

## What's Your Style Under Stress?

Derek was steamed! His colleague Josh had once again dropped the ball preparing for a court date and Derek was forced to scramble to get all the pieces together. He had to cancel dinner with his girlfriend because he and Josh were going to work till all hours that night to prepare for tomorrow.

At 8:00 PM, Josh walked into Derek's office with a draft of a pleading and handed it to him.

Derek looked up and asked, "What?"

"Is everything ok?" Josh asked.

Derek took the papers, began to scan them and said, "Don't worry about it."

Our style under pressure reflects our fundamental approach to handling conflict and difficult situations. Derek is an avoider. He can be really ticked off, but he usually doesn't talk about the bigger issues. He withdraws from interactions that threaten to be personal and uncomfortable.

On the other end we've all dealt with people who approach tough conversations with bluster and blame. Even if they don't yell, they control conversations with all knowing pronouncements, dismissive labels and more talking than listening.

The most successful at cleaning up messes and getting high productivity and loyalty from employees, are the people who are great at listening and quietly talking about the most salient issues behind the difficulties. These "best of the best" keep a door open for dialogue while they're saying what needs to be said.

In high stakes conversations what's your style? Do you abandon the truth when it needs to be spoken? Do you throw your intellect and power around when you need to be listening? Would you like to change or tweak your style?

It is possible to make some changes that may save a professional affiliation, retain an important client, reengage a valuable employee or resuscitate a personal relationship. Think about changing instead of just regretting.

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Birke Consulting has helped many professionals achieve better outcomes in their conversations. Call or email us; we're ready to help you.