

**COACH'S CORNER** by Katharine Giacalone

## Playground Personalities

*Who is Really Sitting Next to You in a Meeting?*



**H**ow often do you sit in a meeting fantasizing about smacking the person sitting next to you? Most of us spend more time at work than anywhere else, so it doesn't seem too much to ask that we learn how to get along with our co-workers, right?

Understanding what motivates people is one way to ensure you get along with them. While sometimes this seems difficult to do, I think it's as simple as figuring out what kind of kid they were on the playground. As *The Corporate Nanny™*, I have identified four Playground Personalities© that are easy to remember and apply. But before you apply this to others, it's important to know yourself first.

What kind of kid were you on the playground?  
The type of kid who:



Made sure everyone got a turn at bat?  
(The Peacemaker)



Had everyone line up and count off by twos?  
(The Organizer)



Changed the rules in the middle of the game?  
(The Revolutionary)



Wanted to play it your way?  
(The Steamroller)

See if you can apply a Playground Personality to some of your co-workers:

**Peacemakers** appreciate communication and collaboration. If you are in a meeting, and a staff member's eyes start to bulge when two other staff members are having a disagreement, you may be working with a Peacemaker.

**Organizers** are highly structured and decisive. If a staff member comes to a meeting prepared with charts and spreadsheets on color-coded paper, make no mistake, you are working with an Organizer.

**Revolutionaries** hate routine and schedules and prefer to adapt to the moment at hand. If you are talking to a Revolutionary you'll know it because you'll find yourself saying, "Where did that come from?"

**Steamrollers** are smart and highly opinionated and can solve complex problems. You know you are working with a Steamroller when he or she takes the opposing viewpoint to keep ideas floating at 30,000 feet instead of on the ground.

Here are some examples of how these Playground Personalities find their way into the workplace:

If you are an Organizer working on a project and your co-worker is a Steamroller, here is a tip on how to approach them to get the best results: Don't ask them to articulate the details—that drives a Steamroller nuts. Besides, you probably won't get an answer to your satisfaction anyway. Ask for the "big picture" or his or her other "opinion" or "vision." Then, as an organizer, put the information into a format that you like.

If you are a Peacemaker and your boss is a Revolutionary, and you need his or her feedback on an issue, know that you have about 45 seconds or less to capture their interest—so just get to the point! Know what your goal is going in: Use small sound bites and think on your feet.

Also, don't ever underestimate the Steamroller boss. It doesn't matter which Playground Personality you are—never tell a Steamroller boss he or she "can't" do something.

Not rocket science, right? So, the next time you have the urge to smack someone sitting next to you, remember: Know yourself first and then apply the Playground Personality that fits and approach that person accordingly. ■

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