



## **Workshops and Presentations** **Written Notes and relevant material**

*By Leigh Nomchong - Psychologist*

The following materials are the written notes of a presentation or workshop run by Leigh Nomchong. They are provided here for the benefit of the participants of that workshop or presentation. If you have not attended the workshop/presentation you may find some of the aspects of the material a bit confusing. This is because these notes are a guideline to the event and not a full account of the event. Therefore, if you have not been a participant, you should not view this material on its own, as other relevant and significant material may have been presented verbally or visually.

Please note that we have undergone changes over the years, hence our letter head can vary at times depending on when the workshop/presentation was run.

If you would like a work shop or presentation run for your organisation, or you would like more information, you can contact us below:

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*It's all about the way you think*

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## **Dealing with Difficult Clients**

A workshop presentation by Leigh Nomchong

[www.nomchong.com.au](http://www.nomchong.com.au)

# Dealing with difficult clients

## Program

1. Why are they difficult
2. Personal reasons for being difficult
2. Some psychological issues
3. Types of difficult client
4. Ways to deal with them
5. When to be assertive
6. How do I cope?
7. Discussion & Examples

Why are they difficult?



- They have no previous experience with the legal profession, or authority
- They have unrealistic expectations (which are based upon what they have seen on the media)
- Their perception of right and wrong
- They don't understand the difference between Legal Justice system & justice



- They have been traumatised by the issue (Pain, Depression, PTSD, Anxiety)
- They have been badly handled by a predecessor & are now being assertive (all men solicitors are bastards)
- They have no understanding of the costs of legal process, or the time it takes to do things



# Personal reasons for being difficult



- They handle stress by being aggressive or putting on a front
- They are doing this under instruction of another
- Cultural differences (Asian, African, American)
- They play the victim in all matters where they feel out of their depth
- They worry about money – as they are not working, yet still have bills





# Some Psychological Issues



- Trauma & stress can make people make emotionally based decisions that defy logic
- As a consequence they can react in unpredictable ways
- Pain affects all cognitive function including memory, concentration, comprehension, attention span and so on



# Difficult Clients & their characteristics

Personality  
Types  
You  
Need  
to Know



- The person with a chip on their shoulder (anger issues, sense of injustice, the need to control the situation)
- The person who needs an audience (they waste your time)
- The helpless person (they will rely on you for everything)



# And of course the....



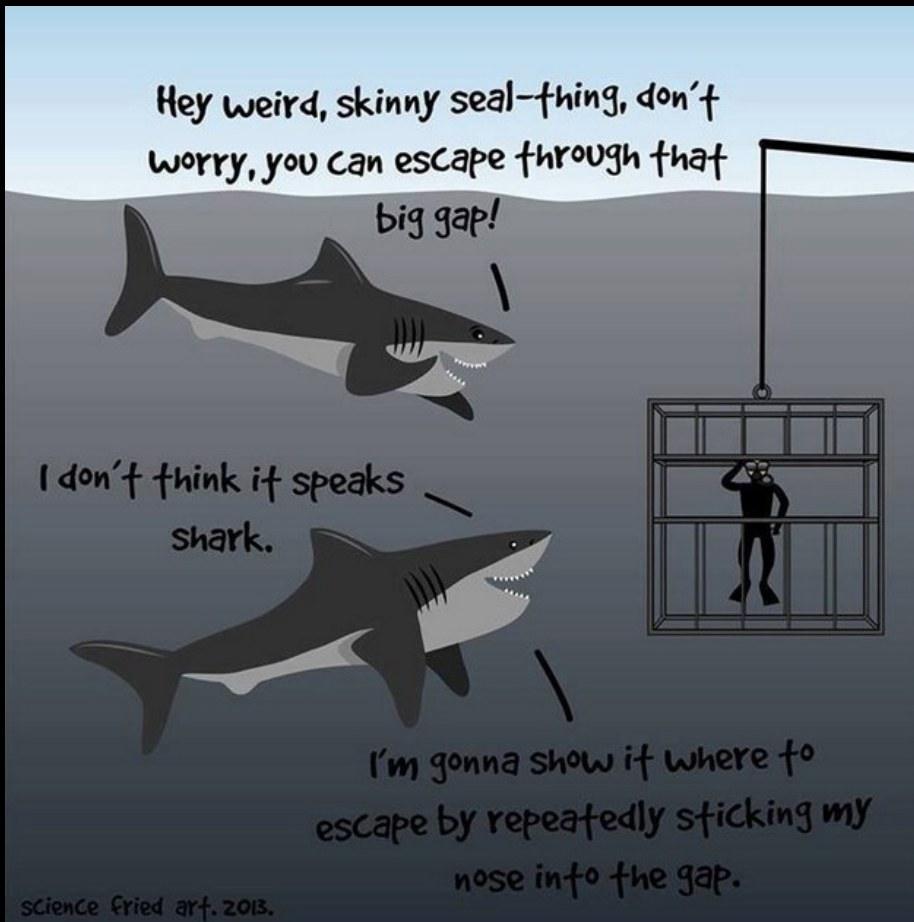
- The NFI Person!
- Their total lack of insight will cause you a great deal of stress work
- Repeat the message repeatedly!

# Ways to deal with Difficult Clients



# communication

- Communication
- If you cant get the message across – they cant get the message!



# Attitude



- How you think about the situation will determine how you experience the situation
- Be relaxed & comfortable & they will respond



# Ownership vs Responsibility



- Owning a problem has a major impact upon how you experience a problem
- Responsibility is when you don't take ownership, but you do decide to be competent & efficient

# Reflection



- Reflecting back to a person what they are saying validates them & makes them feel that you care and you understand.

# Soothe them...



- Be supportive in your manner & language
- Give them attention & you will be able to move quickly through the matter
- A smile costs nothing but helps so much

# “I am not the enemy”



- Remind them that you are working on their matter for them, so is your boss!
- Yes its difficult but you are doing what you can!

# Prepare, prepare, prepare...



- If you are not across the file, or cant get to the file quickly – you are left fumbling your way through any client contact – not to mention fumbling through your work!

# Being Assertive



- Knowing when to close
- How to have a thick skin
- How to say no
- Will being firm make things worse?

# When to be assertive & when not too!





- Client with anger issues – its a judgement call
- What is your role in the office? Should it be passed up or down the line
- When the client has been traumatised or in pain, you can make it worse!
- The many ways to say no :)



How do I cope at the end of the day?



# Affirmations



- Affirmations, Self Talk & Way of thinking
- Whatever you say to your self - its true!
- You are what you think!

# \$10 Bill example

- How to have a thick skin by simply thinking differently!



# Relaxation & Stress Management



- Exercise
- Diet
- Sleep
- Happiness is a state of mind not a destination

# Debriefing vs bitching



- Taking a few minutes out to get something off your chest to a friend or colleague, can often give you that brief respite and a moment of acknowledgement yourself!

# Sum Up of Strategies

- The way you think of a problem determines the problem
- Communication & Attitude
- Assertiveness
- Prepare
- Self Talk & Affirmations
- Ownership vs Responsibility - problems



# Emergencies



- Police, Ambulance, Fire, Mental Health Crisis Team
- Do what you have to do, but DO NOT take ownership of the actions of others!
- We are responsible for our own actions, not the actions of others. They are responsible for themselves!

# Discussion: Case Issues & Problem Solving





Then if all else fails – just relax...

