure? You may be better than some, but you may be worse than some, too." But he didn't say any of those things. By his not saying anything she could move on to the next point. You see, if he'd stopped and argued, then he would have put a circle around that point and given it importance way out of proportion to its relevance.

Her next point was: "There is a lady who works for another company who gets seventy dollars a week. This company is making lots of money. If the other company can pay those salaries, so can this company."

"Well, there are people in this company who are getting more money than some people over there." He could have said that, or have said, "There are people in other companies getting less money than you are getting." But he doesn't argue. Now she was attacking the company, too. First, she attacked some of the other girls. Now this company wasn't good enough.

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Her next point was, "I have had to fight for every raise I ever got, and that is what I am doing now." He thought, "I'll say you are, sister." But he didn't say it. He listened.

So she went on and said: "You brought a new girl into the unit the other day. If you had given us girls in the unit a raise, then we would have worked harder and you wouldn't have had to hire a new girl.

"Ha, so she is soldiering on the job, and now she wants a raise." He said nothing. He nodded his head and said, "I understand. I see how you feel." It is very good to say that--"I understand how you feel."

Next she said: "If you can't pay me any more money where I am, why don't you transfer me? One of the girls got a good job in another department, where they don't work her as hard as here." Notice, she said, "Why don't you transfer me?" Now she was taking a slap at the supervisor. First, it was the other girls, then the company, and now the supervisor. By letting her say these things, she got her hostility out of her system. She then went on to say, "If I were pretty, you would give me an increase."

Her next point was covered when she said: "You don't want me here. You just want younger girls. I am getting old, so I guess I should get out." Perhaps he breathed a sigh of relief at that.

Then she went on: "No one pays any attention to me any more."

A little bit later she said, "All of my troubles seem to have started since my father died last year. Since then things haven't been going so good."

Now he began to realize what the trouble was. This was in Detroit. She had lived in Canada. Every week end she went to Canada. She always had some place to go. After her father died, she had no place to go. On week ends and vacations she was going places. Suddenly she was living alone in Detroit and had no place to go.

After all these statements, hostile statements, regressive statements, she suddenly came to a problem. "All of my troubles seem to have started since my father died last year." Then almost immediately she suggested her own solution and said: "If I could find another girl to live with, maybe things would be all right. But I can't find anybody I like." She hasn't bought the idea yet, but she has tossed it around. Had somebody else suggested this solution, she would have rejected it, of course. Now she has rejected it, but it was her idea; she came back to it.

Finally after these wanderings she made the statement: "I won't be working here very long. I have been buying a $25 war bond every week. That has mounted up. With my pension I will get along all right." He then thought: "A $25 war bond every week? That is more than the supervisor has been buying, and here this one is squawking about wages."

A little bit later she got up and thanked him. She said he had been very nice. She smiled and walked out. He wondered, "What did she thank me for?"

And, interestingly enough, she did change her residence. They checked up on her 6 months later. She had moved. She was living in a house where there were 25 other women. Everything was fine. She had started going to company parties and things of that sort.

Let us look at this case from the point of view of attitude changes. I have already implied that the hostility, the aggression, and the regression that was expressed helped a lot. But notice the attitude factor. She looked at the wage problem, feeling hostile toward the company. And of course, when we first met this girl, we thought she was one of those "sour pusses" too. As a matter of fact, that is what the girls called her. Supervisors had her classified as one of the disagreeable employees, always squawking about something.

But notice when we saw her as a lonesome person, how differently we felt toward her. Here was a lonesome person. Now let us just take a look at her statements. "I would like an increase in wages that everybody else doesn't get." What was she talking about? Money? No. A kind of recognition. What she was dreaming about was some attention, wasn't it?

Then take this jealousy about younger girls. "Nobody wants me. You just want young girls," and so on. Here was a very lonesome person, who didn't feel she "belonged." Nobody was making a fuss over her. And the more she felt that way, the more disagreeable she got; so the more reason she had for feeling that way, because she was turning people away from her, which made her all the more lonesome, which made these symptoms get worse. So the thing snowballed.

Someplace or other we have to alter that process. When you get frustrated, you want to slap someone around. Then that person slaps you around, which frustrates you. Then you slap them around some more. Things go from bad to worse.

But when you see that she is lonesome, that she isn't just somebody who wants more money, her statements have an altogether different kind of meaning. They fit together too. Together they give a different kind of logical pattern. All the things she said make sense on a feeling basis. Here originally we were criticizing her for being illogical, This was because we were viewing all her statements from an intellectual point of view.

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Not only did the manager feel differently about her after listening, but his changed attitude made it possible for him to visit her and chat with her. As a matter of fact, he now gives her extra jobs to do, and she loves to do those extra jobs.

She too, felt differently after the talk. She came in with a chip on her shoulder, but she went out with a smile. Interestingly enough, she went so far as to change her residence and start coming to company parties and things of that sort.

So by being listened to, the employee was helped. But, probably more important, the manager was helped too. He understands her now. Now he can give her things to do. Now he knows how to ask her to go to company parties. Now he knows how to chat with her when he goes past her desk, and things of that sort.

So here is the technique that I would like to leave with you What can you do? In the first place, feel that it is worth your while to listen to a person and to see how he feels, rather than being so anxious to tell the other fellow how you feel and how you think he should feel.

Suppose you go to a hospital to see a friend who has had his appendix out. He shows you a scar 6 inches long. Don't say, "That is nothing," and show him that you have a bigger scar. If you want your visit to be helpful, you have to listen to his feelings. You have to let him talk. Let's hope that when you are in the hospital, somebody will listen to you.

(13 Jan 1953--500)A/G/ibc