

How to Build 3D Relationships

Ever been frustrated by a colleague or customer?

Why is it that our work colleagues and customers can sometimes drive us crazy? Frustration is such a difficult feeling to deal with because - by definition - we just don't know what to do next!

Wouldn't it be good if there was some way to break the deadlock and build a better relationship with our colleagues and customers?

Understanding 3-dimensional relationships

Every relationship we have with a colleague or customer has 3 dimensions to it. The better we get at dealing with each dimension, the better the relationship.

The problem is that we are usually unaware of these dimensions and how well we are doing in relation to each of them.

Here are the 3 dimensions, and what we can do to improve our "score" on each of them:

- 1. Connect** - how good is the connection with our colleague or customer? How can we get to understand their feelings?

Get better at this dimension by improving the connection: ask questions, listen to what they say and make that the starting point for what you say next!
- 2. Control** - we can't control the other person, only ourselves. Are we in control of our reaction to the frustration - or are we making assumptions about the other person that may not be true?

Get better at this dimension by improving your level of control over what you say: try to keep calm, clarify terms, beliefs and expectations, and establish a common ground.
- 3. Create** - the Greek philosopher Aristotle once said that we communicate for 2 reasons - to inform and to persuade. I think there's a third: to Create. Informing and persuading can quickly lead to arguing which leads to frustration!

Get better at this dimension by looking to create something valuable: ask yourself "What can I do right now to make this feel better for both of us?" and ask them "What would it take to find a solution to this problem?"

So the next time you're feeling frustrated, think: which dimension needs my attention at this moment?