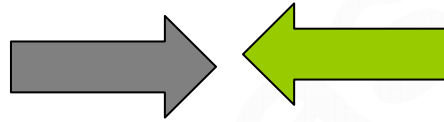


Dealing with Difficult People 101 ©

A Positive Change Tool



visionareease
positive change leadership & consulting

Confronted by a 'Difficult Person'? You need positive solutions.

Some may say, "There are no difficult people, only difficult behaviours."

Why is the person being "difficult"?

- Their most 'negative' behaviours and personality traits are at play.
- Rare is the person who consciously wants to be difficult.
- The person may be unaware of their behaviour and its effect on others.
- They do not realize how damaging their actions are to their own career and personal success.
- They may have developed negative behaviour due to work or personal stress, mental health issues, sexual, physical or mental abuse, and a myriad of other reasons. No baby comes into this world planning to be negative.

Reality Check:

- We will commonly be faced with working alongside others who may challenge us and perhaps even challenge our ability to complete work assigned to *us*.
- Taking the time to try to understand the other's viewpoint is highly valuable.
- Changing our attitude toward them and changing our perception about what makes them "wrong" can give us knowledge to improve our own ability to work with people.
- Occasionally, we find ourselves in situations where we-they are not a 'match', and never will be... we have many choices to deal with this scenario. However, if the person in question is truly a 'bully', their goal may be to get *you* to leave, and maintain a workplace environment where they control all others.

Notes

Types of Difficult Behaviour Styles... *there are others.*

Miss The Sky Is Falling: a Gloomer Doomer type, whiny, fearful, negative, cup is half empty

The Wet Blanket: makes it his or her job to point out all that is wrong with just about anything anyone comes up with

Mrs I'm No Good At That You Do It: has many techniques to get out of work and responsibility

The Bully: goal is to control, gain special treatment and even eliminate stronger, threatening forces. It's my way or else!
Biggest fear: losing control.

The Know-It-All: don't dare to question them. Arrogant - defense against vulnerability and insecurity. Greatest fear: losing credibility and respect.

Notes

The results of difficult behaviours, for those who continue to display them:

1. People refuse to deal with them
2. Others don't believe what they say
3. People think they really don't know their job
4. They may be fired eventually because of their attitude.
5. Eventually, people give up trying to work with them.
6. People will not tell them the truth or provide them with vital information that might help them make better decisions
7. Others learn to ignore or discount their opinions or decisions
8. People will avoid implementing their ideas and subvert their authority (consciously or unconsciously)
9. They may be fired because of their bad decisions and poor abilities.

Notes

Strategies:

1. When someone verbally attacks or excessively defends, observe only if you can, and move on for now.
2. If the irate one is a client, 'take in' what they have to say – take notes if you can, and let them know that you want to ensure their ultimate satisfaction. Ask if you can have someone else participate in the discussion. If you made a mistake, follow your company policy – (Apologize or not? Seek a resolution?). If the person is verbally abusing you, tell them you realize they are upset, but you need to withdraw from the conversation until they can speak to you in a respectful manner. You may state that you feel threatened by them, and end the scenario abruptly if necessary. Speak with your supervisor as soon as possible and document all that you can remember about the incident.
3. Realize that the person is feeling very insecure at that time.
4. Don't continue to push them.
5. If the behaviour occurs when the person is under stress, wait until another time to pursue the discussion.
6. If they are always overly defensive or always attacking others, look for another person to work with, who does not have the same problem if possible.
7. Remain positive in your interactions & be confident: don't allow yourself to be verbally abused.

Are you supervising negative people?

1. Look for ways to help the person see how much their negative behavior is damaging their career potential. Consult with your HR expert to learn positive communication strategies to address the issue.
2. Set goals for them to learn to work better with others and monitor their behavior until it improves.
3. If it does not improve within a reasonable time, work with your colleagues, including those in HR, to plan next steps.

Notes

Overcoming negative aspects *in yourself*:

1. **If your negative side is 'how you are' most of the time, it is and will seriously impact all aspects of your life.**
2. Learn and practice positive thought and imagery strategies, including scenarios of 'you being positive, happy, fulfilled, liked' in your career. Follow through with new communication skills to match.
3. Recognize when your defensive mechanisms pop up: you are probably not really being attacked.
4. Catch yourself feeling defensive: react more slowly, calmly.
5. Practice listening when someone asks a question or makes a suggestion.
6. Ask people to re-state their question/comment/suggestion.
7. Try to understand what others are saying by repeating back what you think you heard.
8. You can ask for more time to respond, and then get back to them. You're off the hot seat.
9. Do consider that other people have good ideas, like you do.
10. Study or take courses in listening skills and team-building.
11. Find someone who can help you work on this negative aspect of yourself. If your helper is someone that you interact with regularly, ask them to let you know when you are being difficult and call your attention to what you are doing. That will help you learn to see what situations and events trigger your behaviour.
12. Recognize that changing learned patterns of insecurity and defensiveness may take months or years of work.
13. Don't give up on yourself.
14. Explore and understand your own personality and your unique strengths and weaknesses.
15. Your effort will be rewarded as you find more career opportunities open up for you and more joy in your life.

Questions and Issues to Discuss at Team Meeting	Ideas for Positive Change

This document is 'starter info' only. It is meant to elicit reflection and group discussion. It is based on information in the public, organizational development and academic domain, and the leadership experiences of the author.