

15 ways to Deal with Difficult People

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People are not necessarily difficult but different. In other words if someone sees things different than us we might think they are “difficult.” To deal with these “difficult” people follow these rules:

1. **Realize that people who are angry feel justified in their anger** –Whether it’s a perception or reality there is “real” reason for their anger.
2. **Avoid anger in yourself** – Angry exchanges change few minds. Speak in a calm voice.
3. **Ask questions** – Make sure you get the real reason for the anger.
4. **Show empathy** – Put yourself in the other person’s shoes. Show empathy by saying such statements as “If I were in your shoes, I’d feel the same way” or “If I believed that, I’d probably feel the same way.” Notice that neither of these statements says that you agree with the person. The only thing you’re saying is that if you saw the situation the same way they did that’s how you would feel.
5. **Listen**-Many times people just want to be listened to. When you listen they tend to calm down. Also by listening you find out what the real problems are.
6. **Take responsibility for the conflict** – Realize that something you did or didn’t do caused the conflict to take place. If you are at fault, admit it.
7. **Summarize the needs and desires both parties** – Clarify the argument.
8. **Ask what you can do to resolve the disagreement** – By asking this you show that you want to be helpful and that you value the relationship. It’s also surprising that when you seek a resolution most people will just want to be treated fairly and won’t “ask for the world.”
9. **Choose time and place carefully** – If you’re going to get into a confrontation, make sure it’s in private and pick a time when they will be most relaxed.
10. **Paraphrase what has been said.** – Repeat back what has been said to make sure you’re both clear on what the real conflict is.
11. **Don’t interrupt** – Rapport, sensitivity, closeness and commitment are killed.

- 12. Mention their name** – If you're dealing with someone who is yelling at you, mention their name over and over again. This way you can add in what you want to say.
- 13. Don't accept it-** There are times when verbal abuse is uncalled for. It's at these times that it is appropriate for you to tell them that their behavior is inappropriate and you won't accept it.
- 14. Say "NO" in a nice way** – If someone is being difficult, use the USA method to interrupt and get your point across. Say, "I **understand** this is important to you, however the **situation** is this is what we did and we can do this (**action or alternative**) try this method."
- 15. Don't take it personally.** Many times people are angry because they are hungry, already angry about something, lonely or tired.

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