What would it be worth to you to have easy access to hints, tips, and techniques to solve those people-oriented problems that disrupt your work and make it harder to get your job done? Instead of a technical bible, what about a ‘bible’ full of information to help you with things like assertiveness, difficult conversations, motivation, rapport, presentations, managing meetings and the myriad of other non-technical skills you need to be successful. STEP has invested in a ‘bible’ as a membership benefit for you and there is a link to access it at the end of this article.

You are probably already far better at managing other people than you imagine. After all, you started managing your parents before you could talk. It is often the case, however, that the people management skills we learned earlier in life have not been updated for our working environment. Throwing your toys out of the pram may well have been a successful strategy when you were much younger, but it does not work so well in a business meeting. You can probably think of other childish people management strategies that you have seen play out in the workplace.

Another people factor that plays out in the workplace is how we wear our masks, and which mask we wear. We all wear a mask at times; it’s almost part of the social contract we have with our fellow human beings to ‘get along’, and that’s OK. Where it becomes a problem is if the surface mask is significantly different to the one under it. When we sense this incongruity in another, it can lead to mistrust and uncertainty, neither of which are useful in business dealings.

Look around you, and you will begin to wonder what’s behind the masks. It’s probably not a good idea to go around trying to peel off the layers of masks worn by your boss, your colleagues, or your clients, tempting though it may be. It is enough that once you realise that you are probably looking at a mask you begin to see more in people’s eyes, to hear more on their voice, and to intuitively understand more beyond the image they present to you. Understanding there is more depth to a person than a mask will help you interact with them in a more adult way without your mask getting triggered by the behaviours of their mask. Treat people as if they are more than their presenting mask, and they will begin to show us more.

For ideas like these, and hundreds more, explore the Assistant online resource that you have access to as a STEP member benefit. Discover the wealth of practical information that can support you and help make your job easier and more successful. It has been described as ‘roll-up-your-sleeves’ information and the ‘guide-at-your-side’. You can find it here: https://www.step.org/professional-development-resources/alchemy-topic-index