

Follow-up

SEPTEMBER 1997



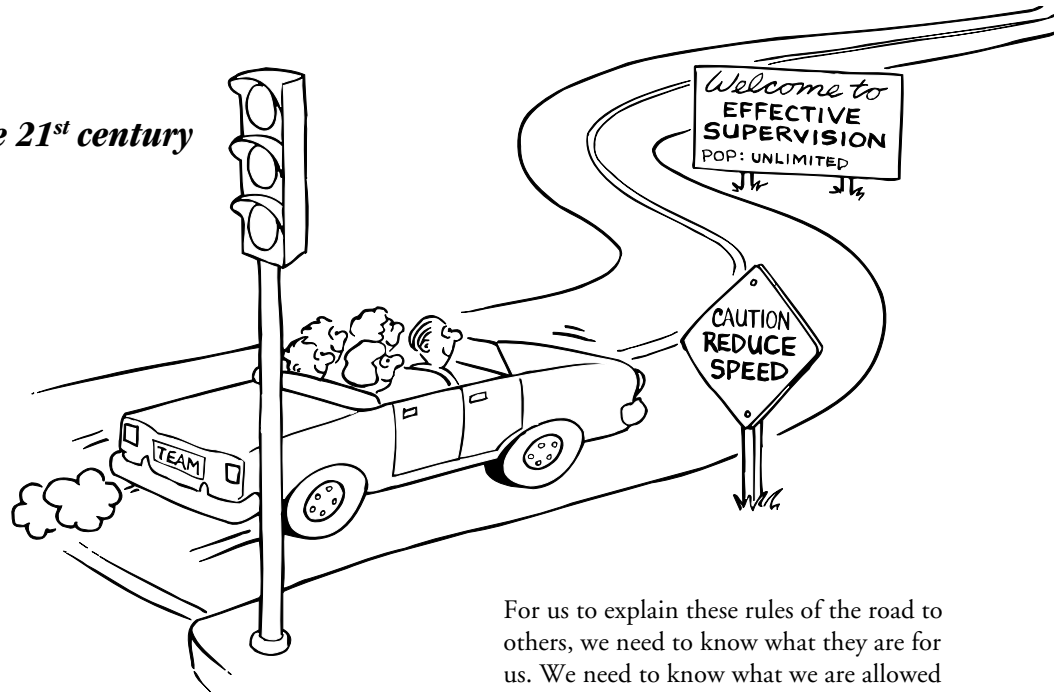
New paradigms – models for the 21st century

Teaching Supervisors the Rules of the Road

Traffic lights have three familiar colors in most parts of the planet, and the role they play in the junctions and intersections that we drive through is very significant. If we think of these intersections, both from a driving point of view but also from the relationships we have with others, then we can use the sequence of traffic light colors to help us in dealing effectively with others.

Traffic lights allow us to cooperatively use the “road” in a way that others can use it too. Hopefully, you will find that taking a more “colorful” approach to manoeuvring through people intersections will assist you as you work with others, including the people you live with.

Whether or not we are responsible for others, called a supervisor, team leader or simply known as Fred, the basic premise of STOP, LOOK and LISTEN, GO works well in most interpersonal situations. When I was small, the first two instructions were painted in large letters by the side of the



railway tracks we crossed each day. They served us well; GO was the implied result of doing the other two. With lights that tell us to GO, life may be simpler.

So what do traffic lights represent to you? (Other than “stop” and “go”)

You may have thought restrictions, slowing down, nuisance—or you may have thought rules, order, giving way, letting someone else in. Depending on your point of view, any or all of the above can be true when we work with others.

Traffic lights tell us when to stop, slow down, go, who has the right of way and serve to warn us. They also provide a framework for behaviour, setting rules and giving order to junctions. Similarly when we work with others, we need to provide a framework with clear, agreed-upon expectations and outcomes.

For us to explain these rules of the road to others, we need to know what they are for us. We need to know what we are allowed to do without checking with our boss and what our roles and responsibilities are. What expectations do others have of us?

Too often we end up on different paths with little appreciation for the other person’s point of view.

Red

Check our facts, points of view, opinions and let our “emotional” red reaction cool off. Many of the mistakes we make in working with others can be traced back to “jumping the lights.”

Yellow

Get ready to move. This is the moment we write the script of what we are going to say, practice with colleagues to gauge possible reactions, and be clear about the purpose of the meeting we plan to hold. Prepare the location of the meeting to

continued ...



make it appropriate for the reason for getting together.

Green

Take action, get on with it. We are prepared, have all the tools we need to cross the intersection safely and keep driving on the other side. The other people in the car with us will arrive safely and will consider us to be a “good driver.” We shall be able to travel along the road without incident until the next set of lights turn to red and cause us to stop, look and LISTEN again, for working with people is a continual process and never comes to an end.

Those things we need to understand when we learn to drive a car well and defensively

correspond with developing our skills in working with others. When we define the rules of the road, pay attention to the traffic, help create good traffic conditions, understand the different types of drivers and become able to teach someone else to drive, we make the traffic lights work well both for ourselves and for the people who interact with us.

Next time you set off down that road called WEWO or “Working Effectively With Others”, remember the “Colors of Supervision” and think Red – Stop, Yellow – Look and Listen, then Green – Go!

This article is adapted from *The Colors of Supervision*, © Jane Durant 1995, published by Kendall Hunt Publishing Company, 4050 Westmark Drive, Dubuque, Iowa 52004-1840, USA, 1-800-228-0810.

Follow-up is published two or three times a year for clients and friends of Jane Durant. We hope it helps you get better results for yourselves and others.

If you would like the opportunity to be part of a future issue, or if you would simply like to receive a copy, please call, e-mail or write me at:

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Creative design by Janice Harvey.
Cartoon artwork by Ingrid Rice of
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PRINTED IN CANADA ON RECYCLED
PAPER

International Federation of Training and Development Organizations

The idea for IFTDO was conceived during a United Nations conference in 1971; the first conference was held in Geneva in 1972 and attended by 19 organizations from all over the world. Currently, the IFTDO's worldwide network includes human resource practitioners in small and large training and development organizations, universities, government agencies, multi-national corporations, and consultancies. IFTDO's membership consists of about 150 organizations in 47 countries.



IFTDO's mission is to develop and maintain a worldwide network committed to identifying, developing and transferring knowledge, skills and technology to enhance human performance, productivity and sustainable development. One of the main events is an annual conference. This year it is being held in Kuala Lumpur and will be opened by the Prime Minister of Malaysia, followed by a full schedule of keynote speakers and workshops (Jane will be presenting one of the workshops). Visit IFTDO's Web site at www.tomco.net/iftdo/ to find out more. See you there!

Fall
Happenings!

- Workshops in UK and Kuala Lumpur (see this issue)
- Problem-resolution strategies — Nanaimo Regional General Hospital
- Earning respect — Professional Secretaries International, Vancouver chapter
- Learning to be a Granma
- Articles for the Mining Co on the Web — nothing to do with mining in the usual sense, but mining for information, a handy way with a real live guide to help

“The best laid plans of mice and men gang aft a-gley.”

Robert Burns (to a mouse!)

Some of you will remember that we were pleased to announce the Web site in the last issue in April with “Jane Goes Global.” Your feedback told us that finding it in the search engines was a challenge and, in fact, we were unable to list in the “big ones” — so we have taken the next step and moved to www.janedurant.com. We've added new materials and a search page. Take a look!