

## 12 Ways to Handle Difficult People

These 12 guidelines are meant to enhance your ability to deal with the difficult people in your life. It provides you with suggestions to use on a day-to-day basis in your interactions with them. Difficult people come in many forms. They are “know it alls”, arrogant, opinionated, critical, condescending, angry, blaming, offensive, negative, abusive, combative, intimidating, backstabbers, bullies, etc. Avoid them if you can. If not, here are some helpful ideas to follow:

1. Listen carefully to what the other person is saying because many times it has nothing to do with you. If that’s the case, don’t react to what they’re saying, because that is what they want. Probably, it’s their boredom, exhaustion or disappointments that they are taking out on you. More often, however, their troublesome behavior is habitual and repeated with everyone they know.
2. Conserve your composure because getting angry only escalates things. In this way, you maintain rational judgment and stay aware of the situation. Difficult people are experts at “playing this game” and you are an amateur against their lifelong skills.
3. Arguments are usually a “battle of egos.” Therefore, ask yourself, “How important is it to really win? Is it worth wasting my time and energy with someone in a negative state of mind? Am I ready to continue in this negative, downward spiral myself?”
4. Everyone is entitled to their own opinion. Opinions are just a matter of perspective. So, allow them to express their thoughts and let it go. Why get into a conflict when it’s virtually impossible to change what someone believes or even how they live their lives?
5. Every time you are “buying into” someone’s negativity, you are destroying your inner peace and personal enjoyment. The only one you truly hurt is yourself. Know that it is almost impossible to argue them out of their negativity if they are already in the flow. Instead, respond with your own optimistic response and this can often diffuse the situation.
6. Before speaking rudely back to someone who’s offended you, ask yourself, “Will it help or will it hurt?” If you feel it will help, then respond, “I’m not here to lay blame or find fault. Let’s try to look for a solution instead.”

7. **Stand up for yourself, but don't do it if you get caught in the other person's power struggle. Resist the trap set by difficult people by being aware of your own temptations to defend yourself. Sometimes, it's healthier to just walk away.**
8. **Use appropriate language that would make these difficult people less defensive. Say things like, "Maybe it's possible to...", "Would you be agreeable to..." etc.**
9. **If you can, change the subject by talking about something else more pleasant. In this way, you ignore their comment and maintain your level-headedness.**
10. **Be aware of your own "Hot Buttons" and the things that drive you crazy about this person. Not everyone will be pleasing and agreeable to you, nor will they all like you. Just be aware of your own expectations and perspective.**
11. **If you are regularly around these difficult people, it is important to protect your self-esteem. Probably their facts about you are over exaggerated and based on assumptions, which are not logical or rational. Therefore, there is no point in defending yourself because it wouldn't matter to them. You know who you are and that's what's important. You also know who they are, which makes it easy to ignore their "nonsense."**
12. **Do NOT, under any circumstances, become like them. Instead, be an example of tolerance, patience, kindness, respect and understanding. We are all influenced by the people around us, but certainly don't allow these difficult people to make you engage in any of the behaviors that gave them the bad reputation they are known by. Perhaps your kindness will actually get through to them and make them better people.**

