SEAL FOR PROFESSIONALS

You can keep using SEAL throughout your working life!

As a student, it’s really important to identify the Situation in any given learning experience (the S of SEAL) because that is the first step in the process of using an experience to identify learning. In a professional context, you are already involved in the situation so you don’t need to rehash it. But you do need still to think about the Effect it has on you (the E of SEAL) as this a direct impact on your course of action.

The Effect part is essentially the ‘so what?’ factor of the Situation. The reason why you take action (the A of SEAL) is because the situation had an effect on you. In a professional situation, this may mean a potential impact on your performance or the way you interact with colleagues or clients.

This is why you need to self-reflect. Using SEAL to reflect on professional situations will help you identify areas for improvement, or simply to consider how you might do things differently in the future. This has an impact on your effectiveness in the organisation and on your career.

Here’s an example.

**SITUATION:** You’re in a meeting and one of your colleagues is rude to you and cuts you off every time you offer an opinion.

**EFFECT:** You feel really disrespected and you withdraw from the meeting and don’t say anything further even though you have some great ideas to share.

**ACTION:** In order to deal with this situation, the next time it happens you respectfully ask the person if you can finish what you were saying. Although it made for an awkward moment in the meeting at the time, they did apologise and let you finish.

**LEARNING:** What you have learned from this is that through being respectfully assertive - even if it took you out of your comfort zone - you were able to address the inappropriate behaviour that was affecting you. You gained confidence to use this technique again in future situations.
Scenario activity:

Aziz and his colleague, Jana, are working on an important project which is due to be delivered to their manager in a week's time. They are a bit behind so they decide to work separately on aspects of the project so that they can get the work done on time. When they meet up two days before the deadline, they discover that a critical part of the work was not initially allocated to either of them and consequently hasn't been done. Aziz becomes extremely anxious and takes this anxiety out on Jana in a rather heated exchange, basically blaming her for this oversight. Afterwards, he feels terrible about the conversation and realises that he may have damaged his working relationship with Jana.

1. What would you suggest Aziz do in order to deal with this challenging situation? What actions should he take?

FEEDBACK:

A possible suggestion would be for Aziz to apologise to Jana and work together with her to have a clear strategy for meeting the deadline, ensuring that the lines of communication are always open.

2. In the future, faced with a similar situation, what should Aziz do to avoid this less than ideal result?

FEEDBACK:

A possible suggestion for the future is for Aziz to be far more organised with his work, ensuring that he is not rushing at the end of a project to meet the deadline. He needs to monitor the progress of his work and communicate clearly to his colleagues what needs to be done. Even if the situation does cause him anxiety, he needs to avoid taking it out on colleagues and come up with more effective ways to handle stress.