

HUMAN RELATIONS AND INDIVIDUAL MOTIVATION

13 September 1955

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INDUSTRIAL COLLEGE OF THE ARMED FORCES

Washington, D. C.

Dr. Norman R. F. Maier, Professor of Psychology at the University of Michigan, was born in Sebawaing, 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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COLONEL O'NEIL: General Calhoun, guests, members of the Class: The lecture this morning is on "Human Relations and Individual Motivation," why people act or react as they do.

You are familiar with the speaker's background and know that he is the author of several books relating to behavior. In one of these books, he discusses the behavior of the German leadership toward the end of World War II. When defeat first became obvious, they refused to capitulate and prolonged the destruction. He states that the actions of German leadership cannot be explained psychologically if they were in a choice situation. If, however, we consider their condition one of frustration and their behavior that of fixation, then their refusal to consider alternatives does make sense.

It is this problem of making sense with these abstractions that interests us. We are interested in making sense out of the mental, environmental, and emotional influences that affect individual and group behavior. I am certain what our speaker will tell us this morning will enable us to better understand the actions and reactions of Homo sapiens.

It is a sincere pleasure to welcome back to the College and to present to you Dr. Norman Maier, Professor of Psychology of the University of Michigan. Dr. Maier.

DR. MAIER: General Calhoun, Colonel O'Neil, men of the Industrial College: It is indeed a pleasure and an honor to be back here again after one year off. I don't know who took my place last year. I merely say I hope you didn't like him.

When we use the term human relations, we sometimes get the notion that that is a program of being nice to people. I had a friend who had some beautiful mules and he was in very bad financial straits so he had to sell the mules. But he wouldn't sell them to anyone unless the buyer promised to be nice to the mules. He finally found a chap who promised he would treat them with kindness and consideration at all times, and the deal was made on that basis.

Sometime later, the original owner met the buyer and asked him how he was getting along with the mules. He said he wasn't getting along at all. He couldn't get a lick of work out of them. As a matter of fact, he couldn't get them out of the barn. My friend asked him if he had been treating them with kindness. He replied that he had been kind and considerate but could get no reaction out of them. My friend said, "Do you mind if I come over and take a look at them?" The buyer said he would be glad if he would.

So the original owner went back with the buyer, walked into the barn, and there were the rear ends of the mules facing him. He picked up a 2x4 and whacked the mules on the back. The buyer said, "You told me to treat them with kindness." My friend replied, "I know, but you have to get their attention first."

Rather than thinking of human relations as being nice to people, I like to think of good human relations as being one of understanding people. I like to think of problems in human relations as being a search for ways of avoiding misunderstandings. If you think of your problems with people as being due to the fact that people are uncooperative, or unreasonable, or that there is something wrong with people, that people are bad, then you run into this difficulty: If it is the other fellow's fault, the only thing you can do is to sit and wait until he changes, and, as some of you know by now, if you are going to wait for other people to get good, you might have a long wait on your hands. There isn't anything you can do then except to wish and hope that the other fellow will change.

So avoiding misunderstandings isn't just a matter of what we might say as a Pollyanna kind of philosophy. I think if we assume that there are no bad people, that whenever we have difficulty with another person or a group of persons, there has been a misunderstanding. We will find that there is something to do, and that is what we need more than anything else when we are in trouble; something to do, some kind of action we can take.

The things we can do are to determine the sources of misunderstandings and to clear up any misunderstandings that have occurred. Today I would like to talk about some of the sources of misunderstanding.

First of all, a source of misunderstanding is the fact that we really don't believe in causation when it comes to behavior. If the car goes wrong, we are willing to accept the fact that there is something wrong with it,

that the car isn't expected to run unless it is in proper condition, but we often refer to people as doing things they had no business doing. The assumption of causation, which underlies, of course, any science, implies necessity, anything that occurs has to happen.

So if a person makes a mistake, we have to assume that there were factors in that situation and in that person that made a mistake inevitable. If you want to prevent that mistake in the future, then we either have to alter the circumstances, in other words the conditions of work, or we have to alter the person.

Causation also implies that the cause precedes the effect. In other words, the cause is always an antecedent event. Yet, when we talk about people, we act as if they are guided by the future.

For example, if it were possible for me to wire your chairs so that by pressing a button here I could cause an electric charge to enter your body from the seat, by pressing that button I could cause you to jump. If I asked you, "Why did you jump?" You would say, "Why, we jumped in order to get away from the charge." I would have to say, "No, that couldn't be why you jumped because you got away from the charge because you jumped." In other words, getting away from the electric charge was the result of your behavior; hence it could not be a cause. We will find we are doing that. I would just like to write the formula on the black-board.

$$S \leftrightarrow O \rightarrow B \rightarrow A$$

The situation (S), or you might say the stimulus, acts upon you, the organism (O), the result of behavior (B), and behavior accomplishes certain things (A). Now the stimulus (S) for events is shock. The accomplishment (A) is getting away from the shock. The behavior (B) is jumping. And the explanation of behavior is that you (the O) being what you are and you being stimulated (S applied) the way you were, you had to jump.

If I don't like this jumping behavior, I can either stop stimulating you as I did, do what I can do to train you not to jump, or do what I could with drugs or anesthetics to alter you so that you would be a different kind of organism. The first method changes the S while the second and third suggest changes in the O.

Why did the chicken cross the street? You say, "To get on the other side." No, she got on the other side because she crossed the street. Let us get things straight. The result can't be cause.

We are doing that sort of thing much more than we think. Always look in front of the behavior for the cause and you will always find a situation and you will always find the behaving organism.

There are two ways of altering that behavior. One is through training, and the other is by altering the situation. As many of you know, training is a rather difficult way of controlling behavior. Sometimes you can do a lot more by looking for changes in the situation.

For example, there is more accomplished in the direction of safe behavior by doing things to the situation--safety devices, safe runways in the layout, things of that sort, than by film, safety rules and training. Head-on accidents in automobile driving decreased more because of the white line down the middle of the highway than any amount of training that has been given. That is one of the ways in which you control behavior, by doing something to the situation.

You see what we do, and this is where our misunderstandings come in, when we see the behavior and particularly when we don't like the accomplishment, we react emotionally, and blame the person for the behavior. Kids are playing ball in the yard. They're nice kids. The ball goes through the window. That's accomplishment. You don't like the accomplishment and then you take it out on the kids. You become angry because of the accomplishments of behavior.

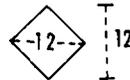
A man goes through a red light. You see him go through the red light. He is lucky. He wasn't hit. He is one of your men so you give him a reprimand. The next day another fellow goes through a red light. This time he is hit by another car and we have \$400 worth of damages. He really gets it. The same behavior; different accomplishments.

Don't look at the accomplishment if you want to correct behavior. It's true that it's the accomplishment that hurts. But if you want to control behavior, you should look at the behavior and then examine both the situation and the individual so that you can evaluate which is the most economical and efficient way of preventing this behavior from happening again. When you blame, you look backward, but the past cannot be altered.

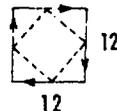
Correct the source of misunderstanding by not confusing accomplishment with behavior, and remember that whatever an organism does is caused and that his nature and the nature of the situation contribute.

There are two ways of improving future behavior. One that is so often overlooked, particularly when we are angry, is the fact that the situation can be improved or altered. The other is to train the individual and this includes increasing his knowledge, his motor skills and improving his attitudes.

A second source of misunderstanding resides in what confusion arises over what are called attitudes. I have a garage window that is 12 inches high and 12 inches wide. It is too small. So I get out my little saw and saw around it in a clockwise direction and make it twice as big. I measure it. It is 12 inches high and 12 inches wide. I don't get any sign of misunderstanding from you people at all. Let me repeat. I have a garage window that is 12 inches high and 12 inches wide. I want to make it twice as big. I saw around it, cut out lumber and after I make it twice as big, it is still 12 inches high and 12 inches wide. It is all because of your attitudes that you fail to understand me.

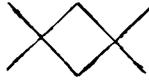


There is my window, 12 inches high and 12 inches wide. I saw around it.



Now we were not communicating because I visualized one kind of thing that had certain meanings. You visualized something else, and so we didn't understand each other. You thought probably that I wasn't talking very logically, and I am not going to tell you what I thought of you. It is the sort of thing that happens when there is a failure to communicate. We personally are looking at things differently.

When I put this kind of a figure on the board, I can ask you: What is it?



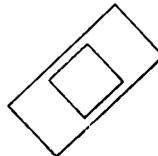
Well, what is it? Some of you may say a pair of X's; some of you may say a diamond; some of you may say a couple of V's. Actually, it is a W on top of an M. I can see a W on top of an M without straining myself. If you didn't see it and if it is easy for me to see it, then maybe you are not as bright as I thought you were. Isn't that the way we talk about attitudes--why can't you see it my way? And who is usually right? The guy in charge, of course?

I would like to have you think in terms of facts, opinions, and attitudes. I want to make those words different for you. I will put something on the board here.



I am going to call that a fact. Now if I ask you what it is and you say I think it is a diamond, you are expressing an opinion. An opinion is an interpretation of a fact, your interpretation. Somebody else might say, "I think it is a square." Okay, he is entitled to that opinion, too. But as soon as you say "square" or "diamond", you are doing more than describing what is out there. You are making an interpretation.

Now, for example, by framing it this way



I can make this appear more as a square; or I can make it appear more as a diamond by framing it this way:



In other words those two objects (inner figures) which were pretty much alike initially are not as much alike since I framed them differently. I didn't change the fact. I didn't alter that object

in the middle at all. I merely set it against different backgrounds. I gave it two different frames of reference. We can think of an attitude as being a frame of reference.

Obviously an opinion is influenced by facts, but it is also influenced by a frame of reference or an attitude.

In my illustration of the frame of reference I used drawings and figures. Actually attitudes are not geometrical figures. An attitude is a frame we put on things. I put one frame on my garage window and some of you put another frame on it. Let me give you a more realistic illustration of how an attitude works without using drawings.

Suppose a man opens his pay envelope and finds \$97 in it. What is the \$97, which of these three; fact, opinion, or attitude. The \$97 is a fact. I might ask the man, "What do you think of your pay, mister?" He says, "It is lousy." What is that? That's an opinion; an interpretation. I ask another man, who makes \$97. "What do you think of your pay?" and he says, "It's good." That is a different opinion about the same fact.

Suppose I polled the employees and found there were some employees who had a favorable attitude toward the company they worked for, and there was another group of employees who had a very unfavorable attitude toward the company. If I asked both groups about their pay, would the proportion of people who said the pay was good be the same in the two groups? More favorable opinions would be found in the groups that liked the company than in the groups that didn't.

I think we agree that when employees don't like the company, they have a whole series of unfavorable opinions. "What do you think of the pay?" "Not so good." "What do you think of the food in the lunchroom?" "Lousy." "What do you think of the management?" "Mediocre." And so on down the line. If I could change people's attitudes, I would change a whole series of opinions. Insofar as attitudes influence opinions, changes in attitude produce changes in opinions.

The mistake we make is to assume that opinions are interpretations of facts. When opinions of others are not the same as ours, we consider them as faulty interpretations and overlook the fact that different attitudes are introducing the difference. It becomes even more confusing because, when I say, "My good man, why do you have that opinion?" he gives me reasons, a whole series of reasons that turn out to be

justifications. When I say to a man, "Why are you a Republican?" he gives me 18 different reasons. If I could prove that every one of his reasons was fallacious, if I could destroy every one of his reasons, would he change his opinion? You have tried that, I see.

That is what you do when you argue; that is what you do when you debate; that is what you do when you reason with somebody. I suppose if we didn't do those things we would have an awful lot of time on our hands because we spend most of our life doing that.

But don't fool yourself about what is going on. It is good mental exercise to debate but the reasons given and argued are the result not the cause of opinions. If you want to change the opinion, you have to get at the cause. Sometimes facts are causes but usually in controversial items you are dealing with attitudes as a major influence.

How do you change attitudes? Not by logic, not by arguing, and not by reasoning with a person. I am going to come back to how to influence attitudes later on.

There was a program sometime ago that had to do with, how to influence the prisoners who turned Red and wouldn't come back? And for a while they talked about training some people in dialectical materialism so that they could argue communism with these fellows; treating them as if they had been converted on a logical basis.

What caused the prisoners to have certain unfavorable opinions? You will find the answer more quickly in some of the feelings and some of the attitudes they developed. Maybe they were turned down by a girl friend back home, or something of that sort. Suppose a person expresses certain opinions. Immediately we want to know why, so we ask him, Why do you hold that opinion? He feels he must be intelligent about it so he feels he must have a good reason. What kind of reason will he give you? One that he thinks you will think is good. That, of course, will not be the real reason. He always wants to make a good impression on you so he always gives good reasons, but let us not confuse these reasons with causes. The reason is always given to appeal to the fellow who is asking for one. We all realize we run into that kind of problem with subordinates. They tell us what we like to hear, not what's cooking.

I say, "I don't like olives." "Why don't you like olives?" some one asks. I reply, "I don't like them that's all." He answers, "You

must have a reason." In desperation I say, "I guess I don't like the color." He asks, "What's wrong with the color?" Finally, I say, "Look, when I was a youngster my grandmother was choked by an olive. That's why I don't like olives." Then he says, "Well, why didn't you say so." and let's me alone. So if you don't have a good reason for what you do, go to a psychologist and he will build one for you--in your subconscious. Then you have an acceptable reason, but the whole mental exercise is a waste of time.

Now the third source of misunderstanding is related to what I was talking about and arises because of the way in which we misinterpret frustration. When people become frustrated, they cease being a problem-solving kind of people. Instead they follow such behavior as aggression or regression. Aggression is a hostile destructive type of behavior; regression is a show of childlike behavior. Maybe a child when he is sent to school, is frustrated by the school. He may show aggression by fighting or tearing books or he may regress by starting to wet the bed again--assuming he had been trained. If he regresses he is showing behavior that is not as grown up as his age would warrant. I know of three dogs in my lifetime that, when they were frustrated, lost their toilet training, if you call it that in dogs.

A third kind of behavior we call fixation, which is stubbornness or rigidity in behavior. When we solve problems, we are not stubborn. We are plastic. We try this out, we think of that, we think of something else. When we are frustrated, we can only see one way, and we persist regardless of consequences. A problem-solving person grows. He is open to suggestion. He isn't dependent on others, but has a lot of initiative.

The inability to make decisions isn't a lack of intelligence; it is more a matter of dependency--a form of regression. Hostile behavior is a matter of frustration. You solve your problems by means of a big stick. That is one of the unfortunate things with power. If you have power, it means you have the stick; whenever you are frustrated, you use it. If you don't have the big stick, you have to get along with your wits and can't afford the luxury of frustration.

I have been particularly impressed with that in connection with some of the prison situations in which a warden can really get a high type of guard behavior by merely removing the sticks and guns. Guards without sticks had better use their wits or they will wind up with a cracked skull. And they do use their wits. They develop some of the best controlled prison situations.

Two supervisors without sticks can supervise 125 prisoners and they have no difficult problems. If one of the prisoners decides he doesn't want to work, what can he do? He can send him back to his cell. But if he won't go? If the supervisor has neither a stick nor a gun, how does he get him to go back to his cell if he decides he doesn't want to? In such a case he just calls the guard. But if the guard has no gun and no stick, what if the prisoner refuses to go with the guard? Well, it seems that doesn't happen. It has never happened so we need not worry. So often we worry about things that never happen.

Why doesn't it happen, you wonder. Because the prisoner doesn't happen to be mad at the guard and he has no face-saving problem with the guard. He got into a row with the supervisor. Problems in discipline arise when a prisoner, and a supervisor have the following exchange; "I won't do it." "You will do it." "I won't do it." "You will do it." "I won't do it." "You will do it." Now when the guard comes along, the prisoner says, "See I told you I wouldn't do it. I'll go with him." There was no face-saving problem. But the point I wish to make is that the kind of thing we often fear in this type of situation is something that doesn't happen.

Now, if you expect people to be reasonable when they are frustrated, you are misunderstanding them. When people are frustrated, they are mean, they are childish, they are stubborn. That is the way other people are. And so are you. You have done some of the silliest things, such as kicking a tire and maybe breaking a toe when you couldn't get a wheel off in changing a tire or something of that sort. Those things are very human. The important thing is recognize the true difficulty; that is, the state of frustration. I will give you some suggestions in a moment, of what to do once it is recognized.

I would like to mention briefly a fourth source of misunderstanding, that is the difference in the needs of people. There are sharp individual differences. We must solve our human relations problems in terms of the needs of specific persons. You motivate people when you utilize the needs they have. Here is a girl who buys a fur coat. You say, "She doesn't need a fur coat." If you are the husband or the boss, you may say "But, Mary, you can't afford it. A cloth coat is just as warm." You are implying that she wants a fur coat in order to keep warm. If she bought the fur coat because of prestige, all the talk about warmth is beside the point.

We go around criticizing people for having television sets rather than rugs on the floors. You say, "They don't even have rugs on the floor and they do so and so." I would say that if some people have television sets and don't have rugs on the floor, it means they need the television more than they need the rugs. So go mind your own business and let other people take care of their needs in their own way. We misunderstand, you see.

For example, our own kids in high school do a lot of those silly things. A few years ago the rage was going steady. In your day you didn't have to go steady; you could play the field. But your daughter got the silly idea that she had to go steady. When your child sees that everybody is going together steady then she has to go steady. She develops a need which she acquires from the group she is going around with and you, not having that group to go around with, don't have that need. So that makes you a person who doesn't understand your daughter.

Husbands and wives go around with different groups and as a result acquire different needs. Supervisors and employees as well as officers and privates are in beautiful situations for misunderstanding each other because they have different needs. If you want to understand why a person does something you have to find out what his real need is.

To summarize, the four sources of misunderstanding are, (1) the failure to recognize the notion of causation in behavior, (2) difficulties in communication arising because of differences in attitudes, (3) expecting people in a state of frustration to show behavior that is reasonable and logical, and (4) the tendency to overlook the differences in needs and how these are acquired from our associations with the group to which we belong.

Now just a few quick illustrations to show how we can avoid some of the misunderstandings that arise because of these four reasons. There is one approach that I feel very strongly about, that is to use group participation in solving some of the problems that involve a whole group. I can't go into detail on that point but I would like to offer a suggestion that may give you some ideas.

Here is a problem in the telephone industry. It concerns what are called "Wet-weather drops." The drop line is the line that runs from the house to the pole, and when that line gets old, the insulation cracks. When it rains, water gets through the insulation and that shorts the

line so when you dial a number you don't get what you dial at all. Such a defective line is a "wet-weather drop" and you report that your phone is out of order.

The company recognizes your complaint and promises to take care of it. They have a record of all of those lines. They perhaps knew before you called up that your line was in need of replacement. You can see in times of material shortages, they would leave defective lines up longer than normally, but it is also necessary to appreciate the fact that such a defect is not a serious problem because the sun will come out and dry up the line and you will say, "Boy, does that telephone company work fast!" And you call them up and thank them. They appreciate the thanks you give them even though the sun is really doing it.

This was during a period when there were a lot of wet-weather drops. Foremen were having a hard time getting repairmen to go out and replace them because this assignment is viewed as not an important job. A phone that is completely out of order requires a certain amount of ingenuity, technology, and ability; but anybody can replace a wet-weather drop, so no one wants to do it.

The foreman says, "Now, look, we have to get in some wet-weather drops. Let's be cooperative around here." They say, "We'll bring some in." When they return in the evening the foreman says, "What about wet-weather drops? Did you bring any in tonight?" "No, I didn't have time boss. You know that job I had on Penn Street, oh, Boy! Do you want me to tell you about it? The foreman says, "Forget it." Others have similar reasons or excuses.

He tolerated the runaround for a while and then says, "From now on we are going to clear wet-weather drops or else." He now gets a few. Then that peters out. Now he has to pull the "or else" again, but he can't keep it up too long because someone might call him. After he lives with that sort of thing for a while, he develops procedures. He says, "George, you have the least seniority around here; so for the next two weeks I am going to put you on a special assignment--clearing wet-weather drops."

George says, "Why pick on me? What have I done?" The foreman replies, "you have got the least seniority around here." George goes away grumbling.

Now, the foreman in this particular case is going to work from the point of view of some of the things we have described here. He says, "I have a problem, fellows--wet-weather drops. They are increasing faster than we can clean them up. What do you think is a fair way to handle it?" Asking the men what they consider fair. Various things were discussed and they come up with a program which gives you some insight in to what is going on.

1. Every one to take a share of the unpleasant job. There are various ways of dividing up wet-weather drops. One way is on an eeny, meeny, miny, moe basis, another is on a street basis. This group chose the later. Dividing the job up evenly came as a surprise. We thought these fellows believed in seniority. However, we have found that they believe in seniority when it comes to privileges but not when it comes to dirty work. Everybody takes his share when it comes to something unpleasant.

2. No one will help out another. What are they fussing about that for? We begin to realize, after hearing the discussion, that the way the job had been running, the men were being penalized for cooperation. That happens in a good many segments of life. Here's a fellow who brings in a wet-weather drop. The foreman says, "George, I appreciate that." Then the next day he brings in two, and the boss says, "Wonderful." The next day he brings in three, and boy, he is really getting along.

Finally, he sits back and he begins to realize he is doing all the dirty work around the place. No one else is bringing in any wet-weather drops. He is getting along fine with the foreman but the other fellows are standing around laughing at him. He says, "I am not going to do all the dirty work around here. When are you fellows going to do some of it." The fellows laugh at him and say, "You're the sucker." If you cooperate, you are a sucker. That is one of the psychological factors that makes for poor team performance. Cooperation shouldn't be a sucker deal.

These fellows are setting up a situation in which everyone does his share, so if you bring in some wet-weather drops, you are not going to have to do somebody else's. What these fellows have been afraid of is doing all of the dirty work. If you do some of it, you will be asked to do more. So they drew these lines very sharply.

3. The office gives order in which drops should be cleared. We are always afraid that we can't let these fellows decide a service problem like that because they won't have high standards. These fellows said, "Now, the office gets the order and have the records. They should tell us in what order we should clear up the wet-weather drops. For example, if a doctor's office had a wet-weather drop, it should be cleared up before one to a grocery store. A grocery store problem should be cleared up before one at an ordinary residence. So the office is asked to give the priority listing on the drops, but the fellows are free to clear them when they want to, but in the order that the office says.

Up to this time, this particular crew of 12 men in a three-month period cleared up a total of 80 wet-weather drops. The week after this solution was put into effect they cleared up 78, without impairing the rest of the job in any way. In no time at all there was no wet-weather drop problem.

The group solution took into account their needs, their sense of fairness, their social position in the group, their sense of values and prevented frustration. It accomplished many things by a very simple procedure: Group participation in decision making.

For the second procedure, I would like to read a case that I hope will give you some insight into how we can deal with, we might call, unreasonable people. An unreasonable person is really one we don't understand too well.

Miss E is middle-aged and has been employed by the telephone company for some 20 years. She is single, and her progress in the company has been average or somewhat less than average. Her rating is that of an average employee. Because of her long service, she was receiving the maximum wage for her job classification.

The supervisor of this girl had been in the training program and he had participated in discussion on ways to deal with complaints. The conclusions were: (1) Don't argue because that doesn't do any good. (2) Don't evaluate; (3) Try to understand; (4) Listen and you will learn.

In an interview between you and another person, if you do the listening, you will do the interviewing; if you do the talking, the other fellow is doing the interviewing. When the so-called interviewer talks more than the interviewee, the interviewee is really in charge.

In our case, Miss E barges into this supervisor's office and says she would like to talk to him. She started out by saying, "The only pay increases that I have had in 10 years are those where the top rate has been raised. Everyone gets those increases. I think I should get an increase once in a while that isn't due to the top being raised."

He thinks, how unreasonable can people get? How are we going to give you a raise without raising the top when you are at the top? In other words, why do you have to be so selfish and ask to be made an exception, and so on, and so on. If he mentions these thoughts that is arguing. Fortunately, he didn't do that. He asked her to be seated and tell him some more.

Then she said, "A girl with a good attendance record should be given an increase for that reason alone." He thought, "Good God, when you work for this company, it implies that you attend. Now because you work for the company, you want a raise for it."

Fortunately, he realized that he was dealing with a dissatisfied employee, and accepted this as a good opportunity to put to practice some of the things he had learned in the training program. He got a slip of paper and put it on his knee and jotted down the various arguments she used. This kept him so busy he couldn't think of ways to argue back. Here are the arguments she gave:

"New girls come into the office and they get increases whether they are any good or not."

He could have said, "So did you," and she would have said, "I did not." His reply would be, "You did, too." Hers would be, "I did not." His again, "You did, too." A person can repeat something again and again if it is denied. In this way you can prolong a senseless discussion. But if one doesn't say anything, then the other can't say, "I did not. I did not. I did not. I did not. When a statement goes unchallenged the speaker must move to a new topic. This is what Miss E did when she said:

"Lots of girls working for the company get more money than I do and I'm just as good as they are." He might have said, "And they are just as good as you are." But he didn't and so she moved to her next point.

"There is a lady who works for another company who gets \$70 a week and the telephone company is making lots of money now and if others can pay those salaries so can the telephone company." He could have said, "There are people who work for the other company who get less money than you do, "but he didn't, so she goes on to the next point:

"I have had to fight for every raise I ever got and that's what I'm doing now. He could have said, "I guess you are but it isn't going to get you anywhere." That is one of the bad things of being clever. If you can think up a good snappy answer every time, you must prolong the discussion, and very often capable people cause hurt feelings because they are so clever with their replies. Her next point was a new angle.

"You bought a new girl into our unit the other day. If you had given us girls in the unit a raise then we would work harder and you wouldn't need to hire a new girl." Notice that she is soldiering on the job and she wants a raise. These remarks are childish and illogical and are evidence of regression. Now she says:

"If there's no more money for me here, why don't you transfer me? They have lots of good jobs in other departments and they don't work as hard as I do." Now she is a little aggressive, hostile, criticizing--she is attacking the supervisor himself. He nods and says, "I see." Fortunately he isn't challenging it. He is too busy jotting down these remarks on his knee to get angry. The next point came shortly afterward.

"If I were a pretty girl, you'd give me an increase." A little bit later she said, "You don't want me here. You just want young girls. I'm getting old so I guess that I should get out." About this time we usually reverse our feelings and show an opposite kind of reaction. Rather than challenging them, we become sympathetic and say, "There, there. It isn't that bad. We really don't hate you as much as you think." One mustn't do that either. You should neither take sides against nor take sides for a person. You must skate right down the middle.

As soon as you give sympathy, the person leans on you. People love sympathy, but if you sympathize with them, they don't solve their problems. Instead they want more sympathy. When you listen with understanding you don't sympathize and you don't criticize.

The next thing Miss E did was to cry. He showed understanding; he passed the kleenex.

A little later she said, "No one pays any attention to me any more."

Then she said, "All my troubles seem to have started since my father died last year. Since then, things haven't gone good for me."

He knew she used to live in Canada and that almost every week-end she would spend in Canada. When vacations came along, and some one asked, "Where are you going on your vacation?" She would reply, "Canada." She went places. She was an international traveler. Where does she go now? She has a room in Detroit. She never goes any place.

In having some one to talk to, she finally located her own problem. This seems to be the process. After you get your frustration out of the way, express your hostilities and your childish feelings, then you come around the problem. That is what we as supervisors and leaders usually don't wait for. But we don't have to solve another person's problem. In almost the next sentence Miss E suggested a solution of her problem.

"If I could find another girl to live with me, maybe things would be better. But I can't find anyone I like." She isn't ready to accept a solution yet--even if its her own.

Then she went on, "I won't be working very long anyway. I'm buying a \$25 war bond every week and that has mounted up and with my pension I can get along all right." He thinks, "Good God, she is tucking away more than I am.

As a matter of fact that isn't what he thought since his attitude or interpretation of this girl had changed. Instead of seeing her as a problem employee he now saw her as a lonesome employee.

At this point, he asked her what she intended doing when she retired and he found that she wanted to travel and they discussed travel. Then, with no urging on his part, she got up from her chair, and said, "I have taken an awful lot of your time; thanks so much" and walked out with a smile.

He started paying a little attention to her on the job, and made it a point to talk to her every day. He asked favors of her and would give her special assignments. His attitude toward her changed because he listened to her. Her attitude changed too.

She did move into a house with a lot of other girls. Her work on the job improved. She started coming to company parties, and so on. Her attitude changed during the interview, and it was stressed that, subsequent to the interview and also because of improved relations, she became a better employee.

Now this trying to understand the other person will do more to change that person's attitude than anything we can do. If we would just stop trying to change people's attitudes, we would change a lot of attitudes in a constructive direction. They would not always be in our direction, but in a constructive direction, and this is what is good about it. Just trying to understand people will do more than anything I know of to help them see things straight and to get rid of frustrated feelings which stand in their way.

Thank you very much.

(19 Oct 1955--250)K/mmg