



# DEALING WITH DIFFICULT PEOPLE

Learning how to deal with different personality styles can be a real asset.

If you consider someone “difficult,” your first step may be to try to understand what it is about that person that bothers you. Then you can deal with that specific trait or behavior in responding to him.

## TYPES OF DIFFICULT PEOPLE

**You may find some people difficult, for instance, because they seem to know everything and they are reluctant to take advice or suggestions from anyone else.**

These people may come across to you as self-centered, arrogant and snobbish. An important thing to remember about most people like this is that underneath their self-confident exterior, they are often insecure. They may fear being exposed as the unsure people they are.

The best way to deal with someone with this personality trait is to try to understand, rather than possibly embarrass the person. If you have suggestions, always make them privately. Avoid public confrontations or power struggles if at all possible.

**Another type of person you may find difficult is someone who tends to be very critical of others and who often feels taken advantage of.** These people tend not to trust others, often accusing them of things that may not be true.

In dealing with these people, the most important point is to try to establish trust. Also, try not to get into lengthy debates with them. Instead, thoroughly explain the facts as you see them so that you will not be accused of holding anything back. Be as open and honest as possible.

**People who nit-pick are another type that you may find frustrating.** Nothing ever appears to be good enough, and they often criticize others for not working hard enough. Things must be just so. These people are often late, sometimes procrastinate and don’t seem to move on from a particular topic. Often they are impeccably neat and require neatness of everyone around them.

A first step is to gently remind these people that their expectations may be unreasonable. It may also be useful to set constructive limits, showing them that even if they make such demands of themselves, they cannot impose them on you. Helping them to see that you are trying your best and that your actions are not subject to their control is sometimes effective.

**Another type of person that might annoy you—not to mention drain you emotionally—is someone who makes waves by being consistently hysterical.** For this person, everything is a disaster. Projects are doomed to fail. These people tend to exaggerate the importance of things, and they often appear to be surrounded by confusion and chaos.

The best way to handle people like this is to try to remain calm. State the facts in a gentle way. Avoid getting pulled into their anxiety and drama. The more you can stay based in reality, the less they can blow things out of proportion.

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