

## **STOP!**

### **Handling Emotions at Work**

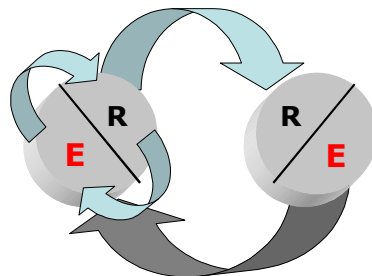
Adapted from:

- Ashkanasay, N.A., Zerbe, W.J., & Härtel, C.E.J. (Eds.). (2002). *Managing emotions in the workplace*. Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe.
- Gallwey, W.T. (2002). *The inner game of work: Overcoming mental obstacles for maximum performance*. London, UK: TEXERE Publishing.
- Goleman, D., Boyatzis, R., McKee, A. (2002). *The new leaders: Transforming the art of leadership into the science of results*. London, UK: Little, Brown.

How do you deal with someone who seems upset, anxious, or angry? The brain is such that connections from the emotional systems to the thinking systems are stronger than the other way around. This is the reason why emotions can flood our thinking. In other words, thinking is indivisible from, and influenced by *feelings*. Our first response to the outside world is to *feel*, then think. Not the other way around.

Trying to appeal to rationality and logic when someone is upset never works! What they want is to have their feelings *acknowledged* first.

#### **Rational - Emotional**



**S**tep back. Let the other person get it off their chest without you reacting.

- Take a sip of water. Focus on your breathing.

**T**hink. Create thinking space.

- Think about the context, the other person's viewpoint, and your feelings.

**O**bserve and name the emotion.

- "My observation is you're feeling..."

**P**ropose a course of action.

- "Let me propose..."

Repeat these steps no more than twice to invite the other person to a more rational dialogue. If not successful, withdraw from the conversation to resume at another time.