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# Serenity Now!

Strategies to reduce stress and conflict in the  
workplace

Steve Vargo, OD, MBA

# Course objectives

- Learn how conflict and stress negatively impact productivity
- Learn strategies to contain stress and conflict
- Protect your sanity!

**1 in 4** employees  
view their JOB as their  
**#1 STRESSOR**



# Causes of stress and conflict

- Condescending and demeaning comments
- Overruling decisions without offering a reason
- Public reprimands
- Talking about others behind their back
- Giving others the silent treatment
- Ignoring people
- Rude comments
- Not giving credit
- Insulting others
- Yelling



CAN'T HEAR

CAN'T THINK

CAN'T HEAL



Perfect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Detail oriented</li> <li>• Gets things done</li> <li>• Great analysis</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Could have analysis paralysis</li> <li>• Believes they are right even when wrong</li> <li>• Super-sensitive</li> <li>• Can hold a grudge forever</li> </ul>
Playful	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fun to be around</li> <li>• The life of the party</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does not always get work done</li> <li>• Procrastinates</li> </ul>
Powerful	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Takes control</li> <li>• Achieves more in short period of time</li> <li>• Usually right</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does not care about other people's feelings</li> <li>• Ignores rules</li> <li>• Not detail oriented</li> </ul>
Peaceful	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Loyal</li> <li>• Easy to be around</li> <li>• Tends to please</li> <li>• Avoids conflict</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Achievement is not high priority</li> <li>• Works on their own time frame</li> <li>• Avoids conflict</li> </ul>



You shouldn't feel that way!

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Take care  
of yourself!



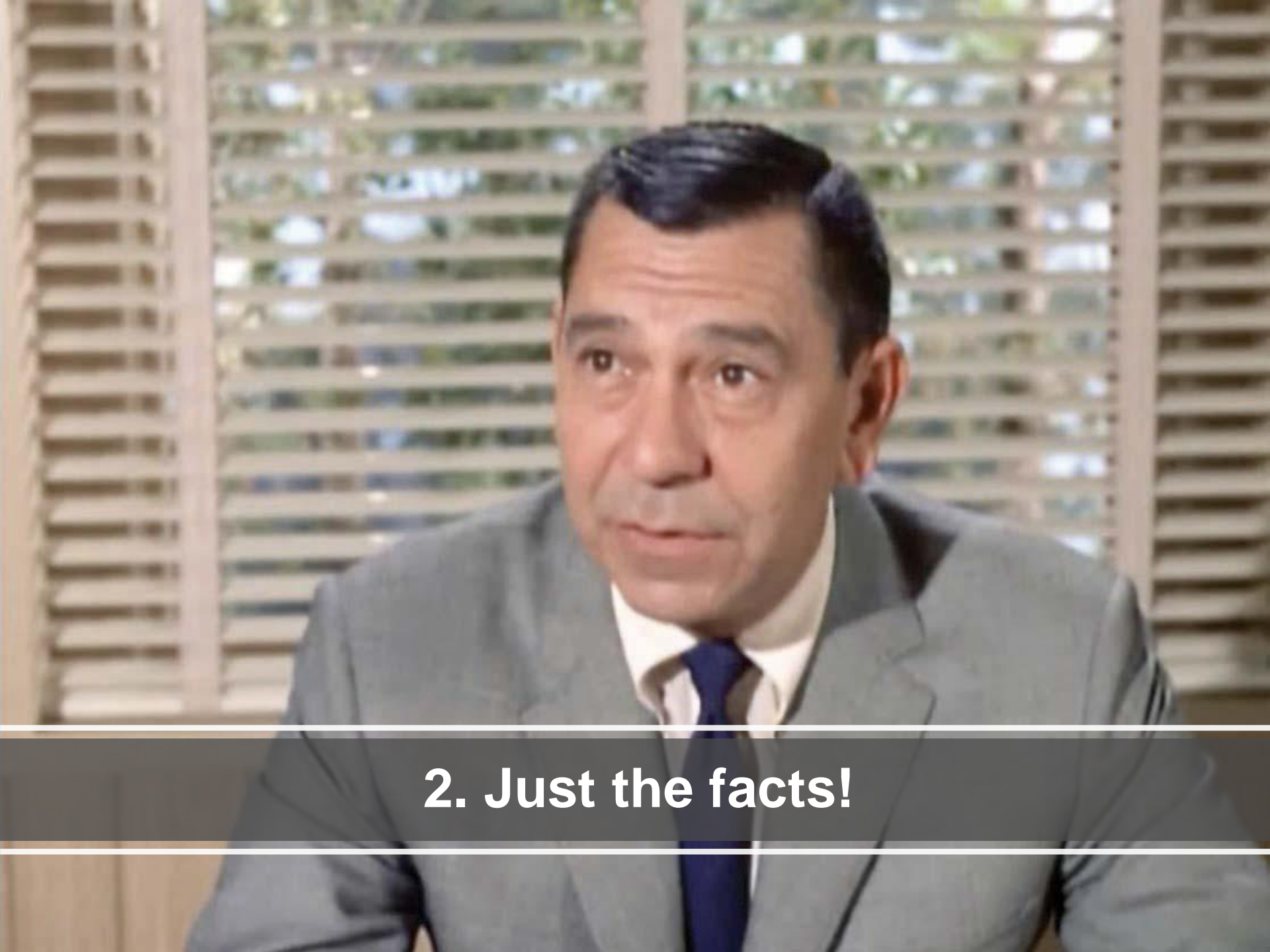
# Conflict resolution strategies

A close-up photograph of a hand holding a small, rectangular, light-colored card. The card has rounded corners and the words "Thank You!" are printed on it in a bold, green, sans-serif font. The hand is positioned at the top and bottom of the card, with fingers visible. The background is a soft, out-of-focus green and yellow, suggesting an outdoor setting. The lighting is bright and natural, highlighting the texture of the card and the skin of the hand.

**Thank You!**

## **1. Appreciation**

# The Power of Reciprocity



**2. Just the facts!**



### 3. Get curious

Can you help me understand why...



Problem

Problem

Solution

Problem

Problem

Prob

blem

Problem

## 4. Explore Solutions

**Low Assertiveness**

**High assertiveness**

**High Hostility**



**Hot contempt**

- **Intimidation**
- **Confrontation**
- **Insults**

**Low Hostility**



**Low Assertiveness**

**High assertiveness**

**High Hostility**

**Cold contempt**

- Avoidance
- Backstabbing
- Gossip

**Hot contempt**

- Intimidation
- Confrontation
- Insults

**Low Hostility**



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**Low Hostility**



**Hard on the  
problem;  
Soft on the people**



**5. Are there consequences?**





# Channeling frustration



Disconnected  
Depressed  
Low-stimulus



Gossip  
Blame  
Conflict



Teamwork  
Productivity  
Engagement





# Mediating staff conflict

1. A NO-BLAME Zone!
2. No need to agree – just listen
3. Repeat back what you heard
4. Explore reasonable solutions

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Thank You!!

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