

## [CH]Appendices: Top Tips and Examples

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In the following appendices we set out some concrete examples of how to get in the mindset to use each of the animal styles effectively. We outline what to do and what to avoid, and give one personal and one professional example for each mode: how to engage in conflict (T-Rex), to capitulate (Mouse), to exert control (Lion) and to cooperate (Monkey).

Remember, though, that whatever mode you are in you need to always ensure you keep the HEAR principles (page 00) in mind throughout since these are the absolute foundations of rapport, and even someone excelling in using, for example, Lion skills will quickly falter if they are being dishonest or failing to show empathy, provide personal choice or fail to use reflection skills to examine thoughts, values and feelings. The HEAR principles must permeate throughout any interaction to be successful.

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### [A]Appendix 1: T-Rex

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T-Rex behaviours are most likely to be needed in situations of conflict. You should avoid conflict wherever you can and in all but a very small minority of situations it is usually desirable to let it go... whether that involves someone insulting you in a bar, aggressive driving behaviour or even something more intimate like a family argument or argument with friends. Most of the time you should ask yourself, ‘Is it really worth me engaging in this?’, ‘Is it worth getting in a bar fight, a road accident or falling out with family over what is, ultimately, not that critical?’

When you can avoid pulling out T-Rex-type behaviours you should – you have the other three animal styles to use in most situations. Don’t underestimate the power of capitulating in situations – the Mouse is often a really powerful way to control a rapidly escalating interaction. Equally, the warmth of the Monkey can be disarming, and sometimes you might need to just ignore the confrontational elements, get on with the task and adopt a more Lion-like approach. Only allow the normally extinct T-Rex to emerge when it is critical, unavoidable and where you must engage in confrontation. So, our first tip with T-Rex is answering the very simple question: ‘Is it worth bringing this side of me out?’

We have chosen two examples here: one professional and one personal.

In our work example, Aiden is the boss of a large textile firm and has received a report from one of his employees, Grace, that she has been receiving inappropriate text messages from Owen, her line manager. Aiden sees some of these messages and they are

indeed inappropriate. Aiden calls in Owen for a meeting and listens to his side of the story. Owen admits he has sent them but refuses to accept that the messages are inappropriate. At this point, we know we are going to have conflict. Aiden has recognised that Owen is putting Grace at risk and has decided that Owen will receive a written warning. He would like Owen to consider apologising and would like him to understand how inappropriate the messages are. Finally, Aiden will need to make clear that any further similar behaviour will be met with a final warning and thereafter dismissal.

We will get to the Aiden and Owen meeting in a moment but, before we do, let's consider our more personal example. Leah and Julia are long-time school friends. They have known each other throughout school and now have their own children, Ruby (Leah's daughter) and Isla (Julia's daughter). Ruby and Isla are 12 and 14 respectively and both attend the same school. Although Isla is two years ahead of Ruby they sometimes hang out. Both families (mums, kids and husbands) get together on a regular basis. Recently on days out Isla often rolls her eyes when Ruby makes an enthusiastic comment about her favourite TV show, or interrupts and talks over her. This has gone on for a few weeks and Leah notices that Ruby has got more and more withdrawn and avoidant on days out. In a conversation with Ruby, Ruby reveals to her mum, Leah, that Isla ignores her completely. She says that last week Isla sent her a gif saying 'snoozefest' in response to Ruby texting 'Can't wait to see you next week.' Yesterday, when Ruby went up to Isla at school, Isla apparently told her to 'just fuck off'. When telling the story Ruby started crying and saying that she didn't want to grass on Isla and now feels like she has 'ruined everything'. Leah does make some effort to explain to Ruby that teens can sometimes be mean and that it is maybe a stage that Isla is going through. In doing so, Leah, quite rightly, tries to build Ruby's resilience and not automatically go to the confrontation stage prematurely. But that evening, Ruby gets a Snapchat video message from Isla (with a bunch of Isla's friends sat behind Isla laughing), with Isla saying, 'If I was as ugly as you I'd have to hide away in the loos all day.' At this point, we would argue, Leah does need to intervene – and most parents would likely feel the same way. Though there is not an inevitable confrontation on the horizon (either with Isla or her mum), it is at least possible.

So now let's return to how to get in the right mindset for T-Rex, as well as what tips and hints we can use to engage in conflict without anger or aggression and, importantly, how to achieve our desired goals.

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[B]**Mindset**

To help you get in the right frame of mind here are some tips. First, *be clear on your goals* – where you want to end up in the interaction. For Aiden it would be to make sure that Grace is protected from any further harassment, feels safe and is content with any final outcome. And also to make sure that Owen recognises the boundaries of acceptable behaviour and that he never repeats them. It may also be to ensure that he retains both staff and makes sure no other employee has to endure such behaviour again.

For Leah, it is to look after her daughter Ruby, ideally to retain a friendship with the other family and also, preferably, not to upset Julia or Isla.

In both cases there may be some goals we might have to prioritise and be clear what is and is not up for negotiation, and what we can and cannot control. In Aiden's example, he can't allow Owen to do this again to Grace or anyone else in the company. However, he can't make Grace or Owen stay with the company and he can't change Owen's mind if Owen remains stuck in the idea that these sorts of text messages are OK. Equally, Leah can't make Isla like or involve Ruby or be more kind, and nor can she convince Julia that Isla's behaviour must be changed if Julia has the rather skewed view that Isla's behaviour is acceptable. With T-Rex you only control you; you can only affect your own behaviour and response to things and can neither insist nor expect others to change their mind or simply accept your viewpoint. But you must be clear on your goals and especially what is and is not negotiable.

Once you are clear on what the goals are you need to concentrate on what you are not going to do if and when you engage in conflict. You have to now focus on what you must avoid. Lose all thoughts of aggression, attacking, sarcastic or argumentative behaviour. This is NOT about you being mean to other people. It is a resolute, unwavering and non-negotiable clarity of purpose about what you think, not what you want to make someone else think. For example, you can't stop someone thinking racist thoughts or saying racist things. But you can, with utter clarity, say that you don't think that way, find it surprising that they do or ask (but you cannot insist) that they don't say such things in your company. You control you but you don't control other people. As soon as you engage in the emotional aspect of an argument you have lost control. Stay steady, stay resolute but do not get angry, aggressive or take out your ire on the person you are in conflict with.

The key to T-Rex is to keep things simple. Know what it is that you are clear on and say it in as clear and simple a way as possible. Here is a mantra in the form of the mnemonic CALM that you should seek to repeat before you engage:

[Numbered list]

1. C: *Cool* – I won't lose my cool. I will be objective and neutral and stick to my goals.
2. A: *Angry* – I won't get angry. I won't get drawn into anger or allow things to escalate. I recognise that the other person might get angry but I can't control what they do – only what I do.
3. L: *Language* – I won't use bad language or personalise anything. I will keep the message clear, short, firm and resolute. I know that this is a thing that I will not negotiate on. I know I can't force the other person to accept it, but I do need to be very clear on what my line is and ensure that they understand it. I need to show empathy and consider that perhaps if I were in their shoes I might not like it. I do care what they think and will recognise how they might feel.
4. M: *Measured* – I won't escalate things or make the situation worse, even if they do. I will listen to their view and seek to understand – even if I may not agree with – their perspective. I will explain why I see things this way – i.e., I will say, 'I think A, B and C and the reason I think that is because of X, Y and Z.' I will not overegg or harp on about the reasons, but provide them in a brief and measured way.

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Often with T-Rex you don't need to stay there long – say what you have to say and make it clear, concise and then retreat. You might then need to rapidly adapt to the response you receive to your delivery of the T-Rex bottom line depending on the outcome and, for example, back down to Mouse or warm things up with Monkey if you get a conciliatory response. After you've said what you need to say you don't need to labour it and sometimes it is better to let the other person absorb the message.

To help you actually deliver T-Rex think of the opposite attributes of the things you want to avoid. Instead of losing your cool, stay calm; instead of getting angry and emotional, if anything get calmer and less emotional; instead of using aggressive language, use conciliatory, peace-seeking language; and instead of blowing things out of proportion, keep them measured (but that doesn't mean play them down – just be accurate and know what the facts are).

Here are our two examples:

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[Display text]

Aiden: Hi Owen, come in and take a seat.

Owen: Hi. What's this about then?

- Aiden: I spoke with Grace the other day about a series of four text messages that you have sent her. She was quite upset about these and so I have said that I would speak with you to clarify things. What can you tell me about them?
- Owen: Do you mean the jokey ones that aren't really anyone's business but mine and hers? That is not even work stuff... I can't believe she has bothered you with this...
- Aiden: I understand if you are saying that they were not meant to offend and I'm reassured to hear that was not your intention. No one at our firm should be deliberately setting out to offend. But the comments in those messages did upset Grace....
- Owen: (*Interrupting.*) For fuck's sake. That's ridiculous. You aren't going to buy into that are you? (*Muttering.*) Political correctness gone mad.
- Aiden: ... and what I wanted to add is that I do not want messages like that to be sent to anyone within our firm, via work phone or indeed any device, whether email, over the phone or face-to-face.
- Owen: Jesus... talk about a storm in a teacup.
- Aiden: Owen, I need to be really clear here. For Grace's sake and for yours. You are saying this is trivial and not offensive. I am saying it is not trivial and it has caused upset. I recognise all you do for this company and, as you know, that does not go unnoticed. In the past few months you have worked hard for us and certainly on many occasions I can see you have provided great support to Grace... But, I want to be direct and also not shy away from any behaviours that I consider inappropriate. So, I am going to outline this in a written warning.
- Owen: No, don't do that... that's unfair.
- Aiden: Owen, this is not personal or designed in any way to get at you.
- Owen: She is out to get me.
- Aiden: I am here to protect everyone in this company. Grace, you... everyone. My decision is to provide you with a written warning that will make clear neither I nor the company tolerate such messages. To be clear, this is the single and only issue I have with your attitude or any of your work but it *is* an issue and this behaviour is not acceptable from you or anyone else. Ideally, I'd like you to apologise to Grace for the upset but I can't and don't want to enforce that.

That is between you and Grace. But, you do need to work together and I know what an excellent professional relationship you have had in the past.

Owen: Are you saying that I have to watch everything and anything I say or do here?

Aiden: If you don't recognise that what is in those texts is inappropriate then you do need to be more vigilant, yes. Is there something in any of those texts specifically that you don't see as inappropriate?

Owen: Well, what is wrong with a compliment?

Aiden: OK, so one of the messages says, 'I always let ladies go first upstairs... especially you.'

Owen: Yeah, so...?

Aiden: What did this message mean?

Owen: It's just a stupid... like saucy postcard thing, you know?

Aiden: So it does have a sexual innuendo?

Owen: Well only insofar as I am actually complimenting her figure. It's not abuse. She *has* got a great figure. I've known her for years. This is just banter. Are you saying you don't notice when she wears some of the things she wears?

Aiden: So, you're saying that because a woman wears certain clothes and if you have a close professional relationship, anyone might send or say the same type of thing?

Owen: Yeah, if you are down with banter like me and not part of some mad woke culture bullshit.

Aiden: Owen, if this were a single comment Grace may not have mentioned it. I agree, we all have thoughts; we are all allowed private thoughts. But this is not about what you are privately thinking. This is one of four messages that have been sent, uninvited, and, as I understand it, not reciprocated.

Owen: Humph... Well, yeah, she didn't send anything back I guess.

Aiden: They all relate either to something Grace has been wearing or her legs or her bottom. I want to be very clear – it is not appropriate, it has caused upset and you will receive a written warning. I can see you are angry about this and that you think it is unfair or disproportionate. You have said you did not want to cause offence and I know that you and Grace have a long-standing excellent professional relationship. I am sure that will continue. I know that in every other respect you are an outstanding and supportive colleague. I know and have recognised that you have helped Grace in the past as well as many other

colleagues. But I am not going to change my mind on this and it is only fair to you that I am open, direct and clear about it with you. I'll send the letter this afternoon. You should feel free to come and see me about it if anything remains unclear or if there is anything further you'd like to talk about.

[End display]

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In this example Aiden has a clear, unhesitant start – he makes clear what we are here to talk about. Although Aiden doesn't hesitate to get to the point, he does invite Owen's views. He also considers that Owen may genuinely not have meant to have caused offence. (But, note, he does not collude with that view.) Aiden also tries to move towards a peaceful resolution but reinforces the key issue that a staff member has been upset and offended. He is clear and direct. Without anger and without shaming Owen he sets clear parameters. Critically, he doesn't try to pass the issue over to Grace, but makes clear that it is his decision as a boss and not Grace's decision. As such, and with clarity and taking ownership of the issues, he sets out what will happen next. He also depersonalises the consequences and directly addresses Owen's 'this is unfair' statement. Aiden provides clarity on the non-negotiables. He recognises that an apology would be good but it must be heartfelt and notes that such mediation cannot be real unless it is actually genuinely felt.

Aiden also seeks clarification of Owen's understanding of whether he recognises that he has done wrong. He is upfront about having to be more mindful if he just doesn't get it but doesn't fall into the potential trap of inferring Owen must be stupid or a caveman to not know the behaviour is out of order.

The key issues here are objectivity, calmness, sticking to the goals and knowing that shame accusation and aggression are very likely to create defensiveness and further aggression from Owen.

But what about a situation that is more directly personal and where you don't have the benefit of automatically being in control by virtue of being the boss? Let's turn now to Leah's dilemma about her daughter Ruby and the apparent bullying by Julia's daughter Isla.

In this situation, there are many anxiety-inducing elements. Leah doesn't want to upset Julia or Isla, she doesn't want Julia to feel like she is stepping in on her parenting and it may well be that Isla's meanness is related to some other issues that Isla herself is struggling with. Recognising the complexity and stress of being a teen and not wanting to escalate anything in Julia's family circle, but also knowing that she has to look out for her own family, Leah must tread very carefully indeed. But at the same time, if Julia is a long-

standing friend who Leah trusts and loves dearly she cannot avoid speaking about this – not least because she could keep resentfully holding on to it every time they see each other. Fundamentally, though, she will quite rightly want to protect her own daughter who is clearly being negatively affected. Think again of the mnemonic of what to avoid and what to do: the key is to be CALM (calm mindset, amicable outcome, language appropriate, measured response).

In this case Leah might be able to manage this on the phone or in person. Either method might be acceptable depending on their relationship, but this is not for texting, email and certainly not to appear in any other electronic passive means. Friends talk directly about problems.

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[Display text]

Leah: Hi Julia, how are you? Is now a good time to speak?

Julia: Hi Jools. Yeah, no problem... We'd just finished tea – are you guys still all good for this weekend?

Leah: Yes, of course. Looks like we might get rained on but we can all get wet weather gear. But, look, I wanted to talk about something that's been on my mind... I don't want to freak you out at all and know that when I say this. It's so hard because I love you to bits, but I just can't not mention it...

Julia: Blimey! Now you're freaking me out. Are you OK?

Leah: Yes, of course. It's nothing traumatic and I so don't want to worry you. Let me just explain and then hopefully we can sort it out. It's to do with Ruby and Isla.

Julia: Oh no... have they fallen out? I did worry about that... Isla has been so moody recently. I hope she hasn't upset Ruby... I'm sure it's nothing but Isla being difficult.

Leah: God, I remember hitting 14 and it was a nightmare. I was all over the place. It's hard for kids these days. And I know with Ruby being that bit younger she idolises Isla and that might feel like Ruby always trying to horn in on things... and at school that could be very annoying to a teen but...

Julia: (*Interrupting.*) Yes, I'm sure whatever looks and sighs Isla is sending out is what I get every day. It's not personal – Isla wouldn't mean anything by it.

Leah: I know. But it did escalate the other day – first with a gif that was sent and then a video on Snapchat. If it had just been the sighs and eye-rolling I wouldn't phone. Anyway, the gif simply said 'snoozefest' when Ruby WhatsApped Isla about the weekend and then when she went up to her at school Ruby has said Isla told her to

‘fuck off’. Then this evening Ruby showed me a video Isla sent on Snapchat saying, ‘If I was as ugly as you I’d have to hide away in the loos.’

Julia: Oh my God, that is so awful. I’m so sorry – are you sure that is what she said or is that just Ruby making things up?

Leah: No. I did see the actual message. In fact, there were some other girls in the background behind Isla as well. I’m just pulling my hair out here. I was very anxious about even mentioning it because we are all so close and love you all to bits and I don’t want to make things worse. But Ruby is in a really bad state and I couldn’t not mention it to you and Gavin and then be constantly thinking about it.

Julia: And are you sure Ruby didn’t do something to provoke it in the first place? Did she first send something to Isla? I know Isla can be moody but that is not like her to just lash out spontaneously like that. She does have friends here at the moment. Are you saying it was sent this evening?

Leah: Julia, all I know is what Ruby told me, as well as the message I saw about an hour ago. Of course, Isla will not have meant that Ruby should actually go and hide in the toilets. My worry is – and I have nothing else to suggest this – that things could get worse and more stressful between our two girls, between our families and maybe even at school. I wanted to bring it up as soon as possible so that instead of me just hanging on to this and Ruby and Isla getting further apart we could help calm things down. I’m totally not bringing it up to make you, Gav or Isla feel bad or have a rant, or even take sides, and I know that we need to think about things that give Isla some space from Ruby. I can talk to Ruby about that – I understand how a 14-year-old might feel towards a 12-year-old who is into things that are too immature and Isla has always been very good to Rubes in the past. But I do get it. I should have thought about this before and how they might grow apart. Would it be an idea for you and I to grab a coffee before the weekend to help soothe things? We both want the best for our kids and love them to bits. I’m sorry to now pass this problem on to you as well but as a very dear friend I felt we could sort it out. What do you think?

[End display]

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Crucially here you will see there are lots of efforts to show empathy – ‘I don’t want to upset you’, ‘There may be understandable reasons why Isla might say this’, ‘Isla may be having a hard time’, ‘I don’t want this to get between us’, ‘I want to be able to discuss it’, and so on.

Leah avoids shaming anyone and is devoid of anger. However, she presents the facts and

sticks to them. She doesn't embellish or ratchet things up and, even when Julia has the audacity to suggest that Ruby might have been responsible for her own bullying at the hands of Isla, Leah does not react by aggressively attacking this ridiculous idea. Instead, she remains calm, her language is measured and proportionate and she seeks resolution and a peaceful outcome not retribution. It's clear, though, that she is not prepared to let it continue and, importantly, she has not tried to hide these things from her friend. She could sit and seethe and then let it all out the next time she directly sees Isla bullying Ruby – and that would be catastrophic. So, she has the honesty and ability to be direct, calm and upfront about the issue, with the assumed idea that this is resolvable.

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In summary, the T-Rex style is objective, brisk, straight-up and goal-directed, but it is never mean and there is room for empathy as well as all the other HEAR principles. It does not require that the other person accepts the resolution, but you do have to make clear what your non-negotiables are. In Aiden's case he will not accept this behaviour in his organisation and in Leah's she will not allow Isla to continue to bully Ruby.

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## [A]Appendix 2: Mouse

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Mouse behaviours help you to listen to and learn from others. Often under-utilised (at least in the West) the Mouse is key to self-improvement and psychological growth. It is frequently neglected in favour of wanting to be in control, to be the centre of the universe and to attend to our own needs. Although we enjoy the feeling of power over things and other people, we should also dignify and enjoy the benefits of letting go and giving into things. This is the best mode to increase our knowledge and wisdom about other people. The joy of Mouse is its disarming power in bringing about deep and enduring relationships.

As with T-Rex, we present two examples: one professional and one personal.

In our work example, Mika joins a team of actors for a theatre production of *Brooklyn: The Musical*. She is part of a small cast. Aysha, Karen and Brett have all worked together on a previous production and know each other well, but Mika is new to the production and hasn't met any of them yet. She is less experienced and this is her first big role. She knows it will be hard to break into such a tight-knit group where she may be seen as the outsider. How can she make her own mark and integrate into the group? Easy! By adopting the Mouse style when she first meets them...

We will join her in a moment, but before we do let's set out our personal example.

Noah, 18, lives in Dundee. He describes himself as a ‘fantasy nerd’. He is about to meet – for the first time – the like-minded Willow. Willow, like Noah, is into comic books, anime and manga. Although they’ve talked for a year online, this is their first meeting in person and they are meeting at an Anime convention in London. Noah is keen to find out more about Willow, including whether there are any romantic possibilities. They decide to meet for lunch at a café near the convention and their first conversation, although a little clunky, goes well. They have a fun first day at the convention though most of their discussions are about the creators, the films and comics that they enjoy. Willow asks Noah if he wants to go to the pub and have a few drinks at the end of day one. How can Noah find out a little more about Willow and, if an opportunity should arise, is there a way he can explore her feelings?

Before we show how Mika and Noah navigate their way around these two situations, let’s help them get into the right mindset for Mouse.

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### [B]Mindset

To help you get in the right frame of mind here are some tips. First, and as with T-Rex, *be clear on your goals* – where do you want to end up? For Mika it is to get a better appreciation of who she is working with and, ultimately, to get on with them all. Noah also wants to get more insight – he wants to see what Willow thinks about their current relationship.

Mouse helps us to stay on ‘receive’ more than ‘send’ mode. Mika and Noah will need to be adaptive and relinquish all ideas about controlling the other person or trying to make them think or feel a specific way. They need to open themselves up, go with the flow and be OK about letting the other person do most of the talking. That means gently asking questions, listening carefully and showing real interest and curiosity. They need to adopt the mindset of ‘I am here to listen to you and to learn about what you like, what you value and what you believe.’

However, they must avoid bad Mouse attributes. That means remaining calm. In Mouse mode you can’t simply sit back and be a wallflower. You can’t just blend into the background or be pushed around or be made to feel invisible. Mika and Noah are lucky here because they are with pretty easy, considerate people but you should recognise that in adopting Mouse mode you can neutralise unreasonable people quickly and effectively. You can open your mind up to new experiences, new knowledge and personal growth – even when you are with people you dislike or don’t get on with.

Happily, with Mouse, there are a few things you can do that are quite specific and easy to implement. The absolutely critical thing at the heart of Mouse is listening first and then thinking about what you want to say before talking. With Mouse, you want to create an almost meditative state. Be at peace. Be serene. Before entering into such an interaction, you might want to take some deep breaths in and out to a slow count of four. You could repeat a calming word or visualise a calm scene (gentle waves on a shore, slow-moving clouds or a leaf gently falling). You could also repeat in your mind a peaceful mantra. This could even be the mnemonic we have for you – which spells out ‘EASE’:

[Numbered list]

1. E: *Explore* what the other person has said before making assumptions about it. Have you heard right? Have you interpreted it correctly? Don’t make assumptions about what people mean before you have fully checked what you have heard. Use what you have learned in Chapter 4 to help you understand what people mean and don’t simply keep throwing in question after question to make your own mark or get your own opinion in. Use expressions like, ‘Tell me more about that’ or ‘Explain what you mean when you said that’ or ‘Can you describe that a bit more?’ Also, ask about feelings and thoughts after someone has explained something – ‘How did that make you feel?’ or ‘What were you thinking at that time?’
2. A: *Advice* from others. Seek out and carefully consider other people’s counsel even if, after consideration, you won’t necessarily adopt any of it. In some cases, you may assume that certain people are so unlike you that they won’t have a clue about how to help you. You might think they couldn’t possibly offer anything. This is a common mistake we see time and time again. The young fail to listen to their elders; older people fail to listen to youth. Sometimes students fail to take advice from teachers and sometimes teachers fail to take advice from students. It is common to put your own views forward before considering how others could educate *you*. Ask more questions in conversations and seek to find out more about others rather than always talking about yourself.
3. S: *Slow down and give space*. Leave plenty of pauses and spaces for others to fill in conversations before filling them in with your own ideas. The average time people wait for an answer to a question is between five and seven seconds before interrupting. Instead, slow down and allow space for people to think before they answer – particularly if it is a complex or emotionally heavy question. The silence always feels more awkward for you as the listener than for them, the person

responding. Get used to giving more space in conversations where appropriate. If you are in Mouse mode you should speak less than 20 per cent of the time, leaving the other person the remaining 80 per cent.

4. E: *Examine* what is in your mind before you speak. Better to think slowly and mindfully about what you want to say and then say it rather than rush into a comment, question or statement. Listen, *think* and then speak, and make sure it is in that order.

[End list]

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You can perhaps see with all of these tips that they are about helping you be on receive, being at ease, being at peace and leaving the ego at the door.

Let's turn now to our examples of Mouse-type behaviours.

First, let's look at how Mika gets on with Aysha, Karen and Brett. She has just walked into the theatre to meet with them. This is going to be their first read-through and this is their first proper meeting as a cast.

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[Display text]

Mika:           *(Brightly.)* Hi, I'm Mika...

Aysha:          Hey Mika! *(Walks up to greet her and hugs her.)* Congratulations and... welcome to the team! *(They both walk over to the others.)* This is Brett – he's a bit of a diva *(Brett laughs)* and Karen who has to manage him! Guys – this is Mika *(hugs all round)*.

Karen:          We've been together as a team on this for a while, but we sadly lost Gina at the end of the last run in Oslo.

Mika:           Oh, I'm sorry to hear that. When you say 'lost'...

Karen:          Oh my God. Sorry, I don't mean she died... No, no, she had some personal issues.

Brett:          Jesus, that's underselling it...

Karen:          Brett!

Brett:          What?! Thank God she's 'lost'... Nightmare. The end of the last run was a catastrophe. I'm not as tolerant as these two to be honest. Our last director was too weak to bin her and use an understudy on the last night, but that final night was awful.

Mika:           *(Inquiring.)* Awful?

- Aysha: Yes, we definitely ended on a downer. It nearly killed the possibility of us getting another run, but I guess because we are all so close we kind of were able to cover for her.
- Mika: *(Thinking.)* That's cool you are so bonded that you can do that as a team...
- Karen: *(Interrupting.)* Yeah, it's like a sixth sense, you know, partly I suppose with us working for so long together – well at least me and Brett have been together for nearly six years and then with Aysha we just clicked.
- Aysha: Yeah, I found these guys very accepting as long as you know what you are doing...
- Mika: So, it's not just the time you guys have worked together that gives you that intuition and insight...?
- (A ten-second pause as Brett and Karen look at one another with a knowing look wondering whether to reveal this. Mika looks on and gives space as they consider.)*
- Brett: Yeah, me and Karen are actually gonna get married soon, though it took some time for us to professionally click I think it's fair to say, but with Aysha, cos she blends with the two of us and understands us so well and, actually, I guess is pretty different to both of us – it's kind of, I dunno, complementary.
- Aysha: Yeah, I keep you two from arguing... I was practically serving as part of the UN on the last production between you two!
- Karen: Let's not go there... that was to do with Gina constantly bitching to me about Brett and then bitching to Brett about me.
- Mika: Sounds like Aysha was ying to Gina's yang – the romantic matchmaker too?!
- Brett: She definitely helped neutralise tensions and yeah – absolutely – helped us two get together and not be split apart...

[End display]

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In this short and simple interaction Mika has said very little. She has a quiet, enquiring, but by no means weak, tone. She shows warmth and genuine interest. You'll note she uses a lot of reflection skills here – some simple reflections, some reframing. And, critically, she leaves space for others to speak. Note, the space she leaves while Brett and Karen consider whether to reveal their relationship. Mika has learned a great deal about these three people – she now knows that Karen and Brett are an item; that Gina made things tricky in the last production and got between Brett and Karen; that Aysha gets on well now with them and may have been responsible for bringing them together. Karen seems quite a dominant person, maybe Brett

too. Importantly, Mike has learned a lot about what these people value and what makes them tick. She has said very little about herself so far and yet she doesn't come across as frosty or withholding – just genuinely interested in them. She does less than 20 per cent of the talking and by giving space, coming across as relaxed, interested and exploring for more details and thinking about what she is saying, learns a great deal very quickly. She is now in a better position to understand them and with some more work is likely to learn more. Of course, she should, before too long, offer some information about herself but this is early on in the interaction and we are less than ten minutes in.

Now, how about Noah? Let's join him and Willow down the Wheatsheaf pub, a quiet, small London pub, after a full-on day at the convention. At the point at which we listen in they've been talking about the convention, but now the conversation changes tack:

[#]

[Display text]

Noah: So, how's it feel knowing you'll soon be liberated from the shackles of school? I know how much you think that place sucked.

Willow: I know... I guess it wasn't all awful... And anyway at least it's done and I can do my own thing now. I guess the issue was I never really fitted in there.

Noah: Did you feel kind of alone?

Willow: Yeah... Um... *(Pauses, clearly thinking. Noah recognises that she needs time to think – he is pretty sure he hasn't made her feel awkward but just recognises she needs some time to process her thoughts.)* It wasn't so much 'bad' alone if you know what I mean... I had a few people I hung around with and they were all actually really nice. I'd still definitely want to keep in touch. Um *(still thinking and processing)*... I guess, um, I guess I just felt like I was waiting to get on with my life... Maybe I'm not making sense. Do you know what I mean? *(She sounds unclear on how precisely to get across what she means.)*

Noah: I think so... Do you mean that as you were going through school you kind of knew that there was something else out there for you?

Willow: Exactly! I just felt like I was riding it out and, like, doing what I had to do to get me on to the fun stuff – I mean – not like I think life is gonna be easy but like school was just a thing that was gonna lead me to *the* thing... I'm not making much sense am I?

- Noah: *(Smiling and with a supportive tone.)* And *the* thing? Tell me about that...
- Willow: You know... freedom, not being judged, meeting people that get me... not just the sporty types or the swotty types but the weirdos, the geeks. *(Another long pause and clearly thinking again.)* I dunno though – maybe I don't even fit in with them... *(Long pause.)* Hah! *(Seems to find the realisation almost funny.)* I guess I've got so used to not quite slotting into whatever is going on around me.
- Noah: But you seemed so chilled today...
- Willow: Yeah – I loved it. It was cool to wander, chat and cotch... But I think I'd have still felt like, like I was on my own, and... *(Willow struggles to find the word.)* Um, not just a weirdo like all the other weirdos but like someone who doesn't even fit with the real weirdos – but, like, an *ultra* weirdo... Do you know what I mean? If I was on my own...
- Noah: So, you wouldn't've gone alone.
- Willow: Oh my God no... I needed another ultra weirdo – like you! *(Laughs.)*
- Noah: Hey! *(Feigning offence.)*
- Willow: *(Gently and genuinely.)* Thanks for taking me Noah... My fellow ultra weirdo!

[End display]

[#]

We can leave Noah and Willow now, knowing that maybe, just maybe, there is a little more than just a friendship here. As with Mika, Noah has, without pushing, given space, stayed relaxed, been gently curious and without any force at all has left Willow the space to think through her own thoughts. There were plenty of occasions where he could have given his view (of school, of friends, of the convention, of his feelings), but in surrendering the conversation to her and showing real interest in how she thinks, he has allowed her to explore her own thoughts. Of course, it's nice that it's turned out this way for him, but Noah seems like the sort of guy who would have had the strength of character to let the girl opposite him say whatever she wanted knowing that things can't be forced or leveraged out of someone.

[#]

In summary, Mouse is a really powerful way to understand someone's thoughts, feelings beliefs and values. As such it is often the most important style to learn first.

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[A] **Appendix 3: Lion**

[#]

Lion behaviours are required in situations where you must lead others. Whether you are in charge of a theatre company, a battalion or a school project, you need to take charge. But this does not mean ‘my way or the highway’.

As with the other animals, we have chosen two examples here: one professional and one personal.

Our work example: Sofia leads a team that delivers a one-day stress buster course for senior managers in high-profile corporate companies. She has a small but successful business that has been running for two years. She employs three other people – Trish, who has worked with her from the start (and also knew her at university), Louis, who has worked for the company for 12 months, and a newly appointed, fourth member, Chester. Chester joined three days ago. All staff (Trish, Louis and Chester) are expected to deliver the actual stress busting course in order to meet the increasing demand from clients. Chester also has the added value of being a very competent analyst and statistician. In fact, for the first two days Sofia has allowed him to work from home to analyse and then produce a series of slides about the success of their business. The slide deck he has produced is impressive. But the complexity of the facts and figures means that he is the best person to present it. Today, the team (led by Sofia) have a critically important pitch meeting scheduled. The potential investor is considering whether to invest in the business. A successful pitch could mean an upswing of 200 per cent for Sofia’s business. Sofia’s intention is for her to lead the pitch, and then have Chester present the analytical slides. The entire pitch is to last 30 minutes: 15 minutes for Sofia, 10 for Chester’s facts and figures and 5 minutes for questions.

As planned, Chester turns up to meet with Sofia and the rest of the team before the actual pitch. It is 12.15pm, three quarters of an hour before the actual pitch meeting with the potential investors. Trish, Louis, Chester and, of course, Sofia are at the pitch meeting. Just before they all meet as a team Chester pulls Sofia aside.

‘Sofia,’ he says, ‘I’m so sorry, I’m not sure I can do this... I might have to back out.’ He looks worried but then walks into the meeting with Trish and Louis and starts talking to them about how nervous he is.

Clearly, Sofia is going to need to make some decisions. She is going to need to manage the whole team. But, before we get to that, let’s outline our more personal example.

Mark, Darren, Luke and Chris have been hiking in North Wales. They are all lads in their late teens. None are hugely experienced climbers but they have a decent knowledge of the Snowdon range since they live locally. Having said that, none have been in the sort of

weather that they now find themselves in, near the top of the north ridge of Tryfan mountain. The three lads have on several other occasions been around various mountains in Snowdonia National Park. As is often the case, weather near the summit can change quickly and in this case what started as a sunny day for the friends has become, in the last 30 minutes, sheeting rain and high winds. Chris is starting to freak out and says, ‘I don’t want to go to the top... This is freaking me out. I think we need to go immediately back down.’

Luke responds with, ‘No way – you go down if you have to, but we are less than five minutes from the top. I’m going up.’

Luke then begins to ascend. Mark and Darren look at one another and both think, ‘What are we going to do?’ In this case there is no obvious leader, though some decisions need to be made. Arguably it is not Luke because he has already decided to abandon one member of the group. Also, it’s unlikely to be Chris as he, in his own words, is freaking out. This situation is potentially trickier as it has immediate peril and no clearly defined leader–follower structure.

Let’s return to how to get in the right mindset for Lion:

[#]

### [B]Mindset

To help you get in the right frame of mind, here are some tips. First, and as with the other animal mindsets, *be clear on your goals* – where do you want to end up? For Sofia it would be to make sure she secures the best pitch from her team as well as to make sure Chester feels confident and less nervous. She will also want to convince the others in her team that she has made the right decisions for the business.

For the lads their absolute key priority is to all get down safely. Less important, but a goal might also include retaining their friendship or, less importantly still, having that great feeling of getting to the top. These other goals, though, are relatively insignificant if they compromise their actual safety.

Unlike T-Rex, where you set out only your own lines in the sand and your own non-negotiables, in Lion you *are* seeking to exert a degree of control over the group. But, crucially, you must take into account the needs, values and beliefs of all members of the group. For example, Mark and Darren might also want to get to the top of Tryfan but whoever ends up leading here is likely to take into account all the lads’ perspectives. Again, you can’t insist that when you lead you must demand that others follow and, in fact, the more demanding, insistent and rigid the behaviour (bad Lion) the less effective will be the result (as well as resentment further down the line).

Once you are clear on what the goals are you need to concentrate on what you must avoid doing if and when you engage in leading. You have to focus on what you must avoid. You must avoid bad Lion attributes. You must not be rigid or demanding. Lose the idea of force or threat to get your way and forget the idea that this is about you and your needs, desires and wants. Instead, you must quickly recognise a bigger picture that includes views and needs that are different from yours. You must seek the best way to bring people together and pull in the same direction. Hard though this may be, recognise that to lead does not mean you'll get any recognition for it. You may well even not be clearly marked or remembered as the person who generated the best outcome. Often the best leaders leave their ego at the door. Lions in the wild lead for a long time because they are good at looking after their pride. No more, no less. They don't get a badge for it – they just happen to be good at protecting the pride. Your reward is that the job gets done and everyone sticks together and pulls together.

As with the other animal styles, we have a mnemonic to help you remember what to avoid as well as what to do instead. In the case of the Lion the mnemonic spells out ROAR. So, when you are engaging a Lion mindset ask yourself the following questions:

[Numbered list]

1. R: *Rigid or Reciprocal?* Am I being rigid and trying to do everything myself and do every element of the task (bad Lion) or am I thinking about reciprocity and what each team member may be able to contribute individually to the team (good Lion)?
2. O: *Only me or Others?* Am I thinking only about my needs and what I want (bad Lion) or am I considering others' needs to find a solution that respects the wider issues and not just my own (good Lion)?
3. A: *Anxiety or Achievement?* Am I seeking control through creating anxiety, fear or threats (bad Lion) or am I seeking to focus more positively on a feeling of achievement, autonomy and empowerment for each individual (good Lion)?
4. R: *Resentment or Resilience?* After the event is over will I have created resentment towards me (either because I thwarted goals or railroaded decisions without consultation – bad Lion) or will I have created further resilience and bonding within the group (good Lion)?

[End list]

[#]

You can see that with all of these they are about taking care of the pride and not only one person's needs (and certainly not just the lead lion). Lion leaders take care of the *whole* group and help them to all pull in the same direction. That means in Sofia's case that, while the goal

might be to secure the contract, she must also take into account that Chester is anxious about performing and that both Trish and Louis are going to want this to work as well. How can she inspire them to all pull together? Similarly, either Mark or Darren is going to need to step up. Someone is going to need to take control and, on the one hand, stop Luke going off on his own while on the other stopping Chris from making his own way down.

Let's start with Sofia:

[#]

[Display text]

Sofia: OK, guys, all take a breath. We've got roughly 40 minutes before they arrive. I want us to pull together here so that we get the right result. Trish, Louis, I'm going to come to you in a moment for a view, but Chester I know that you are feeling anxious and that there is some pressure on you in this pitch... What are your thoughts?

Chester: Like I said, I'm really, really nervous. I scared I'm gonna screw it up and, being the newest member here, I don't want to let anyone down.

Trish: Sofia, do you need me or Louis to step in?

Sofia: Hang on. Let's focus for a moment on Chester. He has prepared an excellent slide deck but I for one would feel less well-skilled in presenting the details of that than I know Chester could. Having said that, one option is that I bring you and Louis in as backup since it may be that there are elements between all of us that we could support one another on. But, my worry there is that we could end up tripping over one another and we have very little time. And I think there are at least five quite complex slides which neither you nor Louis have seen yet. And it's not fair to expect either of you to wing that. Chester, tell me a little more about your specific concerns. Is it just the anxiety about public speaking or are you actually concerned about the content of the slides and their meaning?

Chester: No, no, I know exactly what the slides mean and I know they are accurate and really show what you guys have achieved so far. It's... just I've not done public speaking.

Sofia: OK, I understand. Would it help for you to talk us through it now? I'm sorry, I should have tried to support us doing this before the actual pitch but maybe if you just explained the slides to us now – while we still have 35 minutes or so

– it may help us make a decision about whether me and Trish can pick this up or, having presented to us, you may feel you are more comfortable with it.

Chester: Er... sure, here let me open it. So, like, do you want me to do a practice run or just like, informally, go through the slides so you get what I mean?

Sofia: What are you most comfortable doing?

Chester: Maybe like a mix. Kind of present it but not worry too much about it – like, informally.

Sofia: Sure. Give it a shot.

*(Chester then goes through the slide deck. After which Sofia feels that, although Chester was very hesitant, he does know his stuff and it has also enabled her to get a better grasp of each slide.)*

Sofia: Chester – that was great. Sure, you seemed nervous but that's fine. Did I get what you meant and did the results show off what we have achieved? Yes! Trish, Louis, what are your thoughts?

Louis: I thought it was outstanding. It was really clear. I wouldn't want to be questioned on it but I got what you were saying.

Trish: Me too. I think I could present that if that would help.

Sofia: Thanks Trish. Cool – well, look, maybe we should all go in as a team. What do you think now Chester?

Chester: Uh, yeah – I think I could probably do that again. Maybe if I know I've got backup in there that'd help me.

Sofia: OK, cool. Look, let's stick with you presenting it as you did here. Trish, Louis, if you can accompany us in we can all be present and one of us will step in if Chester is struggling.

[End display]

[#]

In this example, Sofia uses the word 'we' as opposed to 'I'. She is signalling that the group matters and that her decisions are to support everyone. She seeks views from everyone but also has the clarity of vision to help them all move in the same direction. You can see that there is no rigid, immutable agenda that is imposed on the group – she is open to solutions and feedback based on clarifying everyone's input. You can feel that the solution that Sofia focuses on is arrived at through consultation and establishing how each member can contribute. She isn't simply imposing her own needs ('I need this pitch to work') nor using threats or the creation of anxiety to get what she wants ('and you need to perform and do

your job or we will lose this contract') – both of which would likely escalate anxiety and create division. Finally, the feeling that the team will experience going into the meeting is one of inclusivity and being led by a person who cares about each of them, considered how each can contribute and how they can look out for one another. Crucially, though, Sofia is still going to do the heavy-lifting at the front end and neither expresses her own anxieties nor individual needs at all. She neither seeks nor wants recognition for any of her own work – she just puts her energies into the team. Leading is selfless but the final reward for her is a team that is fully functioning and working at peak capacity.

And now the more personal example:

[#]

[Display text]

Darren: Woah, Luke, hang on, hang on.

Luke: What? Look, I'm just gonna get to the top. It's literally five minutes. I am NOT going back down.

Darren: OK, look, we need to try to stick together here. You're right. It's not far. Mark what do you think?

Mark: I think Luke is right – we are so near.

Darren: OK, cool. Chris, are you sure you don't want to get to the top given it's so near? I know what you're saying – you're right the weather is shitty but if we get to the top we can get down via the south ridge.

Chris: I am fucking freaking out here. I know the path we just came up and I can get down that way. I'm not doing south ridge when I've never done that route and it means going further up. Just fucking leave me then.

Darren: No, we stick together and we sort this out. Luke, Mark, are you happy to go together to the top so at least no one is on their own? I'll hang back with Chris until you get back and we can all go back down together. What do you think?

Luke: Sure – we can get to the top and back easily within ten minutes, but you should do it too.

Darren: It's fine. You go. Be quick but take care. I'll hang back here.

Luke: But, like you said, don't you think south ridge is the better option?

Darren: It probably is a little safer but Chris is more comfortable with what he knows and I know you and Mark have also descended this route and we can nail it together, and Chris is right we've literally just come up this way. The other issue is time. South is longer and the weather is looking worse and worse. You

guys get to the top. We will catch our breath here, calm down and gather our thoughts and then we will need you two guys again to help guide us all down together.

[End display]

[#]

In this interaction Darren does two things in quick succession: he stops Luke and tells Luke that he is right – ‘Yes, you could get to the top Luke’ – rather than berate him. Bad Lion would say, ‘No, stop you fucking idiot. Don’t you give a shit about the rest of us?’ As friends (and note this is not military training of new recruits where that latter, more forceful, feedback may actually be appropriate) you need to consider potentially fragile egos. Also, in this case, Darren empathises with Luke – he knows the last few yards are easy, achievable and safe for him and deeply frustrating if rigidly thwarted. And so, to his own personal detriment with regards to also wanting to reach the top, he offers to stay with Chris to support the other two lads. Again, leading can be hard because your own desires and needs are not as important as keeping the group together, keeping them safe and maintaining control. Note also that Darren’s language is uncomplicated and directive (‘You do this’, ‘You do that’), but it never comes across as dictatorial. Instead it is firm, confident but consultative. Options are generated, compromises sought and egos massaged. Darren outlines the facts (Chris isn’t going up and won’t go down south ridge). Then, after consulting, he seeks the other lads’ views about their own competencies and appeals to their skills and desire to show how they can contribute. Crucially, at no point does he make Chris feel further anxiety. He does all he can to calm him down. At the same time, he recognises and has a reasonable response to enable the other two lads (together) to reach the top. So, throughout, there is no rigid agenda or dictating but controlled consultation. This provides progress and forward movement by seeking a solution that works for the group and not the individual.

[#]

In summary, the Lion is about self-sacrifice, thinking of others but ultimately directing them with confidence. The end result is to create an atmosphere of achievement and a feeling of continued resilience for the group. Firm but fair.

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#### [A]Appendix 4: Monkey

[#]

Monkey behaviours help you to collaborate with others. The Monkey style is key to warm, nurturing relationships with friends and colleagues. It is useful in working with teammates in

sports or other activities that require collective action. It is also the secret to enduring, deep and loving romantic relationships. Mastering the Monkey style is key to avoiding the incredibly damaging psychological and physical effects of social isolation. It works well once you have learned more about a person and have some awareness of their thoughts, feelings, values and beliefs. A leap straight to Monkey when you first meet someone new can be a bit overbearing and you can end up drifting into a bad Monkey style (overfamiliar and a bit desperate). With that in mind, let's fast forward now and see how Mika and Noah are getting on in their professional and personal relationships. Imagine that both relationships have moved on. In Mika's case she is now four weeks into full rehearsal, and she has learned a great deal more about her fellow cast members. We will join them as they seek to overcome some issues that could jeopardise their work. Similarly, we will join Noah and Willow after they have been on another ten dates and are six months further on since the convention. Happily, they have been an item since the convention and it was Willow who asked Noah to go out as more than just friends. We will join them as they seek to resolve the issue of the geographic distance between them.

[#]

### [B]Mindset

Before we do, though, as with all the other styles, a mnemonic that may help you get in the right mindset to think about how to adopt a Monkey style of interaction. For Monkey, the mnemonic is 'TEAM':

[Numbered list]

1. T: *Think it, say it.* If you have a positive feeling, thought or compliment in your mind about the other person just say it. This is a good example where, if timed wrong and too early would be weird. Imagine if Noah chose to say out loud the first thought he had when he first met Willow in person. This might have been, 'Oh my God, you are so gorgeous.' Or if Mika had said, 'Wow, you guys seem really awesome people to work with.' It would just be odd. But, once you get to know someone better and if it is appropriate, why not say something nice? Too often we are reticent to give out compliments – to our parents, our kids, our friends and colleagues. This could be a compliment about a physical aspect ('Those boots are amazing – where did you get them?'), about performance ('The work you did here is really excellent... it got such a fantastic result and, against all the odds, you really smashed it') or thoughtfulness ('It means a lot to me that you'd say something so kind and supportive'). Perhaps you feel a bit cheesy saying such things – especially if it is not your natural style – but if you

actually had that thought then it does mean that you are genuine when you say it. And, if it is honest, why shouldn't we say nice, kind things to one another?

2. E: *Easy and relaxed*. Being around people who are natural Monkeys is relaxing. Why? Because they are relaxed! They are chilled out. And so, giving off relaxing vibes is contagious. In contrast, being nervous and neurotic is contagious. So, for Monkeys to work in a group successfully they need to all feel like things are running with ease. You need to do your own bit to create that vibe. Various people have different ways of doing this but here are two simple ones. The first and often most successful is breathing. Simply taking three breaths can help chill you out. Anxiety is often accompanied by rapid, shallow breathing so you need to break that cycle by first pushing air out of the lungs with a long exhalation. Pause. Now you'll need to take a big breath in. Now try to extend your next breath for longer – a gentle but longer exhalation than the first one. Now a big inhale and, if you can, a final, even longer inhale. You want to try to work on your final exhale being roughly twice as long as your inhale. This 'three-point' breathing helps you disrupt the shallow, rapid breathing that sustains an anxious mindset. You can practise this before you get into an interaction, but once it becomes second nature you can use it in the middle of an interaction more covertly without it looking weird or like you've suddenly dropped into a yoga class mid-conversation. The other thing you can do to disrupt anxiety and keep calm is repeat a mantra or calming word. You might accompany relaxing your forehead and your jaw – these are two areas that often tense up.
3. A: *Animated*. Similar to creating a relaxed state you also want to give off a happy, animated vibe. Monkeys don't just sit around and chill. They like to play – they get excited about things and are animated rather than still. So, once you have started to relax you need to smile, think happy thoughts and give off a positive, animated energy. A good way to put yourself in an animated, jolly, play-type mindset is to visualise a thing, place, event or person that you love. It might be a photo of your son or daughter that you have where they have a big beaming smile, it might be you snowboarding, kayaking, doing a landscape painting, scoring a goal, or thinking about a particular place you love or a ridiculous joke that made you laugh – it might even be thinking about the sound of someone's laughter. The more concrete and specific the image the better as it will be a quick way to evoke a happy thought. And a happy mindset immediately makes your outward appearance change for the better. Critically, it will make you feel more positively inclined to the people in your

immediate vicinity, as well as thinking positively about possibilities. Monkey thinking and problem-solving is optimistic. It is about suggesting concessions and compromises with the intention of resolving problems as a team. As good Monkey you have to keep thinking, ‘What can I do to help make this work? What can I do to make this a warm, social and loving experience? How can I make things better for *us*?’

4. M: *Mirroring*. The final piece of advice to help you get in the Monkey zone is to consider watching and then mirroring other Monkeys. Note, don’t mirror any negative behaviours you see but rather work with the other Monkeys in the room who are making you feel good. Often, for example, it is because they have got very animated and are throwing their arms around enthusiastically or enthusing wildly about something. Monkeys like to mirror and be mirrored. So, if you enjoy what you see, consider joining in. If you are a team you work together and synchronise your actions.

[End list]

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Now let’s return to Mika, Aysha, Brett and Karen.

Let’s imagine that they have a problem to solve. Karen is pregnant and is having terrible bouts of nausea, which is making her feel exhausted. She is three weeks pregnant and the musical is due to start in another four weeks. Originally, she was keen to go ahead with the production but now she is not so sure given how rough she feels. One option available to them is to use Gina – who, as you’ll remember, has done the production before. She knows Karen’s role well and they all know she has the ability, but they are reticent to suggest her. You’ll remember, Gina caused a lot of problems between Brett and Karen and we will see that Brett in particular seems to have a problem with this suggestion. Let’s see if, between them, they can make this whole thing work.

[#]

[Display text]

Mika: Dare I say it, maybe we should consider Gina?

Brett: Er, no... that would be a no...

Aysha: She does know the role well... I know you guys said that she’s a pain but...

Brett: (*Interrupting.*) No, no, no and... by the way... no. I’m sorry, she is a bloody nightmare. It’s not just about knowing the role or being good in it... You have to get on with the rest of the cast or it just does not work (*pauses*). And that bloody woman just nearly ruined us.

Mika: OK, so although you're saying she is tough to work with she is good – I mean, she *can* do this?

Karen: God, yeah! She *is* good... I thought she originally should have played my role. It's not her ability, it's her personality...

Brett: Mika, I know you mean well, but you just don't know her. And, well, the thing with her and me and Karen... Can you imagine that?! While Karen is feeling so crappy.

Karen: Brett, you know I can't do this. I'm just not able and, actually, I just don't want, don't need it...

Aysha: We are desperate here guys... (*They all pause and think.*)

Mika: Brett, I know you say she is trouble and I get it... She's caused you guys a lot of hurt so you *both* need to be OK with this.

Brett: It just isn't going to work – I can't work with her – and not with Karen out at...

Karen: Come on, Brett – you can be a pro about it. Don't not work with her because of me.

Mika: Karen, how do you feel about it?

Karen: You guys are right. Brett, she can be a bitch but maybe she has changed since then – and you and I are together now anyway. She's not an idiot, she isn't going to interfere with that – and, more importantly, she can do it and I can't. Don't not do it because you are worried about me.

Mika: God, no. Brett, you can't drop out... Brett, do you think maybe Gina has matured a bit? When did you last work with her? Maybe things have moved on. And you know she'd be stupid to even contemplate getting between you guys now. This is such a happy time for you. She can't break that – you know that. And, besides, me and Aysha can tag team her ass if she gets out of line. Mika and Aysha... WWE smackdown! (*Laughs.*)

Brett: Jesus... (*Stifling a laugh.*)

Aysha: Look, (*calmly*) there is no rush... You guys think about it.

Mika: Yeah, look... talk it through. We will support *whatever* you decide to do. Why don't me and Aysha go grab some food and leave you guys to talk through what you wanna do. We will respect your decision – give you guys some space. We are here for you both. And, if you wanna give us a buzz and then all get together this evening that's fine too – we can pick some food up for you. Or if you want to talk about it, sleep on it and decide tomorrow, that's cool too. What do you think?

[End display]

[#]

In this interaction Mika is showing positive regard for everyone – she doesn't poo poo Brett's feelings and of course she also acknowledges the more positive and maybe logical solution Karen seems to be comfortable with. But, critically, although she might think Karen is right she doesn't make Brett feel he is wrong, nor does she take sides. She allows them the space, time and autonomy to choose. She also involves Aysha, who seems to be a natural Monkey too. Brett is the most negative force in this group but neither Mika nor Aysha bring attention to that. Instead, gently, warmly and with good humour, they try to stay positive, provide some possible (but in no way forced) solutions that help give support to everyone's perspective. It is warm, positive and understanding. They solve this together – no one takes precedent over anyone else and everything is up for negotiation in respect of everyone's feelings. Gina may or may not need different handling if they chose to use her but even there, there is the optimistic possibility that stays open – maybe she has changed!

Now, let's rejoin Noah and Willow in a discussion at Willow's house in Dorset where Noah has made the long trip down from Dundee:

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[Display text]

Willow: I can't stand the fact that it takes you nearly ten hours to drive. It's shit for you and cos I can't drive I feel bad... I'm so sorry.

Noah: It's fine. I love you. What's wrong with driving ten hours to see the person you love?

Willow: It's not just that... (*Seems angry / upset.*)

Noah: C'm here. (*Hugs her.*) What then?

Willow: It's not often enough.

Noah: Ahh, well that's understandable. Who in their right mind wouldn't want to see a legend like me every second of every day (*laughs*)?

Willow: Ha ha.

Noah: I hate it too... I wish I lived here or you lived near me. But, look, I have no issue coming once a month over the weekend. The journey is fine. You are good to put me up. You have to make all the preparations to, like, host me and you know your way around and you are the one who shows me all this cool stuff along the coast I'd never have seen and people I'd never have met. I love the fact I've experienced all this. And then we have trips to London. It gives us the chance to see things together.

Willow: I just feel bad – I want to come to you... Maybe I could get a train?

Noah: Or fly? I was looking into that. I could get a flight to London. That's quick. And then maybe rent a car. Or you could fly to me? And then I can drive you around... That'd be cool.

Willow: I know. Can we look into that?

Noah: Sure. You wanna look now or you wanna go out and enjoy the time we have? I don't mind. I was just thinking of enjoying this time with you and we can sort travel and stuff when I get home. I can check flights, cars, all that if you want – both ways. Distance doesn't matter... At least we aren't in different countries – wait a minute – we are!

Willow: Dork (*laughs*)!

[End display]

[#]

As with the example with Mika, Noah keeps things light. He never complains, he stays calm and continues to give support. He says lovely things about how much he loves Willow and that nothing is a problem for him. He seeks solutions rather than reiterate problems. He lightens the tone with humour but also doesn't dismiss Willow's worries and concerns. He also wants them to have a good time in the here and now and stay present – perhaps this can be solved with some more thinking when they both get back home. But for the here and now he suggests that they enjoy one another's company. They can work this out together.

[#]

In summary, Monkeys stay calm but like play. They bring humour to the party and warmth. Monkeys stay relaxed, look for the good in things, frame things positively and work for the group as a group. In that way, they make joint tasks possible, achievable and even fun. They want to find a solution that considers everyone. They give space and time to other people and want to make them happy. They don't dwell on the negatives but seek to spread a positive vibe. Even in dark and difficult situations, this ability to keep things light, to keep going, to be happy and want to make others happy is a lovely attribute of the Monkey style. And adopting it and practising it will bring you happier times, sunnier outlooks and fun relationships.

[Section ends]