

SCRLC 2010 Annual Meeting:

Organizational Resiliency: Engaging Difficult People

Getting Change Right: How Leaders Transform Organizations from the Inside Out by Seth Kahan (Jossey-Bass, 2010)

Techniques for Engaging Difficult People

1. Tell them you want to understand their point of view. Simply communicating your desire to understand where they are coming from will gain you ground and diffuse negative emotions.
2. Make a strong attempt to hear them out. Their story is always valid from their point of view. Put effort into understanding how they came to their position. Suspend your assumptions and work to put yourself in their place.
3. Ask them how you work together, and offer suggestions. Initiate a collaborative approach, and offer your best thinking as a place to start. Be quick to follow their lead when you can.
4. Be honest about where there is disagreement. Once you have engaged them, do NOT sacrifice your goals and intentions. Instead, in spite of the honesty, make clear where you part paths.

Getting change right means:

- Bringing people together and helping them interact in ways that create meaningful engagement for new and better ways of working
- Tapping into a high-leverage web of experience and information so your initiative responds in real time to changing circumstances
- Getting many, many people on board as quickly as possible, creating a fast-paced buy-in.