

Meetings: How To Deal With Problem “Children”

For meetings to be successful and productive, it requires participation and cooperation from all the members.

Have you ever been in a meeting where someone just wasn't there – mentally? Have you ever been in a meeting and you knew so and so had not looked at the agenda much less the back up material before they walked in the room?

Of course you have.

Have you ever been in a meeting with a Whisperer, a Rambler, a Dominator, or a Manager? Bet you have. Let's look at these problem “children” and see how to handle them.

Let's watch our very special DAC hold a meeting.

Governor

Peggy (sits at end of table nearest podium)

1. Whisperer

Deb (sits beside Andrea)

2. Rambler

Judy

3. Manager

Karen (be sure you do NOT sit at end of table opposite Peggy)

4. Dominator

Faith

5. Secretary/Whisperer

Andrea (sits beside Deb)

6. Treasurer

Elena

Start here

Peggy: The meeting will come to order. So good to see all of you and we have a lot to get done this weekend, so let's get started.

Deb: *(Pretend to whisper to each other and keep on*
Andrea: *as Peggy says next line)*

Peggy: The first thing on the agenda is the approval of the minutes . . .

*(Stop talking and look at Deb and Andrea—
do not frown or glare)*

Deb: *(Look up as you notice the silence and smile*
Andrea: *at Peggy)*

Peggy: Are there corrections to the minutes?

Deb: *(Start whispering again and keep on for about*
Andrea: *10 seconds – then look at Peggy and smile)*

Peggy: There being no corrections, the minutes
stand . . .

Deb: *(Start whispering as soon as Peggy starts*
Andrea: *talking and stop a few seconds after she stops*
talking)

Peggy: . . . approved as presented.

Maryann: The Whisperer. You have just seen the correct way to deal with them. Now Peggy could have told them to “Shut Up”. But, you know, for some reason it really kills the team spirit in the room when the Governor yells at someone.

What if they don't stop? This is what I have done . . . more than once . . . I say: OK, you two, do we need to separate you? I say it in a very nice voice with some humor.

That will usually take care of it if the stopping and starting did not. But if it doesn't, you can then say: OK, I think we have to either separate you two or plan on spending an extra day here. Who wants to change seats with Andrea? Now they may not have to actually change seats – but they may have to.

Remember – what you actually say is only 7% of communication. The other 93% is made up of your tone of voice and your body language. So if your tone of voice is nice and your body language is non-threatening, you will be alright. Now, for the Rambler.

Peggy: Next is the financial report. Elena.

Judy: You know we have got to do something to get more money for the District. I do not want to propose a dues increase. You know what those Past Governors would say about that. Why I can just hear Connie and

Peggy: *(interrupt her)* Judy, You are right, we do need to look at ways to get more money for the District, but right now we need to look at this financial report. I know, let's start a "Parking Lot" list like they told us to use at PI Convention this year.

Andrea: That's a great idea. *(Gets up and helps Faith move an easel over)* – writes on it:

More \$ for District

Maryann: 10 minutes later . . .

Peggy: The next club we need to look at is the Pilot Club of Harper Valley.

Judy: Do you remember that wonderful project they did several years ago? You know . . . we need a great District Project. If we look at what they did – yes – yes – we could change it and I know exactly what we need to do. We . . .

Peggy: Judy, I believe this goes on our “parking lot” list.

Judy: OK. *(Gets up and writes:*

PC of HV– Service Project)

Maryann: 15 minutes later

Peggy: Our final Club is the Pilot Club of Cary.

Judy: Oh, I love that Club. We need to look at getting someone from there to help us with our new project. Why, I bet . . .

ALL: *(Point to chart.)*

Judy: *(Goes to chart and writes:*
Cary help with Project*)*

Maryann: The Rambler can get you off track and you will end up wasting valuable time. Unfortunately, when it happens at the beginning of a meeting, you feel like you have all the time in the world. But then, what happens is that you run out of time and you can end up rushing through important discussions.

A “Parking Lot” list really works. You know, Judy is a smart lady and she will get the message. In fact, the Judy’s of this world will stop interrupting and just quietly get up and write what they need to on the paper when they

get used to having a “Parking Lot” page.

Next we have the “Dominator”

Peggy: Now we have set aside some time to plan our fundraiser for Friday night of Convention.

Let’s throw out some ideas.

(Peggy --- go to flip chart)

Faith: **I know** what we should do. This is it! We will hold a casino night.

Peggy: *(Write “**Casino Night**” on flip chart)*

Faith: It will be perfect – I can get the visors for the dealers and we can rent the equipment.

Deb: Can we do that – legally?

Faith: Oh, I am sure we can. This will be great.
Pilots will love it.

Elena: What about a carnival?

Peggy: (*Write **carnival** on flip chart*)

Faith: NO. That's stupid. With the casino night we
can have fun and make lots of money. You
know how Connie loves to gamble!

Maryann: Sometimes people get so excited about something that they just can't let it go or hear what anyone else is saying. Faith is so convinced she is right, and if something is not done, they **are going** to have a casino night.

So, what should our poor Governor do at this point in time?

Notice that Elena has been the only one to speak up – besides Faith – and she was told her idea was “Stupid.” That would not encourage me to be the next one to speak up, would it you?

You may have them work in small groups, or if your group is small have them work as individuals.

Peggy should ask each of our DAC members to jot down 3 ideas for a fundraiser. Now we know Faith is only going to write down one thing – that is alright.

Peggy gives them a set amount of time – 2 or 3 minutes.

Then she goes around the table and asks each person to share one of their ideas until all are recorded. And, guess what, she does not start with Faith.

Now we have all the items on the flip chart.

Then you give each person 2 or 3 red dots and let them place them beside their first 2 or 3 choices. One may come out on top – you may have to place your top four on another page and give them one dot to vote with a second time.

Then you discuss the top one and the group comes to consensus on what they want to do.

It's simple and it works.

Last, we have the manager, the person who thinks they are already Governor.

Karen: Now it is time to look at the format for District Convention. I am willing to change a few things, but not a lot of things. I do believe we must have a speaker on Saturday morning – besides that EC person who always has to speak. Everyone agree. Good.

Now, what about . . .

Peggy: Karen, while we appreciate your ideas, I want to hear from everyone.

(Emphasize the word "I")

Karen: You are right, Peggy. We should hear from everyone. What do you think we should do on Saturday, Andrea?

Peggy: I really want to handle this part of our meeting in a different way, Karen.

Karen: I know what you want to do and it will take too much time.

Peggy: *(Stand up – go to flip chart – pick up pen.*

Do not appear threatening)

Karen, I appreciate your opinions, but at this point in time, I am the Governor and I need to preside over this meeting. Let me explain to everyone how I see us doing this part of the meeting, and then we will see where we stand.

Maryann: Peggy had tried several times to get control of the meeting back from Karen. Sometimes this will work and the person will back down.

Sometimes it does not and you have to let the person know – nicely – who is presiding and in charge of the meeting.

This should be done **the very first time** they try to take control or they will think:

- 1) You are all right with what they are doing;
- or 2) You are too weak to stand up to them;
- or 3) You are less intelligent than they are – get the idea?

Problems only get worse if you ignore them and **hope** they will go away.

I'd like to thank the EC for helping us with this. Let's give them a round of applause.

We hope you don't have to deal with any of these types of people in your DAC meetings; however, you might. One thing is for certain . . . if you stay around long enough, you will get a call from a Club President who is having to deal with one of these people.

Laura has revised this just a little and made it a meeting of a Club Board meeting. It is on your Smart Book. Feel free to do this skit at your Fall Workshop. I am sure there are Presidents out there that could use this information.