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HELPING PEOPLE & NONPROFITS THRIVE!

Fearless Facilitator's Toolbox: Handling Difficult People

- **Planning:**
 - Develop agenda prior to meeting.
 - Plan structure and format appropriate to each agenda item.
 - Advance written agenda: meeting purpose and objectives, purpose for each agenda item, and timing.
- **Ground rules:**
 - Agreements on meeting values and behaviors.
 - Provide basic list, ask group to add.
 - Use consistently for standing/regular meetings.
- **Letting group know what to expect from you as a facilitator/chair/leader:**
 - Will keep the meeting focused.
 - Will stick to the agenda.
 - Will not participate in the meeting.
 - Might interrupt; facilitators are exempt from social graces, though interruption will be diplomatic, *hopefully* during a pause.
- **Taking chart pad notes:** helps pace and focus discussion; enables meeting participants to track main points.
- **Time check:**
 - Focuses group.
 - Reminds group that time is not unlimited.
 - Nudges individuals to speak concisely.
- **Checking in with group:** shifts energy; acknowledges situation affecting entire group; discourages agenda changes not agreed to by meeting participants; examples include:
 - Getting agreement from group to change agenda or extend meeting time to accommodate extending an agenda item.
 - Observing that the group losing energy, or stuck, and how to address it.
- **Forwarding phrases:**
 - Thank you.
 - We need to move on, we have 4 agenda items and 15 minutes left before this meeting ends.
 - Unfortunately, that's not on the agenda; perhaps it can be placed on the next meeting agenda.
- **Standing up:** can signal that it's time to move on, can contribute to calming a heated moment.