

Dealing with Difficult Residents, Families, and Coworkers

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Behaviors of Difficult people

- Negative
- Offensive
- Critical
- Angry
- Rude
- Racist
- Mean
- Complaining
- Sarcastic
- Controlling
- Dramatic

Why do people have attitudes?

- They are tired, frustrated, or ill
- They are confused or overwhelmed
- They are defending their ego or self-esteem
- They have never been in a similar situation before
- They feel ignored and feel nobody has listened to them
- They may be under the influence of alcohol or drugs (including prescription drugs)
- They are mentally ill
- They don't speak or understand the language very well

Why do people have attitudes?

- They have been treated poorly in similar situations in the past
- They are in a bad mood and take it out on you
- They are having a bad life
- They are in a hurry, or feel they have waited too long for something
- They have not been taught behavior skills/they lack basic emotional awareness and skills

Why do people have attitudes?

- They remind us of a difficult person in our past
- They are caught up in a position or role that requires them to act in a certain way
- They see the world (or situation) differently than we do (and we fail to appreciate that their perspective may be as legitimate as ours)
- They need to hold tightly to their beliefs to feel comfortable and secure

Questions to Ask

- How much do you REALLY know about the person, his/her life, his/her history?
- Do you really understand why he/she acts that way?
- How many different reasons could explain the behavior?
- Have you been giving the person the benefit of the doubt? Or have you been assuming negative intent?

Questions to Ask

- Does your emotional response to difficult people change as you consider the possible reasons for their behavior?
- How would you behave if you were in that person's shoes?
- Would you be just as difficult or even worse?

How to respond

- Know who you are
- Know your role
- Feel good about yourself
- Take care of yourself
 - > Spiritually
 - > Physically
 - > Emotionally
 - > Socially
 - > Financially

Give the Benefit of Doubt

- Does not mean that you:
 - Approve of their behavior
 - Accept things as they are
 - Excuse unacceptable behavior
 - Pretend everything is fine when it isn't
 - Are prevented from taking action later

Give the Benefit of Doubt

- Does mean that you:
- Are willing to consider the possibility that you don't have all the facts and might not be seeing the whole picture
- Are willing to extend your goodwill to the other person until all the evidence is in
- Practice the same principle in your life that applies in a court of law: Difficult people are innocent until proven guilty

DON'T

- Avoid conflict
- Be defensive
- Argue
- Interrupt
- Blame
- Attack character

DON'T

- Get loud
- Take it personally
- Close communication
- Use poor nonverbal communication (eye rolling, smirking, folding arms, etc.)
- Get caught up in needless drama
- Seek constant approval from everyone around you

- <http://internships.about.com/od/internshiptip1/a/8-Tips-For-De-Escalating-Conflict.htm>
- <http://www.marcdangel.com/2014/09/07/10-toxic-behaviors-that-kill-your-confidence/#more-779>

DO - Listen

- Listening is a powerful tool.
- When other people think that you have not listened to their concerns, they will almost invariably see you as a threat.
- When they feel you are listening, this is the start to a positive response
- So why don't we listen?

DO – Acknowledge/accept feelings

- Building on the idea of listening, acknowledge and accept the other person's feelings without passing judgment on them.
- Don't tell others how they feel; let them tell you how they feel
- Then acknowledge it and validate the feelings

DO - Apologize

- Very few conflicts are entirely the fault or responsibility of only one party.
- To de-escalate the conflict, accept responsibility for your contribution and apologize for it.
- Just say "I'm sorry that" or "I'm sorry for...."

DO – Control tone and body language

- Communication is not only the words you use
- Pay attention to tone of voice and body language
- Words we use – 7%
- Body language – 55%
- Tone & pitch of voice – 38%
- If you want to de-escalate a conflict, remember to control your tone and body-language.

DO – Focus on the Future

- Use problem solving for future success
- Ask “What would you like me to do?” or “How can I help?”
- Apologize for the past, but focus on the future

• <http://recoveringengineer.com/resolving-conflict/five-ways-to-de-escalate-a-conflict/>

DO – Maintain boundaries

- Protect your positive space and attitude
- Don't let negative people suck you into their negativity
- Limit time around negative people
- Don't take it upon yourself to “fix” others
- Don't get too emotional

DO – Disarm negativity

- Help them *feel* more positive, not act more positive
- Be positive yourself
- Help them focus on something positive for the moment

• <http://tinybuddha.com/blog/how-to-deal-with-negative-people-or-difficult-people/>

DO – Offer grace

- Be gracious, no matter what
- Someone's rudeness doesn't give you the right to respond that way
- You can't change many people; be prepared to fail

• <http://www.instanthrsolutions.com/2009/management-tips/performance-management/10-tips-for-dealing-with-attitudes>

Summary

- Know who you are and why you are here
- Take care of yourself
- Remember – you have no idea what another person is going through
- Give the benefit of doubt
- Have grace
- Develop and use your people skills

Summary

- Remember, you are responsible for your actions and your behavior
- If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men. (Romans 12:18)
- Don't let anyone steal your joy
