



DIMENSIONAL[®] COLLABORACTION

Workshop Prework



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Part 1: Overview

Let's Make a Bargain

We want to make a bargain with you.

Soon, you'll be attending the COLLABORACTION workshop. Unlike many workshops, this one gets right into practical ideas you can use.

We know that it's often frustrating working with others to accomplish your goals. As this workshop's title suggests, you'll discover realistic new ways to break through the barriers you face collaborating and communicating with the people around you. But the day after you attend this workshop, you'll immediately be able to put these skills into action — to get the results you want.

Hands-On Learning

The workshop employs hands-on learning. You bring to it your own workplace situation to develop solutions and to practice skills that will help with specific people issues.

Your Part

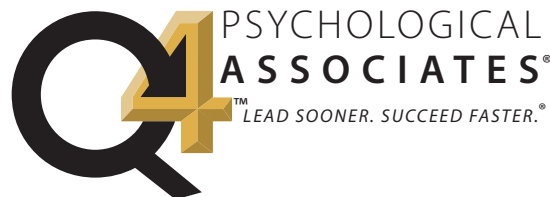
To hit the ground running and make the most of your time, we want you to prepare for COLLABORACTION by completing the Prework that follows. It takes about an hour, but you'll find it interesting, and your investment will pay off: Completing the Prework will make everything you do in the workshop more relevant and valuable.

Our Part

Our part of the bargain is this: We promise the workshop will give you fresh insights about working with people that will help you, and which you can start using right away!

Part 2: Checklist

In Part 2, you'll identify several behaviors that help you collaborate better — and several that pose obstacles. To do it, you'll complete a brief, one-page checklist on the next page.



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Part 2: Behavior & Collaboration Checklist

Review the list of behaviors below. Then, for each behavior, check the box under O (for Obstacle) or E (for Enhancement) to indicate whether that behavior is an obstacle to — or an enhancement of — effective collaboration. After completing the form, bring this page with you to the workshop.

| O | E | Behavior | O | E | Behavior |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Interrupts | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Avoids facing issues |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Encourages expression of opinions | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Monopolizes discussions |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Says “yes” without meaning it | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Rarely volunteers information |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Keeps views and ideas to self | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Glosses over problems |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Meanders | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Is insensitive and blunt |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Is reluctant to reach decisions | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Seeks and gives facts; shares ideas |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Argues and threatens | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Is reluctant to probe troublesome areas |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Explains and gives reasons | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Involves others |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Agrees with everyone | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Does only what is required |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Talks more than listens | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Is quick to find fault |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Listens at a thinking level | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Achieves mutual understanding of, and commitment to, decisions |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Hesitates to seek information | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Listens only to views that agree with his/her own |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Solicits ideas and opinions from others | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Is unenthusiastic |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Keeps an open mind | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Compromises quickly |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Is easily influenced | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Frequently says “I” and “me” |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Is distant and uninvolved | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Believes pleasing is more important than getting things done |

Part 3: Articles

In Part 3, you'll read two short articles that will help you understand the kinds of behavior and communication skills you need to collaborate better with people at work.

Articles

Read the following articles in the order shown (click a link or scroll down):

Article 1: Communication

"If It Weren't for People, I'd Have Better Conversations"

Article 2: Structuring a Conversation

"Try Discussing It One Step at a Time"

Part 3: Planning Guide

Worksheet

*It's critically important that you complete the **Real-Life Situation Planning Guide** before attending the workshop — and that you bring a copy of the completed form to the workshop.*

Article 1: Communication

“If It Weren’t for People, I’d Have Better Conversations”

Working with people on the job isn’t always easy. Here are several situations that show behaviors that you probably recognize.

Mike

Mike works with Elaine who provides him with critical research data. Although they get along, Elaine doesn’t talk much about herself or about work. Lately, she has missed deadlines, and her efforts have gotten sloppy.

When Mike decides to complain to Elaine, she just shuts up. She shrugs her shoulders as if to say, “What can I tell you?” Now, Elaine says even less. What can Mike do?



Amy

Amy was excited about working on a new project team. After several meetings, though, she's frustrated. Another team member, Dan, interrupts frequently, pushing his own opinions. At times, he's sarcastic. The team leader hasn't been much help.

Frankly, Amy isn't sure how to deal with Dan, either. But she does see the team's enthusiasm going downhill and productivity slipping. What can she do?

Jennifer

Jennifer and Doug are assigned to choose a new vendor for their company. When they meet, Doug easily strays from the subject and likes to reminisce. He also seems just to go along with Jennifer's opinions. Once, when she disagreed with Doug's view, he quickly changed his mind.

To Jennifer, Doug values a pleasant atmosphere above all else. She knows this is hurting the quality of their decision-making. What can Jennifer do?

Importance of Understanding Behavior

As the examples show, people can be frustrating even when they're pleasant, as Jennifer is learning in dealing with Doug.

One way to improve collaboration is to better understand behavior. Doing so can make you aware of reasons that some discussions are more productive than others. Then, you can respond to help make your discussions more effective.

It's only human to think about people in terms of the behavior they display. A convenient tool for organizing your observations is the DIMENSIONAL® MODEL OF BEHAVIOR™ (Figure 1).

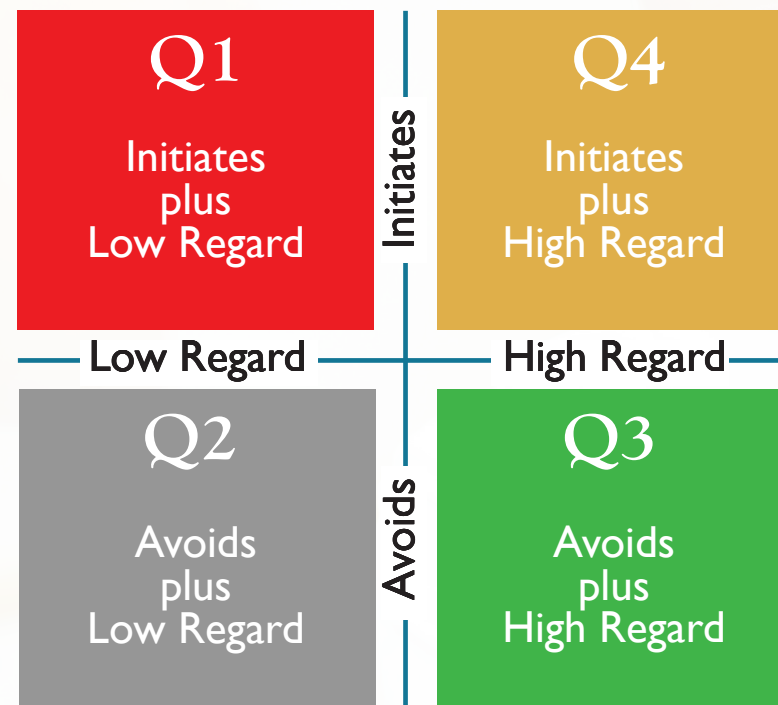


Figure 1

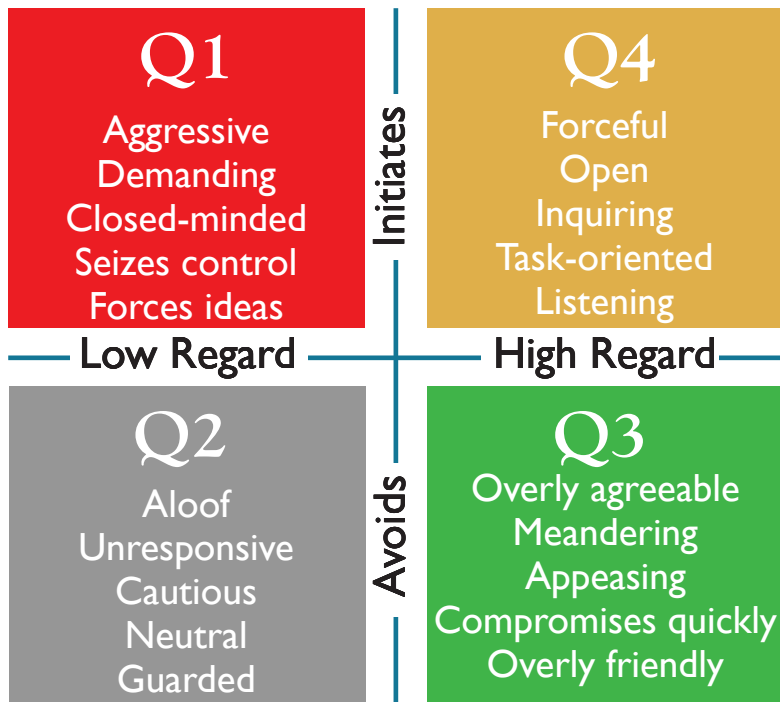


Figure 2

Applying the DIMENSIONAL MODEL not only gives you information about behavior that frustrates you, it helps you deal with it. While a typical reaction at work might be to accept this behavior or complain to others, when armed with insights about behavior, you can develop strategies for responding to the Dans, Elaines, and Dougs of your office in more effective ways. And you can *plan* your conversations around dealing with others' behaviors. That leads to the next Prewrite topic: Structuring your interactions for better results.

Notice that the vertical line (or “dimension”) illustrates a range of behavior, from *Initiates* at the top to *Avoids* below. *Initiates* means taking charge — making things happen by exercising control. *Avoids* is passive, letting things happen by giving in to others. People's actions reveal some degree of this dimension.

The horizontal dimension describes behavior from *Low Regard* (at left) to *High Regard* (right). *Low Regard* behavior shows little concern for other people and their needs, feelings, or ideas. *High Regard* behavior shows concern for others and their needs, and has a high regard for their feelings and ideas.

As you can see, combining both dimensions gives us four sections (or quadrants) in the MODEL. Most behavior you see and hear will be a blend that falls into one of the quadrants, or “Qs” (Figure 2).

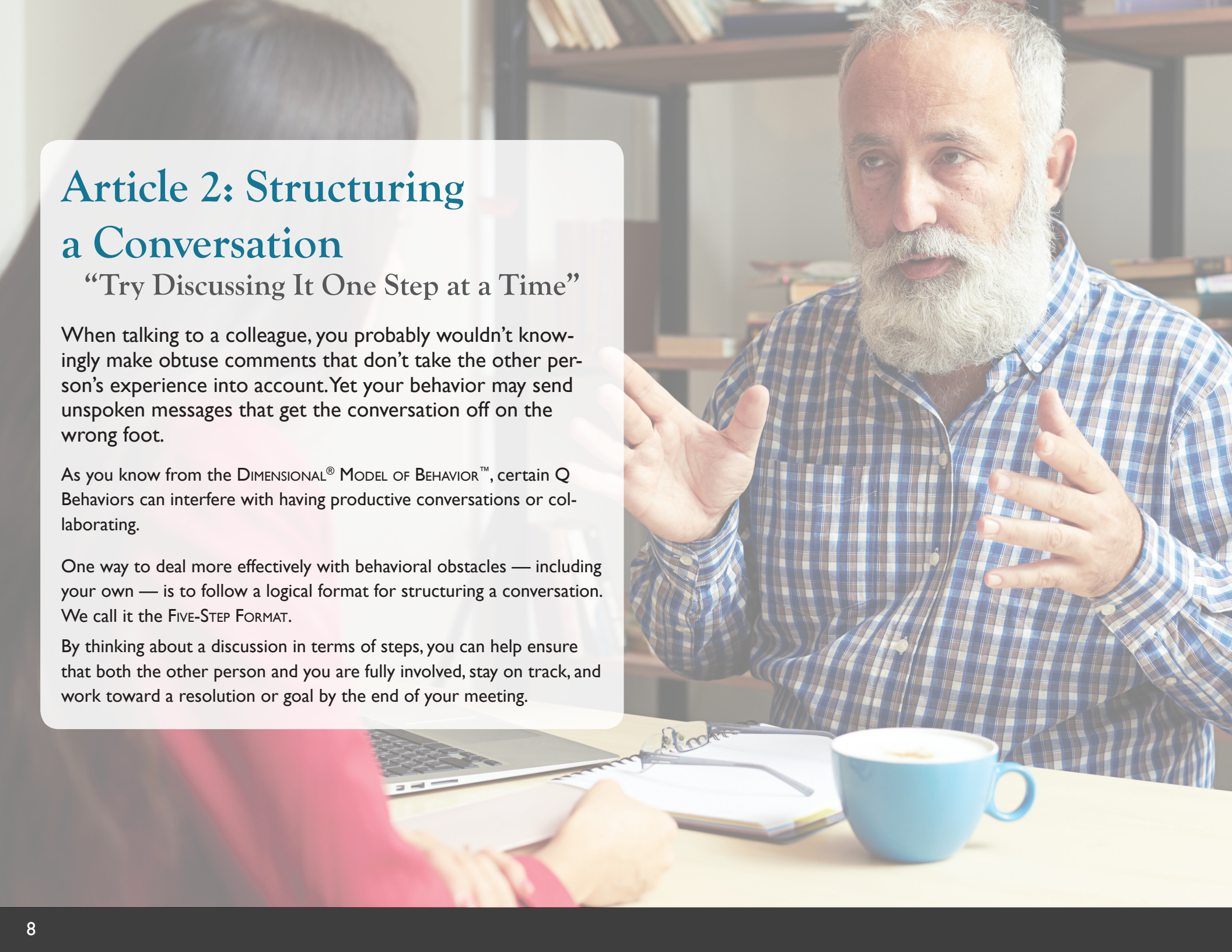
For instance, you realize now that Dan's behavior above matches descriptors for Q1. Elaine's behavior appears to be mostly Q2, while Doug's behavior is Q3 when meeting with Jennifer.

Actually, we are all a changeable mix of all four behaviors. For this discussion, our interest is in the *predominant* behavior of others when we're trying to collaborate with them.

What About Q4?

If you look at the attributes of Q4 behavior in the DIMENSIONAL MODEL, you'll see that a combination of wanting to get things done (Initiates) and concern for other people (High Regard) is ideal for maximum collaboration and effective interactions between people. So, Q4 does not usually frustrate us.

This doesn't mean that Q4 behavior isn't demanding. People exhibiting Q4 behavior usually ask questions and try to resolve differences rather than let them slide. Be prepared for a dynamic, task-oriented interaction when working with Q4!



Article 2: Structuring a Conversation

“Try Discussing It One Step at a Time”

When talking to a colleague, you probably wouldn't knowingly make obtuse comments that don't take the other person's experience into account. Yet your behavior may send unspoken messages that get the conversation off on the wrong foot.

As you know from the DIMENSIONAL[®] MODEL OF BEHAVIOR[™], certain Q Behaviors can interfere with having productive conversations or collaborating.

One way to deal more effectively with behavioral obstacles — including your own — is to follow a logical format for structuring a conversation. We call it the FIVE-STEP FORMAT.

By thinking about a discussion in terms of steps, you can help ensure that both the other person and you are fully involved, stay on track, and work toward a resolution or goal by the end of your meeting.

Step 1: Open the Discussion

Begin with an appropriate degree of socializing. State the purpose for meeting and offer *benefits to the other person* for collaborating with you. Doing this should create interest — very effective for having a meaningful conversation. Check the other person's readiness to proceed. If it's still low, try to raise interest or consider postponing the meeting until a better time.

Step 2: Get the Other Person's Views

When we start a conversation, we're tempted to give our opinions first. It's more effective, though, to get the other person's views first and gather information that could be valuable. Ask questions and really listen to understand what he/she has to say about the subject. By showing interest and encouraging participation, you should increase the other person's interest in the conversation or your thoughts.

Step 3: Give Your Views of Other's Views

Since you've already acknowledged the other person's views in Step 2, they are now likely to be more open to your views about what has been said. Briefly state where you agree, disagree, and why.

Step 4: Resolve Differences

With both viewpoints on the table, discuss where you disagree, try to fully understand, and attempt to resolve any arguments. Since discussions can become impassioned, emotions that interfere with discussion may need to be expressed and acknowledged.

Step 5: Develop an Action Plan

Once differences are worked out, you can now discuss an action plan for **mutually** accomplishing your goal or solution. Talk over the benefits of carrying out this plan, bolstering the high level of commitment you should both have at this point. Work out the details and check for understanding.

Practice the Steps

With practice planning a FIVE-STEP conversation, you'll find that the logic of each step makes the format easy to remember, helping you have more focused and collaborative conversations that get things accomplished.

Part 4: Real-Life Situation Planning Guide

Completing this Planning Guide will prepare you to apply skills you learn in the workshop to a current workplace situation.

1. Briefly describe a workplace situation in which more effective collaboration with a peer would produce better business results.

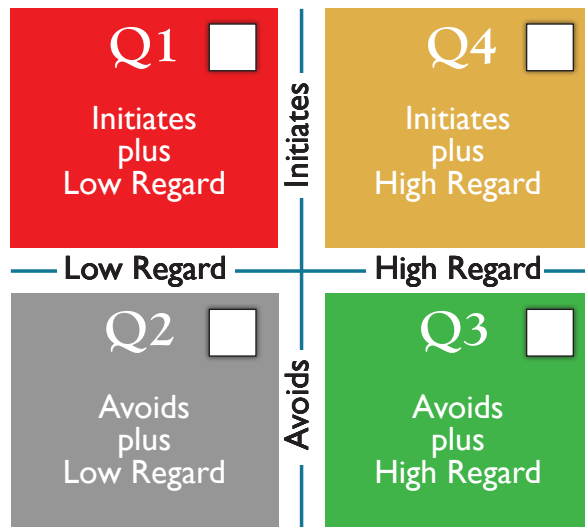
2. What is the benefit of achieving collaboration:
To you?

To the other person?

3. What has the other person done that presents obstacles to collaboration?

4. What have you done to enhance collaboration with this person?

5. Which quadrant of the DIMENSIONAL MODEL OF BEHAVIOR best describes the other person's predominant behavior?



*Please print this page, and bring it with you to the workshop.
After you print the form, you will have completed COLLABORACTION Prework.*