

HIGH MAINTENANCE BEHAVIORS AND INTERACTIONS

INDEPENDENT STUDY

A FIVE CREDIT CLASS

Course # SS409f/SS509f

INSTRUCTOR:

DR. MICHAEL SEDLER

Email:

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(509) 443-1605

THE HERITAGE INSTITUTE

Please Do Not send in no more than 2 to 3 assignments at a time and I will send you back comments. Send them in numerical order (#1, #2, #3...). If you have signed up for multiple classes, please finish one before turning in work for the next one. And, there should be at least two weeks between course completions.

NOTE: This is an online class and all work should be turned in through The Heritage Institute site. NO work should be sent directly to the instructor. When you registered, you should have received information as to how this process works. If you are still unsure how to do this, please contact registrar@hol.edu and they can help you with this issue.

Thank you for signing up for my independent study classes. You may take up to six months to complete this course and may obtain an additional 3 month extension. DO NOT send in any completed papers unless you have registered for the class!

The checklist in the manual is to help you plan your schedule to successfully complete this course. The last page of the manual includes a General Bibliography. If you prefer, you may choose an alternate book not on the suggested list.

On the following page, I have given you a brief biography/resume of my background. You will see that I have a Masters Degree in Social Work; my K-8 Teaching Certification and am a Licensed Social Worker with the State of Washington. My current primary role is as a consultant and trainer for schools, businesses and agencies. I also worked in education for 15 years as a Director of Special Education, a Behavior Intervention Specialist, School Social Worker, and Teacher.

I teach classes and seminars throughout the United States and in Canada. I am an adjunct professor through two Universities in Washington. I am available for on-site training, classes, and in services for agencies and schools. I anticipate this class will be enjoyable and full of learning. Please contact me if you would like me to be involved directly with your school or business.

Thank you, once again, for signing up for it and I look forward to working with you over the next weeks/months.

Sincerely,

Michael Sedler
(509) 443-1605
E-mail: mike@communicationplus.net
Website: www.michaelsedler.com
P.O. BOX 30310 - Spokane, WA. - 99223

****** For those working in groups (400/500 level only!)- be sure to go to The Heritage Institute website at www.hol.edu and click on the "group collaboration" icon.

1. Each group member must pick a book to read (you may all choose the same book).
2. Each group member must read the entire manual.
3. Final evaluation/integration paper must be individually authored.

Please share about my classes with others. It is my main form of advertising.

MICHAEL SEDLER

(509) 443-1605 (w); (509) 939-6302 (c)

Email: mike@communicationplus.net or michael@michaelsedler.com

website: www.michaelsedler.com

Education

B.A., Political Science

Master Degree, Social Work

Master Degree, Divinity

Doctorate Degree, Ministry

Teaching Certificate

Work Experience

Consultant/Trainer/Counselor

Director of Special Education

Developmental Disabilities Administration-behavior consultant

Supervisor, Educational Services

School Social Worker (K-12)

Behavior Intervention Specialist (K-12)

Classroom Teacher (elementary and middle school)

Assistant Pastor

Other Experiences

State Correctional Facility for Juveniles, Counselor and Supervisor

Community Mental Health Therapist

State Trainer in Autism (State of Washington)

Adjunct Professor for several Universities

Student Teacher Supervisor

Consultant for schools, business, churches throughout United States

Provide weekend marriage retreats

Interview and Speech Coach/Trainer for Miss Arizona, 3rd runner-up Miss America 2012

Author

When to Speak Up and When To Shut Up. (Jan., 2006 Revell Books, \$5.99). Book from faith-based perspective.

Communication book discussing conflict, power struggles, listening strategies, asking questions.

(Over 400,000 copies sold).

What To Do When Words Get Ugly. (October, 2016, Revell Books, \$5.99).

(Updated/edited version of "Stop The Runaway Conversation.") Two new chapters in addition to edits. Book from faith-based perspective. Importance of not listening to negative discussions and how they impact a person's attitude.

Books are available through all bookstores, at www.bakerbooks.com, by calling 800 877 2665, or by checking with various online book companies. Revell is a division of Baker Publishing Group. Both books are available on CD as audio books.

INDEPENDENT STUDY COLLEGE COURSES

THE HERITAGE INSTITUTE (credits through Antioch University, Seattle, WA)

MICHAEL SEDLER, INSTRUCTOR

Register for courses anytime. (6-month period for completion from the date you register). ***Collaborate with fellow educators-only one set of assignments turned into instructor.*** (Check out "Group Collaboration Guidelines" at www.hol.edu). **Clock hours available for partial course completion.

The following are **3 CREDIT CLASSES** (3 quarter credits = 2 semester credits)

1. Increasing Motivation and Self-Esteem in Students (SS401p/SS501p)

Strategies to help students feel confident and help educators find more successful approaches with them.

2. Parents: Adversary or Ally--A Cooperative Approach (SS401q/SS501q)

Specific ideas on connecting with parents and helping better communication between school and home.

3. Social Skills: A Foundation For Learning (SS401v/SS501v)

Activities and ideas to encourage students to improve their peer and social relations.

4. Understanding & Connecting With Aggressive Students

(ED404d/ED504d)

Each person will increase their understanding of ways to de-escalate aggression and its' causes.

3 CREDIT COST: \$280-400/500 level; \$195-clock hours (3 quarter = 2 semester)

The following are **5 CREDIT CLASSES:** (5 quarter credits -3.3 semester credits)

1. Bullying Behaviors: Enough is Enough (ED437q/ED537q)

Identification and interventions to reduce bullying behaviors and victim mentality within schools and community.

2. Counseling Skills For Educators (ED409r/ED509r)

Helpful ideas on listening skills, asking questions, and communicating with students.

3. High Maintenance Behaviors & Interactions (SS409f/SS509f)

This course investigates the many aspects of high needs people, behaviors and effective interactions.

4. Mental Health Issues and Students (HE402n/HE502n)

Understand various disorders (oppositional defiant, obsessive compulsive, bi-polar) and interventions.

5. Nurturing Compassion Within Our Schools (ED434y/ED534y)

Ideas to help adults and children learn to be more sensitive, kind, and compassionate toward one another.

6. Organizational Teaching Skills (ED429w/ED529w)

Increase your own organizational and time management skills as well as helping students in these areas.

7. Stress Reduction in Staff and Students (HE401m/HE501m)

Strategies to reduce stress, become more effective in life, and teach these skills to students.

8. Student, Classroom and Whole-School Discipline (ED419g/ED519g)

Focus is on negative talk, gossip and rumors within schools. Behavioral strategies for each above area.

9. Youth Suicide (SS404u/SS504u)

Specific discussions on signs and interventions for suicide prevention.

5- CREDIT COST: \$415-400/500 LEVEL; \$315-clock hours (5 quarter = 3.3 semester)

NEXT PAGE FOR MORE CLASSES AND REGISTRATION INFORMATION

INDEPENDENT STUDY COLLEGE COURSES

**THE HERITAGE INSTITUTE (credits through Antioch University, Seattle, WA)
MICHAEL SEDLER, INSTRUCTOR**

The following are **6 CREDIT CLASSES**: (6 quarter credits - 4 semester credits)

1. Autism: Questions and Answers (ED445y/ED545y)

Understanding the general areas of autism, diagnosis, and overall strategies for interventions for children with special needs.

2. Establishing Rules and Boundaries (ED445x/ED545x)

Ideas to assist educators in setting up a successful work environment for children (rules, procedures, teaching tools).

3. Inspirational Education (ED452f/ED552f)

This course will re-charge the batteries and create a new excitement about teaching in each person.

4. The Impact Of Trauma and Loss in Students (ED464z/ED564z)

Strategies to support children who have experienced traumatic situations in life.

5. Why Children Act Out (ED458t/ED558t)

Recognize the underlying function of behaviors and interventions approaches.

6- CREDIT COST: \$495--400/500 LEVEL; \$380-clock hours (6 quarter = 4 semester)

REGISTRATION: Call The Heritage Institute--1 (360) 341-3020

Or register on line at www.hol.edu

QUESTIONS: Please call Michael Sedler at (509) 443-1605. Leave message when necessary.

Email address: mike@communicationplus.net Website: www.michaelsedler.com

****For clock hours, only complete the first section of the course. Remember, clock hours may not transfer to other districts or states. You cannot go back and acquire credit once clock hours have been earned for a class.**

COURSE TITLE: HIGH MAINTENANCE BEHAVIORS AND INTERACTIONS

NO. OF CREDITS: 5 QUARTER CREDITS
[Semester Cr Equivalent: 3.3]

CLOCK HRS: 50
PDU'S: 50
CEU'S: 5.0 (50 hrs)
PENNSYLVANIA ACT 48 : 50

INSTRUCTOR MICHAEL SEDLER, D. MIN., M.S.W.
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Spokane, WA 99223
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E-MAIL: mike@communicationplus.net

ASSIGNMENT CHECKLIST

The assignment checklist will help you plan your schedule of work for this course. Check off items completed so that you can better monitor your progress. While you have six-months to complete your work, many will find a shorter time period convenient. **Complete no more than 2 to 3 assignments at a time for comments. Do NOT send further work until you receive comments from the instructor. Grades will be submitted once all assignments and the integration paper have been sent to instructor.**

For Washington Clock Hours, Oregon Professional Development Units, Continuing Education Credits or Pennsylvania ACT 48, please complete the first 8 assignments.

Assignment #1:

Read the entire manual and send a **one page summary** of what you hope to learn in this class. Everyone taking the class, including in groups, must complete this assignment.

Assignment #2:

Read a book from the bibliography or one of student's choice. If taking this course in a group, each person should read a book. Only one person needs to write a summary. Critique the book based on personal experiences and insights. Write a **2-3 page paper**.

Assignment #3:

Complete the following activities:

- a) Dealing with Difficult People (pgs. 26-27)
- b) The Runaway Train (p. 34)
- c) Cutting the Cord of the Clingon (p. 44)

(Then, choose one of these pages and write a 1-2 page summary of your thoughts and insights on this topic).

Assignment #4:

Observe another classroom noting specific "high maintenance" behaviors and the implications in the classroom. Make a list of all behaviors that fall within the spectrum of this course. Share these with the teacher as well as ideas for interventions. Write a **2 page summary**.

Assignment #5:

Observe "high maintenance" behaviors found outside of the school setting. Compare and contrast the behaviors found in the two different settings: school, non-school. Write a **1 to 2 page summary**.

Assignment #6:

Keep a written journal for 2 weeks. There should be a minimum of 3 entries per week/one paragraph per entry. Identify specific behaviors that you see in people that are discussed within the manual and your chosen textbook. You may use your own personal experiences, behaviors observed in movies, on television or any other media device. **Turn in as an assignment.**

Assignment #7:

Have one other person (an educator, friend, family member) take one of the behavior tests within the manual. Discuss results and share intervention approaches. Write a **one page summary**.

Assignment #8:

Examine your own characteristics and behavior. Write a **one (1) page** reflection paper about your patterns and interactions in life.

This completes the assignments required for Washington Clock Hours, Oregon PDUs, CEUs or Pennsylvania ACT 48.

Continue to the next section for additional assignments required for University Quarter Credit

ADDITIONAL ASSIGNMENTS REQUIRED for 400 or 500 LEVEL UNIVERSITY QUARTER CREDIT

In this section you will have an opportunity to apply your learning to your professional situation. This course assumes that most participants are classroom teachers who have access to students. If you are not teaching in a classroom, please contact the instructor for course modifications. If you start or need to complete this course during the summer, please try to apply your ideas when possible with youth from your neighborhood, at a local public library or parks department facility, (they will often be glad to sponsor community-based learning), with students in another teacher's summer classroom in session, students from past years, or use one of your own children or a relative.

Assignment #9: (Required for 400 and 500 Level)

Conduct additional reading and/or literature research and combine information from this in the preparation to share with another educator in the methods and information from this class. **Write up the results in a 2-3 page paper.**

Assignment #10: You must choose either "A" or "B" (Required for 400 and 500 Level)

Assignment #A:

- Develop a lesson to reflect what you've learned in this course.
- Implement your lesson with students in your classroom.
- Write a **2 page commentary** on what worked well and what could be improved.
- Include any student feedback on your lesson.

OR

Assignment #B:

Use this option if you do not have a classroom available.

- Develop a lesson to reflect what you've learned in this course. (Do not implement it.)
- Write a **2 page summary** concerning any noteworthy success you've had as a teacher with one or more students.

500 LEVEL ASSIGNMENT**Assignment #11: (500 Level only)**

In addition to the 400 level assignments complete **one (1)** of the following options:

Option A) Mentor another individual in the concepts of this class. Have them share two or three key concepts that they would like to implement within their work or social setting. Develop a plan for the implementation of these ideas. **(1-2 pages).**

OR

Option B) Create a PowerPoint presentation for your staff based on this course and focused on perspectives or strategies you feel would be beneficial for your school. **Minimum of 15 slides.** Save this as a pdf.

OR

Option C) Another assignment of your own design, with instructor prior approval.

400 & 500 LEVEL ASSIGNMENT (To be completed by all participants taking this for credit)**Integration Paper****Assignment #12: (Required for 400 and 500 Level Credit)**

Write a **2 page** Integration Paper answering these specific questions:

- 1.What did you learn vs. what you expected to learn from this course?
- 2.What aspects of the course were most helpful and why?
- 3.What further knowledge and skills in this general area do you feel you need?
- 4.How, when and where will you use what you have learned?
- 5.How and with what other school or community members might you share what you learned?

Must be individually authored (name and course title) for those taking in a group.

QUALIFICATIONS FOR TEACHING THIS COURSE:

Mike Sedler, M.S.W., D. Min., brings over 40 year of educational experience as a special education director, social worker, behavior specialist and teacher to each of his classes. He provides consultation and seminars throughout the United States and Canada for schools, agencies and businesses. He has a graduate degree in Social Work, a Doctoral degree in Ministry, a Counseling license, as well as his teaching certification. Mike has worked with children of all ages, specifically with children exhibiting behavioral challenges, mental health concerns, and characteristics of Autism Spectrum Disorder. In addition, he taught general education classes in the elementary school and middle school arenas. All of Mike's classes are practical and "field tested" in schools and classrooms. Educators have found success in implementing Mike's clear and concise approaches. All of his course material may be immediately implemented into a school or a home.

NOTES: You may work collaboratively and submit joint assignments on all but the Integration Paper portion which must be individually authored. Alternatives to written assignments such as a video, audio tape, photo collage, etc. are permissible with prior approval of instructor.

Full credit will be given to each student as long as all work is turned in. If something is missing, I will be in contact with you. Failure is not an option. ☺

(This course has many quizzes, checklists, and other fun activities. While you are not required to turn most of them in, please do the activities and enjoy the learning that takes place from them)

Thank you for signing up for this course. My intention is to help each person further understand some of the pitfalls that occur in relationships with students, colleagues, friends and family.

We all encounter difficult people in our everyday lives. And honestly, sometimes we are the difficult people to others (really!!). Yes, the mirror does reflect to us a "high-maintenance" person occasionally. (For those wanting a refund for this course, it is too late).

Throughout this class you will be asked to take sample tests, quizzes, complete forms and evaluate your personal and professional life. Please take this course in the spirit in which it is intended: to learn more about ourselves, about others, and to gain further insight into our relationships. This is a practical class that will allow you to gain immediate skills in working with others.

While we will talk about various personality types, behavior styles and characteristics of others, please do not label people or place people in a box. Evaluate the behaviors and attitudes while allowing each person the opportunity to grow and change. The last thing I desire is for anyone to take this course and then see people through tainted glasses: "Hi there Mr. Exploder." "How are you, Ms. Needy?" "How is your day going, Jimmy the critic?" Get my point?

Have fun and remember, while you are taking this course and thinking about your colleagues and friends, they may be taking this course as well and thinking about... well, never mind. 😊

HIGH-MAINTENANCE SELF-TEST

BY ANSWERING THESE QUESTIONS YOU CAN ASSESS WHETHER OR NOT YOU ARE IN A HIGH-MAINTENANCE RELATIONSHIP. CIRCLE THE “Y” IF THE STATEMENT IS TRUE AND CIRCLE THE “N” IF IT IS NOT TRUE.

- Y N Do you feel especially anxious when a particular person has called you and left a message for you to return his/her call?
- Y N Have you recently been dealing with a relationship that drains you of enthusiasm and energy?
- Y N Do you sometimes dread having to see or talk to a particular person at work or in a social situation?
- Y N Do you have a relationship in which you give more than you get in return?
- Y N Do you find yourself second-guessing your own performance as a result of an interaction with this person?
- Y N Do you become more self-critical in the presence of this person?
- Y N Is your creativity blocked, or is your clarity of mind hampered somewhat, by the lingering discomfort of having to deal with a difficult person?
- Y N Do you try to calm yourself after being with this person by eating more, biting your nails, or engaging in some other habit (especially an unhealthy one)?
- Y N Do you ever have imaginary conversations with this person or mental arguments in which you defend yourself or try to explain your side of a conflict?
- Y N Have you become more susceptible to colds, stomach problems, or muscle tension since having to deal with this difficult person?
- Y N Do you feel resentful that this person seems to treat other people better than she or he treats you?
- Y N Do you find yourself wondering why this person singles you out for criticism but rarely acknowledges things you do well?
- Y N Have you thought about quitting your job as a result of having to interact with this difficult person?
- Y N Have you noticed that you are more irritable or impatient with people you care about because of left over frustrations from your interaction with this difficult person?
- Y N Are you feeling discouraged that this person has continued to drain you of energy despite your efforts to improve the relationship?

Scoring: Total the number of Y’s you circled. If you circled ten or more Y’s, you are certainly in a high-maintenance relationship.

Adapted, with permission, from “High Maintenance Relationships” by Les Parrott III

COMPARING LOW MAINTENANCE PEOPLE AND HIGH MAINTENANCE PEOPLE

The following are general ideas and characteristics and should not be taken personally (too much). Any resemblance to a real person is purely coincidental. Please ignore the fact that your mother, brother, sister, spouse or friend called me prior to doing this page. This is not about you...really! Not.

Low maintenance people don't make mountains out of molehills. They are not drama queens. They can handle the little annoyances and disappointments of daily life pretty much on their own. They're usually comfortable living by themselves, even though they'd welcome a life mate. While a high maintenance person can, and usually does, handle little day-to-day emotional issues just fine, a confidant to listen to him or her vent about them and make the appropriate sympathetic noises is more precious than gold. High maintenance people have a lot of crises - usually ones of their own making. They are nourished by positive attention like other people are nourished by an all-day buffet, and tend to crumble like a burnt flower at criticism or negative feedback. Low maintenance folks use the criticism or negative comments as guidelines for improvement.

High maintenance people require constant attention and approval. They crave to be the center of almost every conversation and will often become symptomatic (moody, resentful, loud, threatening) when they are not. You'll find your "needy" types under this umbrella. They analyze every move, thought, word and action of others, and then read more meaning into things (statements, looks, sighs, attitudes) than was ever intended. They are easily hurt, quickly offended, quick to rebuke when they do not get the kind of attention they think they deserve. Threats of withdrawal or desertion become a way of life. High maintenance people are difficult, sometimes impossible, even in the most relaxed of circumstances. They pick fights, find fault, and personalize almost everything. They argue with people who are closest to them for no apparent reason. They often pick on strangers (waiters, helpers). They often live in a world of cut-off relationships where others are idiots and no one understands.

Low maintenance people prefer not to be the center of attention. A quiet evening at home with their loved one and one or two close friends is their idea of a really good time. A quiet evening with their loved one and a good book or two or a movie is even better. High maintenance people, on the other hand, are usually the life of the party. It's all about going out and doing something - anything!

High maintenance people are the hardest friends to deal with. You chose to be friends with them and you feel it is your responsibility to be at their every beck and call even when they have dozens of other people to call. These friends can be especially draining of one's time and energy. You need to really think about what you are getting out of the friendship before you commit to staying friends. Just because you've known each other since middle school does not mean you have to wake up at 3 AM to help her look for her cat. It does not mean you have to listen to his every complaint when he refuses to hear what your problems are.

Low maintenance people may be flat broke - but you'd never know it. Their bills tend to be paid on time, and they may be living on red beans and rice or ramen noodles. They may get their books for a quiet evening at home from the library or a used bookstore - but they will never, ever ask their family or friends for money.

High maintenance people talk about money a lot. You hear about how much they make or how much they should have made. They are so close to a breakthrough, but you usually get stuck with the bill. Or, they flaunt their money in hopes to impress you. But, they are not giving, generous people and usually resent the idea of anyone needing money.

HAVE YOU SEEN THESE BEFORE? (4 PERSONALITY TYPES)

As you read this list, think of one person that falls into each category. Develop an intervention strategy. And, having them move is ***not*** on the option list...good try.

1. **THE CHATTERBOX**—talk, talk, talk (*need we say more*). This person is not mean or malicious, they just like to talk—regardless of whether people listen.

Strategies-

- Use of silence. Smile and nod head, see if the energizer bunny will run out.
- Re-direct the person to another topic or situation. In a classroom setting, re-direct class to other issues (start reading, teaching a lesson, work in groups).
- Give the person a direction, a focus and then thank them for doing it. The phrase “thank you” often terminates the discussion.

2. **THE CLINGON**—this person is connected to you. They have personal space issues (too close). Once again, this person may be nice, friendly (too much), but has insecurity needs and wants your attention. (more strategies later in manual)

Strategies-

- Use of tactical ignoring. Let the person know you are ignoring them and why. “I am ignoring you because you are not in your seat like I asked. As long as you are next to me, I will not respond to your questions.”
- Use of gestures and hand signals (now, now...be careful with your thoughts ☺). Point to where they should go, place your hand in a “stop” signal, shrug your shoulders to show indifference.

3. **THE DEBATER**—challenges authority, argumentative, power struggles. Difficult to maintain a positive attitude due to constant emotional battles.

Strategies-

- Don’t get hooked. Remember, they are trying to engage you in a power struggle. Avoid letting them get you.
- Give them clear, specific directions. Use of choices, options, boundaries and clear guidelines is important. “We will not discuss this further. If you want to, it may be done after school.” (or during recess, or when I am gone—ha, ha).
- Follow up with the person after the incident. Point out to them their patterns and see if they are willing to investigate other choices. “Have you noticed that you like to disagree with me when I give you a direction? Is there another way for you to ask questions without it feeling like an argument?”

4. **THE SULKER**—pouts, blames others, and lacks personal responsibility.

Strategies-

- Use of humor. Help this person see life as enjoyable.
- Be positive with this person. Show them the “other side” of life. Yes, the glass can be half full.
- Ask them to list specific concerns with life. What can they do to correct it? What areas can they control? Help them gain personal strength in life.

In our fast paced society and busy lifestyles, it is easy to become frustrated with our colleagues, friends, family and students. We deal regularly with a variety of personalities and must be constantly flexible and willing to evaluate situations and circumstances to avoid falling into the trap of judgment. Our goal should be to develop a “win-win” situation. This is most effective with an

environment of trust and rapport. Naturally, when the situation is positive, it is easier to feel confident of these relationships. But what about working with an irrational, illogical, or emotional based individual? Is it possible to find a middle ground of negotiation without falling into frustration and anger?

The following strategies will help a person to stay focused and avoid the pitfall of frustration and negative attitudes. However, there is no guarantee that the other person will become more reasonable and contemplative in their thinking.

REMEMBER...You can only control your response and your attitude.

1. Separate people from the problem. Be firm with your approach, but sensitive with the people. Treat the other individual as a "human being" not a problem.
2. Be reflective. Using clarification and good listening techniques. Don't try to prove your point. It will only make the other person defensive.
3. Give positive verbal and non-verbal feedback. Watch your body language – smile, nod your head (I didn't say shake your head). Be sure your gestures are genuine.
4. Avoid responding to a negative or hostile remark with another hostile remark. It is easy to get into the blame game, but there will be no positive outcome. If the person attacks you, clarify their point and ask them for a potential solution to the problem.
5. Rarely use an ultimatum. This will back the other person into a corner. Avoid telling a student they "never" or they "always" _____, instead give them an opportunity to look at options.
6. Eliminate the words, "but," "fair," and "reasonable" from your vocabulary. Instead of "I heard what you said, but this is what really happened..." try "I heard what you said and let me share some other information about the event." Exchange "and" for "but." Minimizing words that create defensiveness may help your negotiations. "Fair" and "reasonable" place a person on the defensive. Instead of "Would it be fair...?" try "Would it be acceptable...?"
7. Don't take personal offense. If you allow the person to "get under your skin" you give them more power in the situation. Situations will escalate when people become offended.
8. Recognize feelings as fact. While you may disagree with conclusions or approaches, it is the way the other person operates and perceives the situation. Avoid comparing them with you and the way "they should do it." See the way they are doing it and work from there.

CASE STUDY

Carl is a second year teacher in your building. He has asked you to mentor him and help smooth out any rough edges in the classroom. While still new to the educational field, Carl is enthusiastic, creative and open to new ideas. By all appearances, he will develop into an excellent educator. Unfortunately, Carl has a tendency to become negative and look at some situations as the proverbial glass being "half-empty." This is especially true when working with parents or being involved in school-wide functions. By himself, he is great. But, when mixed with other educators, his "wet-blanket" personality is magnified.

You are beginning to see how this personality quirk is beginning to impact his relationship with his colleagues. The students love him and he has a great attitude in the classroom. However, his colleagues and most recently, your principal, has commented on his negative perspective on life.

1. Carl has asked you to mentor him, but this is not classroom (or student) related. Would you still approach him? Why or why not?
2. The principal calls you into the office and asks you to speak with Carl about his attitude. You attempt to deflect the responsibility, but the supervisor presses you to a point to agreeing. How would you approach Carl?
3. After you initially approach Carl, he is hurt and defensive. What would you say to avoid any further barriers?

I CAN CHANGE

1. I get really upset when...
2. When I get upset in this situation, I usually...
3. After I get upset, I feel...
4. A better way of handling the situation would be to...

Share these insights with another person.

Think of one person you know that shuts down, refuses to speak, or uses silence to keep people away. While reading the following strategies, choose one or two to utilize with this person. Share the results with a friend or family member.

SILENCE OF THE CLAMS

These people limit risk and seek safety by refusing to respond. They are often non-committal even though they have a definite opinion. Silence is a part of control. They may have learned that it offers protection, gets them what they want, they don't have to commit, or is part of aggression. It shifts the responsibility away from the person.

Opening Up The Clam

1. Ask open ended questions. Use “what” or “how” when talking to them. *This encourages discussion rather than a ‘yes/no’ response. Closed questions are discussion stoppers.*

2. Use the friendly, silent stare. After a question is asked, don't lose eye contact. Keep the pressure on them. *Use facial gestures such as a quizzical look, raised eyebrows, expectant body posture. This should be non-threatening, but show interest by you.*

3. Use silence as your friend. Avoid feeling the need to “fill the silence.” *Silence will place pressure on the person to speak. It is now their turn.*

4. Comment on what is happening. “I asked a question, but you haven't answered. What does that mean?” *It is okay to specifically let them know you are waiting for them.*

5. If no answer, recycle and ask again. “Well, to me it looks like this. I have asked a question and you haven't answered. What do we do next?” *Put the ball back in their court. Avoid feeling pressured.*

6. Break the tension. Help the clam get started by encouraging a response. *Below are a few statements that encourage communication:*

a. “Can you talk about what is making it difficult to share?”

b. “Are you concerned about my reaction? How do you think I will respond?”

c. “You look distressed.”

d. “Don't worry about the words. What's on your mind right now?”

e. “Am I wrong that you are feeling uncomfortable (irritated, frustrated, etc)? (This allows for the issue that you might be wrong. It is disarming).”

f. “If an answer is “I don’t know” use— ‘take a guess,’ ‘what else?’, or keep using the friendly silent stare.”

7. Set a time limit. How much time will you spend with this person? *If you know of the person’s pattern, you might want to set a time limit prior to starting. Otherwise, do so in the middle of the conversation.*

8. If the clam stays closed, end firmly. Avoid letting them off the hook. *“Well, our time is up and it appears you would rather not talk now. I will come back in an hour and we can talk then.” This will put you in a place of power...you closed the meeting, but will raise the issue again.*

9. Follow up with the person. Whether they open up or stay closed, stay connected with the person to develop new patterns of communication. *This person needs practice in sharing their feeling effectively. Re-approach them periodically and help them become a better communicator.*

YOUR BEHAVIOR STYLE

Check Those Characteristics Which Most Describe You

STYLE I- _____

- decisive
- independent
- tends to be dominant
- strong willed
- wants immediate results
- causes action
- likes power and authority
- likes prestige and challenge
- freedom from control and supervision
- wants direct answers

STYLE II- _____

- tends to be exciting and stimulating
- generates enthusiasm
- often dramatic
- open and friendly toward others
- likes working with people
- desires to help others
- likes participating in groups
- wants freedom of expression
- freedom from detail
- likes change

STYLE III- _____

- patient
- good listener
- shows loyalty
- concentrates on task accuracy
- likes security and stability
- likes status quo unless given reason for change
- minimal work infringement on home life
- credit for work accomplished
- likes traditional procedures
- important to perform good work

STYLE IV- _____

- orderly
- performs exacting work
- likes controlled circumstances
- likes assurance of security
- utilizes critical thinking
- follows directive and standards prescribed
- likes status quo, unless assured of quality control
- prefers no sudden or abrupt change
- checks for accuracy
- tends to be serious and persistent

Categories and explanation of style found on next page (no peeking until completed).

BEHAVIOR STYLE EXPLANATIONS

STYLE I DRIVER

1. Idea generator—strong ego
2. Change oriented
3. Wants action –(impatient)
4. Taken advantage of or cannot control (*FEAR*)
5. Wants direct answers/confrontation
6. Desires tangible results, time frame is now-(tends to underestimate)
7. Prefers to work fast and alone
8. Personal criticism (*WEAKNESS*)
9. High output (may overload other people)

STYLE II EXPRESSIVE

1. Idea promoter with enthusiasm, usually animated
2. People oriented and verbal
3. Likes freedom—to the extreme, disorganized at times
4. Loss of social approval/rejection (*FEAR*)
5. Wants to be liked (may not give direct answers)
6. Optimistic—future oriented
7. Prefers to work fast, but with others
8. Broken trust (*WEAKNESS*)
9. Can have high output, but sometimes reduced because of people orientation

STYLE III AMIABLE/TEAM BUILDER

1. Idea fulfiller, thoughtful and serious
2. Family and relationship oriented
3. Loyal (may tend to be possessive)
4. Loss of security and status quo (*FEAR*)
5. Wants appreciation, but may say yes to too many requests
6. Low risk, no surprises, time frame is now
7. By themselves with others around
8. Conflict (*WEAKNESS*)
9. High output, limited only by themselves

STYLE IV ANALYTICAL

1. Idea fulfiller to perfection
2. Precision oriented
3. Accurate, but sometimes gets bogged down in detail
4. Criticism of work, sudden changes (*FEAR*)
5. Wants detailed explanation, corrective responses
6. Systematic approach
7. Prefers to work carefully and alone
8. Confrontation, especially in front of others (*WEAKNESS*)
9. Normally high output (but prefers lower output to inferior quality)

YOU CAN'T AVOID THEM

Every workplace has its' share of them...people are difficult to get along with. Whether a colleague, supervisor, parent or student, there is no way to avoid them. But you can do something about how you choose to work with them. Learning to work with them in a non-combative, sensible manner can make the difference between creating an environment that is harmonious or one that is filled with conflict.

Learning to deal with high maintenance people will take an effort on your part as well as common sense (can't help you there...just kidding). Start by being more empathetic. Place yourself in the other person's situation, imagining their frustration and concerns.

In a work environment, empathy is particularly important because there are so many different types of people. Empathy skills are enhanced by good listening and by taking a few extra moments to evaluate the situation. When a co-worker makes a rude comment to you, for example, don't write them off as having an attitude. Take a moment and consider what might be going on in their life that made them respond so abruptly. Perhaps even asking, "Are you all right?" or "Is everything okay?" may help the situation.

LIST TWO OR THREE PEOPLE THAT YOU WOULD CLASSIFY AS BEING PROBLEMATIC. THEY MAY BE COMPLAINERS, WHINERS, SELF-ABSORBED, ETC.

_____, _____, _____

Choose one of these people and write out some thoughts as to why you think they act they way they do. Avoid the simplistic response of "they are mean" or "they are selfish."

Now...write out one strategy you will use to re-connect with this person and avoid the frustration of their behavior.

LEARNING TO ACCEPT CRITICISM

Do you take criticism well? To get along with others, you will need this skill. This is especially true in close relationships (for those who are married or connected to a significant other...do I hear an "amen?"). When you are criticized, try not to look at the criticism as a personal assault. Most criticism is directed at situations, not people. And, when it is personal, it is usually due to the other person feeling hurt or slighted in a personal way. Look at criticism as an opportunity for feedback that may provide growth.

Naturally, some criticism is unwarranted and even malicious. In these cases, we need to speak up (this will be discussed later). Standing up for oneself is not easy, but necessary for our own personal esteem. Whether it is a close relationship or a business acquaintance, confrontation may be necessary. Be sure to approach the person wisely, without anger or malice.

What about the person who has an overly critical supervisor? How can you deal with them without alienating yourself and jeopardizing the job?

- Do your best and keep a positive attitude even if you receive minimal feedback from the boss? Remember, you are not there to please them. You feel a passion and love for what you do in life (hopefully) and that is what drives you.
- Clarify with the supervisor exactly what the expectations are and how you can fulfill the expectations. Many conflicts occur due to misunderstandings about what the actual duties are in the job.
- Try to look at yourself objectively, evaluating your attitude and performance through your supervisor's perspective. You may learn some new ways to approach the situation.

On a personal note, I had a situation once where I felt my supervisor was being unreasonable in her demands. After several weeks of frustration and emotional debate, I began to evaluate the situation from her viewpoint. What would I say to me, if I were her? The more I looked at it, the more I began to understand the lack of communication from my side. It helped me to approach her, clear up a few areas and then proceed forward with a course of action. While she did not wholly agree with me, I did feel better about the relationship.

- If you are the type of person that likes feedback, praise, or regular acknowledgment of your work, find another outlet where you can expect to receive it. For example, ask a peer or colleague to evaluate your approaches, give you ideas and guidance.
- If you begin to get too frustrated and feel trapped, make a list of options. Empower yourself to be in charge of your own life.

DAILY LIVING IN A HIGH MAINTENANCE WORLD

Research shows that supportive relationships are good for our mental and physical health. However, dealing with difficult people and maintaining ongoing negative relationships is actually detrimental to our health. It's a good idea to diminish or eliminate relationships that are filled with conflict. But what do you do if the person in question is a family member, co-worker, or someone you otherwise can't easily eliminate from your life?

The following are tips for dealing with difficult people who are in your life, for better or for worse:

1. Avoid discussing divisive and personal issues, like religion and politics, or other issues that tend to cause conflict. If the other person tries to engage you in a discussion that will probably become an argument, change the subject or leave the room.
2. In dealing with difficult people, don't try to change the other person; you will only get into a power struggle, cause defensiveness, invite criticism, or otherwise make things worse. It also makes you a more difficult person to deal with.
3. Change your response to the other person; this is all you have the power to change. For example, don't feel you need to accept abusive behavior. You can use assertive communication to draw boundaries when the other person chooses to treat you in an unacceptable way.
4. Remember that most relationship difficulties are due to a dynamic between two people rather than one person being unilaterally "bad." Here's a list of things to avoid in dealing with conflict. Do you do any of them?
5. Try to look for the positive aspects of others, especially when dealing with family, and focus on them. The other person will feel more appreciated, and you will likely enjoy your time together more.
6. However, don't pretend the other person's negative traits don't exist. Don't tell your secrets to a gossip, rely on a flake, or look for affection

from someone who isn't able to give it. This is part of accepting them for who they are.

7. Get your needs met from others who are able to meet your needs. Tell your secrets to a trustworthy friend who's a good listener, or process your feelings through journaling, for example. Rely on people who have proven themselves to be trustworthy and supportive. This will help you and the other person by taking pressure off the relationship and removing a source of conflict.
8. Know when it's time to distance yourself, and do so. If the other person can't be around you without antagonizing you, minimizing contact may be key. If they're continually abusive, it's best to cut ties and let them know why. Explain what needs to happen if there ever is to be a relationship, and let it go. (If the offending party is a boss or co-worker, you may consider switching jobs.)

Tips:

1. Try not to place blame on yourself or other people for negative interactions. It may be a case of your two personalities fitting poorly.
2. Remember that you don't have to be close with everyone; just being polite goes a long way toward getting along and appropriately dealing with difficult people.
3. Work to maintain a sense of humor -- difficulties will roll off your back more easily. Shows like "The Office" and books like David Sedaris' *Naked* can help you see the humor in dealing with difficult people.
4. Be sure to cultivate other more positive relationships in your life to offset the negativity of dealing with difficult people.
5. Don't be afraid to look in the mirror and evaluate your own personal life. There may be areas in your life that need to be "tweaked." Remember, you might be a high maintenance person to someone else (me??, never!).

HOW WELL DO YOU KNOW YOURSELF?

Respond “true” or “false” to the items below. Don’t dwell too long on the questions—give the first answer that springs to mind.

1. If it served my purposes, I would try to bluff my way past a doorman or guard.
TRUE FALSE
2. I would never cut into a waiting line.
TRUE FALSE
3. If I could slip into a movie without being noticed, I probably would do it.
TRUE FALSE
4. I sometimes try to get even with those who have offended me.
TRUE FALSE
5. If a waiter didn’t charge me for an item, I probably wouldn’t tell him about it.
TRUE FALSE
6. I wouldn’t think of having someone take the blame for my wrongdoings.
TRUE FALSE
7. If I’m ignorant about something, I will admit it.
TRUE FALSE
8. I try to be honest in every situation.
TRUE FALSE
9. I truly don’t believe that I am as prejudiced as the average person.
TRUE FALSE
10. My table manners at home are as good as they are at a restaurant.
TRUE FALSE

Give yourself one point for each response that matches yours. The higher your score, the more you tend to present yourself (on tests at least) as socially desirable.

1.False 2.True 3.False 4.False 5.False 6.True 7.True 8.True 9.True 10.True

A score of 0 to 4 points: Low drive for social desirability—you lean toward being non-conforming, social rebel. You try to appear different and independent of others and may indulge in too much self-flattery. It probably wouldn’t bother you to be left out of a group.

A score of 5 to 8 points: Average drive for social desirability—you present yourself to others realistically. You are secure enough to show your faults as well as display your virtues.

A score of 9 to 10 points: High drive for social desirability—you probably seek the approval of others more than you should. You are quite shy about expressing yourself. Scorers in this range sometimes struggle with feelings of inferiority.

Dealing With Difficult People—personal case study

(Connected to assignment #3)

Do you recognize one of these people?

1. The Combative—may be aggressive, intimidating, and even threatening.

INTERVENTION: Deal with them by listening to what they have to say. Avoid engaging in arguments, and be proper when conversing with them. Be succinct and precise with your comments, acting rather than reacting. It may also be wise to have someone else in the room with you.

2. The Dissident—they may be subversive, critical, and hurtfully sarcastic. Nothing is ever good enough for them.

INTERVENTION: Focus on the issue and ignore the sarcasm. Don't overreact. They are trying to make you feel bad or get you angry. The first person to get mad loses.

3. The Indifferent—This type of person can be cold, closed, difficult, and have a hidden agenda. They avoid controversy and never tell you where they stand.

INTERVENTION: Ask open-ended questions (not yes or no); be quiet and wait for the person to say something. It helps to be patient and warm. Indifference can be painful when directed at an individual, so brace yourself.

4. The Arrogant—Ego runs them and anyone else who gets caught in their trap. They know it all and act superior every chance they get. When they are wrong, they tend to pass the buck.

INTERVENTION: Make sure you know what you are talking about. It helps to have documentation to back it up. Agree when possible. Ask powerful questions and listen intently. Disagree only when you know you are right.

5. The Grouch—Everyone knows complainers. They are usually cynical, rigid, and can be downers.

INTERVENTION: Don't allow them to start complaining. Stay focused on solving the problem. Force them to think through the complaint and prove it is valid by telling them they can complain only when they have a solution.

6. The Windbag—These gabby people are busy listening to themselves and seldom hear others.

INTERVENTION: Keep reminding them to stick to the point. Don't be afraid to interrupt a talker, and it's always a good idea to tell them you "only have a minute."

(Continued on next page)

7. The Slouch—Everyone can be lazy, but loafers tend to also be manipulative and put more energy into avoiding work than doing the work.

INTERVENTION: Do not cover for slouches. Be sure everyone follows this lead. Confront the problem head on by having them create a to-do list of tasks to accomplish.

8. The Procrastinator—These people can be frustrating. They meant to get around to it, but something else came up...a rerun of Friends, no doubt. Unfocused, confused, and disorganized, they need to set firm timelines

INTERVENTION: Emphasize the importance of meeting timelines. To eliminate most excuses, tell them the consequences if the timelines aren't met, but be prepared for them to create a new excuse. Make sure you get a firm commitment and follow-up, follow-up, follow-up.

9. The Adversary—These people argue and can be controlling, critical, and intimidating.

INTERVENTION: Stay calm and ask questions to clarify and defuse arguments. Humor used sparingly can help. Focus on solving the problem, not the personality.

10. The Stockpiler—These people hold grudges. It's hard to deal with someone who holds you responsible for something from the past. They are not good team players and tend to live and work best in isolation.

INTERVENTION: Take the pre-emptive approach and first clarify you will not rehash old conflicts. If past conflicts begin to surface, cut the stockpiler off and quickly return to the issue at hand.

Dealing with Difficult people is an art form, and those who are good at it tend to be successful in life and business—or they become educators 😊.

Knowing how someone is likely to behave is helpful and gives you the upper hand in an uncomfortable situation. Trust your instincts and don't let them grind you down.

ASSIGNMENT:

Think of one person that falls into one of the above categories.

Write a 2 page summary listing numerous interventions to be used with this individual as well as your personal thoughts and insights.

DO YOU FIGHT OR FLEE: How Confrontational Are You?

This quiz measures susceptibility to confrontation. It is based on research done at Kent State University in Ohio. Respond “true” or “false” to the items below.

1. Arguing calmly over controversial issues sharpens one’s logic.
TRUE FALSE
2. When I argue I am usually concerned about whether my opponent will think I’m too dogmatic. TRUE FALSE
3. I feel a sense of energy and enthusiasm when I confront someone. TRUE FALSE
4. It upsets me to argue. TRUE FALSE
5. I enjoy using a good argument to put strongly self-assured people in their place.
TRUE FALSE
6. I generally lose more quarrels than I win. TRUE FALSE
7. I find people who always agree with others to be somewhat dull. TRUE FALSE
8. I get nervous around argumentative people. TRUE FALSE
9. I don’t have much respect for a person who won’t fight for what he believes in.
TRUE FALSE
10. When others are in a ruckus, I often play the role of pacifier. TRUE FALSE
11. I feel compelled to speak up for a point that I feel is valid. TRUE FALSE
12. I prefer being with people who don’t disagree with me. TRUE FALSE

Give yourself one point for each response that matches yours.

1.True 2.False 3.True 4.False 5.True 6.False 7.True 8.False 9.True 10.False 11.True 12.False

A score of 0 to 4: You are a peace-loving creature who likes harmony. Other people’s strong emotions often upset you. You may be suppressing your true feelings too much, however, and might be better off expressing some of them occasionally.

A score of 5 to 7: You are about average in your susceptibility to arguments. You don’t mind conflicts once in a while, even when they reach the point of anger, but for the most part you know when to back off.

A score of 8 to 12: You are highly argumentative, a veritable tiger that won’t let a strident comment go unchecked. Your biggest challenge may seem to be in dealing with someone as combative as you, but conflict with a less aggressive foe presents another set of trials, as you may leave egos irrevocably bruised. Learning to listen and let go instead of lunge and leap might help you avoid meaningless scuffles and, more importantly, injured relationships.

How to Deal with Difficult People

Darcy Logan

Dealing with difficult people can be hard because they often trigger emotional responses within us. However, learning a few strategies and tips can help you keep your own cool and resolve the situation.

Dealing With Difficult People Tips

1. Don't be defensive.
 2. Don't respond in kind to bad behavior.
 3. Learn to control your own reactions.
 4. Listening is the best way to learn about problems.
 5. Be empathetic towards the person.
 6. Don't lose your perspective.
- Difficult people are everywhere. You find them on the streets, at work, in stores and even in your own home. Learning to deal with these people is essential, because there are just too many of them to avoid. It's not that they outnumber the "normal" people, instead it is because no matter how "normal" a person may be, at some point they will become one of the "difficult ones."
 - There is no one method that is effective for dealing with difficult people. The techniques that work best for you will not only fit your personal style, but also fit the particular circumstances of a conflict. What works one time may not work the next, but there are a few fundamentals that will help you deal with most situations.

What Not to Do

- When dealing with a difficult person, there are some things that you should not do. These things will simply make the problem worse and can make finding an effective method of dealing with the situation more difficult.
1. Don't be defensive. You only need a defense if you've done something wrong. If you haven't, then let the criticism or complaint go. This can be difficult, since our brains are wired to naturally jump to our own defense.
 2. Don't explain, which can be interpreted as either attacking or retreating.
 3. Don't act or react with anger or intolerance. Such reactions will only make things more difficult.
 4. Don't take it personally. The other person is not difficult because of some flaw in you. They are difficult with everyone.
 5. Don't blame yourself or the other person for conflicts. It is more likely that your two personalities do not fit well together.
 6. Don't do anything if the person is yelling until he or she stops. Try asking him or her to speak slower, which makes it more difficult to yell.
 7. Don't respond to bad behavior by behaving badly. If you want someone to stop yelling, lower your own voice. It can help de-escalate the situation.
 8. Don't make character attacks or try to be "right".

Step 1: Start With Yourself

- It is much easier to control your own reactions than to control someone else's reactions. You should strive to act in a manner that does not make the situation worse.
1. Trying to control the other person usually makes things worse by causing power struggle, defensiveness and criticism.
 2. Make sure you are not overreacting to the problem. Is the situation new or something you have experienced before, perhaps more than once? Sometimes the problem may not be with the other person, but with you.
 3. Identify your emotional triggers. We all have "buttons" that can trigger emotional responses. Knowing what yours are will help you control them.
 4. Prepare yourself for conflicts by learning relaxation techniques and assertive skills. Preparation is especially important for predictable problems with difficult people that you cannot avoid.
 5. Review your own actions to see if there is anything that you may have done that escalated the problem. Perhaps there were things you could have done that you could do in the future to avoid a repetition of the problem.

Step 2: Ask Questions and Listen

- Listening and asking questions, known as the Socratic method is a great method of learning. The less you know and understand about a situation, the harder it will be to resolve it.
1. Start by asking the person why they are upset. This fosters communication instead of arguing. It also puts the responsibility for resolution upon the other person. Then, listen to what the person has to say.
 2. Listening allows the person to vent their feelings.
 3. Use good listening behavior such as nodding, maintaining eye contact and giving small verbal responses.
 4. Don't respond until the other person has had his or her say.
 5. Try asking for advice instead of giving answers. If you try to give answers, the person may feel attacked or criticized.
 6. Ask them what they would like to see you do.

Step 3: Take a Moment

- If you feel yourself getting emotional, take a moment. This may require a temporary way out of the situation. This can be as simple as asking for a moment to think.
1. It will be easier for you to handle the situation once you've calmed down.
 2. Use the time to discuss the situation with a friend or co-worker. This should be a brainstorming session where you explore ways to solve the situation.

Step 4: Use Empathy

- Not only does everyone have to deal with difficult people, but at times we become one of them. Therefore, it is a good idea to start by placing yourself in the other person's shoes.

1. If you try to see things through their eyes while keeping an open mind, then you will gain a whole new perspective on things.
2. Communicate what you think the person is feeling and then ask for feedback. This shows that you are trying to understand their point of view.
3. Don't overdo and sound too patronizing or empathetic.
4. If empathizing is difficult, then analyze the person's behavior.
5. Don't confuse empathy with sympathy, which occurs when you over-identify with the person.
6. Offering an apology is a great way to show empathy. You don't have to apologize for your actions to express regret that the person is having a difficult time.

Step 5: Find a Solution

- When a difficult person is causing problems in your life, you need to find a solution. How you deal with the person depends on different factors. It may be better to walk away from conflict or it may be best to confront the problem.
1. You may not be able to solve the situation immediately.
 2. Don't focus on trying to get rid of the person or finding a winner.
 3. Try having a private discussion with the person.
 1. Remember to use "I-messages" that focus on what you are feeling and not on blaming the other person.
 2. Focus on the behavior, not the person.
 3. Be specific about what is bothering you and what you would like to change.
 4. Sometimes you can solve the problem by eliminating the person from your life. This can be done by switching jobs, transferring, or reducing the person's access to you.
 5. Stay focused on your goal. What do you want to get out of the interaction?

When to Confront

- When we are attacked, our natural reaction is to freeze, fight or flee. Controlling this reaction is difficult. When attacked, we want to respond in kind. After cooling down, you will likely regret having given into your anger. Rational and emotional rarely go together.
- Confronting is not necessarily about attacking. Sometimes it is good to address the situation head on. People may use humor or sarcasm as a method of confronting the person. However, this does not work for all people in all situations. If this person is affecting more than one person, it may be good to confront the person as a group.

THE BLAME GAME

Type 1: These people are strictly focused on their own anxiety. They are attempting to feel better, aren't sure what to do, and are barely aware of you and your reactions. You can sense their agitation and tentativeness.

Type 2: These people are also attempting to reduce their anxiety, but are very aware of you. They diminish their fear and frustrations by projecting on you. Their mood rises as they push you down. They want to overpower you.

COPING STRATEGIES:

- 1. Stay as calm as you can.** These people generate a lot of tension. Remain centered and balanced in your personal convictions and understanding of situations. *Focus on your breathing, body language, and words.*
- 2. Speak slowly and clearly.** The normal tendency is to gear up in our speech patterns as we become upset or defensive. *Avoid falling into the trap of "verbal sparring" with this person.*
- 3. Be patient.** Though difficult to do when being attacked, the blamer needs to be heard. Interestingly, they often have little to say. *Listen to what they say, then ask questions, and then more questions.*
- 4. Pay attention to your internal reactions.** Watch your self-talk and internal thinking process. *This is not your issue, it is their issue.*
- 5. Initially, let them control the agenda.** But, you control the pacing and tempo. *Don't let it turn into a runaway conversation. Slow it down.*
- 6. Treat them with kindness and understanding.** This person has a sense of paranoia and is waiting for you to attack. *Don't play their game by attacking, blaming, and defending.*
- 7. It is okay to ask for clarification and examples.** You may ask for something, place a demand upon them. *Put the responsibility back on them. They should talk and explain more than you.*

BEHAVIOR CHANGE FORM

The following form is one that may be useful when a problem arises with students. It helps them to identify the issues at hand and ways to make changes in the future. It may be modified for your appropriate teaching level.

1. What was your behavior?

2. What did you want? (Check as many as you would like).

- I wanted attention from others
- I wanted to be in control of the situation
- I wanted to challenge the adult's authority
- I wanted to avoid doing my work
- I wanted to be sent home
- I wanted to cause problems for others because I was hurt inside
- I wanted to cause problems for others because of the way they treated me
- I wanted revenge
- I wanted them to stop
- I wanted _____

3. Did you get what you wanted? yes no

Why?

4. What are you going to do next?

5. If the situation happens again, can you think of any other ways to respond that won't get you in trouble?

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____
- d. _____

6. What are some things your teacher or another adult can do to help you?

THE RUNAWAY TRAIN

We have all experienced being around a person who may start off rational and calm, but as things progress, gets so carried away that he/she become a runaway train. This type of steamroller, Sherman tank, runaway train, or whatever other name you may give them, can create quite a mess. Look at the descriptions and intervention ideas below and see if they help you when working with this type of person.

CHARACTERISTICS: This person has a difficult time looking past their own needs. They are independent people who want the world to revolve around them. Their tendency to blame other people during a crisis only increases their need to take over. A condescending style is often part of their repertoire of conversations. Overall, they may become rude, insensitive and stubborn during a discussion or meeting.

MOTIVATION: This person may have some previous internal pain that has not quite been resolved. It could be trauma from childhood, the way he/she was treated by family, previous relationships or job areas that were painful. This type of person chooses to respond to life by avoiding vulnerability. They avoid risk and choose to push people away so they don't get too close.

STRATEGIES:

- a. Look for positive aspects in the runaway train. It is easy to see their flaws (way too easy!), but we often overlook their positive traits. This will help balance our perspective.
- b. Avoid getting caught in a power struggle. You are at an immediate disadvantage. The runaway train has lost touch with reality and will "say and do" things that you might not (unless you lose control also).
- c. Look for solutions. Ask the person what you can do to make it better, what solutions they have, how you can work together toward a common goal.
- d. Find commonality. This is very helpful with parents. Remind them that you care about their child also and want to work out a solution that is beneficial for all concerned.
- e. Set boundaries. What will you allow and what won't you allow? I, personally, have stated to numerous "runaway trains" that I won't stay in a conversation if they are going to "verbally abuse" me. I let them know I am committed to talking and working out the issues, but will not stand there and be yelled at or threatened.
- f. Look for an opportunity. When the runaway train relaxes or gives an opening to you, take it. Be positive, affirming, upbeat and let them know that things can get better.
- g. When appropriate, ask the person what can be done differently next time to avoid this type of confrontation. This is especially helpful in close relationships, chronic work situations (with students, peers), or with relatives. Plan for the future.

Think of one person that fits into this category. Write out an action plan for your next interaction with them including interventions and personal insights.

DOES YOUR ANGER GET THE BEST OF YOU?

Anger and hostility are often born out of frustration and hurt. Animosity is directly linked to insufficient emotional well being as a sense of self-preservation occurs and we lash out. Please choose “True” or “False” for each answer.

1. I am usually the one to stand up for the rights of other people. TRUE FALSE
2. It irritates me when peers or family members tell me what to do. TRUE FALSE
3. Expressing anger to someone who annoys you is emotionally healthy. TRUE FALSE
4. It bothers me very much to be considered “second best.” TRUE FALSE
5. Most of the time, I am willing to fight for what I want. TRUE FALSE
6. I would have no qualms talking back to an authority figure such as a guard or police officer. TRUE FALSE
7. I like to direct the action of others. TRUE FALSE
8. I probably would try to get even with people who had been bossy or pushy toward me.
TRUE FALSE
9. If I am upset with someone, I don’t hesitate to let him/her know about it.
TRUE FALSE
10. People will take advantage of you if you are humble. TRUE FALSE
11. A person who is spontaneous in releasing anger is better adjusted than one who is slow to express it. TRUE FALSE
12. I would feel quite glad if someone told off a person I found obnoxious.
TRUE FALSE

To tally your score, give yourself one point for each “TRUE” response

A score of 0 – 6 points: You have an average degree of hostility that you’d be willing to vent toward others.

A score of 7 points or more: You have an above average amount of anger and might do well to examine what’s setting you off. It may be that the ways you express your feelings are increasing your level of hostility. Chances are you’d benefit from a more controlled release of this volatile emotion.

THE EXPLODER

One of most difficult people to be around is one that loses his/her cool and blows up at everyone around them. Contrary to the “Runaway Train” that operates like the energizer bunny (they keep going and going and going...), the “Exploder” damages everyone within a large radius of them. They then feel contrite and bad about the occurrence, only to have it happen again.

CHARACTERISTICS: This individual is unstable. You never know what will set them off or when they will blow. They are often negative and sarcastic with their humor. Their tendency is to be negative and find fault with situations...they are complainers. Yes, they are rude and lack social graces that many of us take for granted. The exploder may be revengeful, picking the most inopportune time to let go with a flurry of comments and actions. They are selfish people who look for ways to meet their immediate needs at the expense of whomever is in the way.

MOTIVATION: As with the “runaway train,” the exploder uses their emotions as a defense against relationships. Many of their responses are learned from watching parents, friends or significant others. Past modeling is a strong indicator for this person’s actions. Anger is insulation from further pain. The exploder will attack a person to prevent the person from attacking them. “I will get them before they get me.”

STRATEGIES:

- a. Evaluate the reason for their outbursts. Dr. James Dobson shares four reasons for outbursts: 1) fatigue; 2) embarrassment; 3) frustration; 4) rejection. Try to avoid the attitude of “I would never act that way.” Soon after comments like that, I find myself caught up in my own arrogance.
- b. Don’t be a doormat. It is okay to tell the exploder that you don’t appreciate their way of expressing their anger. “Find another way to tell me you’re upset without profanity and put-downs.” This may be best done when there is not an ongoing explosion, but instead after the storm or during a calm time. This is preventative.
- c. Watch out for the contagious aspects of anger. When one person explodes, it is easy to react the same way.
- d. Use a “hassle log” to keep track of issues. If the exploder is someone you are around regularly (relative, student, etc), suggest they keep track of when they feel especially angry. This type of diary allows them to see patterns and keep track of issues. One client I used this with found his profanity decreasing significantly as he was more aware of his outbursts.
- e. Don’t fight back without understanding the issues. Too often we respond in frustration with this type of person before we clearly hear all the issues. True, when someone is yelling, screaming, cussing, spitting, etc., it is hard to hear the words. However, we must read between the lines.
- f. Remember, though you may disagree with the “way” they are saying it, there may be truth in “what” they are saying to you. Listen to the content and evaluate the accuracy of their comments. Focus on those and let the person know you agree with what is being said. You will find an immediate de-escalation when they hear that you agree with them.

HANDLING DIFFICULTIES OVER THE PHONE

When we talk over the phone, it immediately discounts over 90% of communication (facial expressions and body language). The following 8 strategies will help your phone calls become more positive.

- 1. Shape Perceptions**—A phone conversation is small moments that are strung together for a large perception. Since we lack the visual context, we must shape the perception through our words. Ideas: take notes, verbally let them know if something is funny, odd, frustrating, and avoid assumptions.
- 2. Use Your Body For Tone Control**—Lean back, relax, stretch, stand up, or other ways to calm down. The phone will allow you to use calming techniques without being obvious.
- 3. Breathe, Breathe, Breathe**—Breathe intentionally. Avoid sighing or taking huge breaths, but a person can take in air and slowly dispel it as a way to relax.
- 4. Chart a Course, Make a Plan**—Taking notes allows you to write out questions, comments, impressions, and ideas. You may also use this as a way to vent or calm yourself down. Draw a silly picture, write out your feelings ('This is stupid'), write out your grocery list (just kidding...sort of).
- 5. Know When To Hold'Em and Know When To Fold'Em**—While "hold" can be an ally, "wait" is on the other side and can be unbearable. Before putting someone on hold, be sure to ask permission, give them a time frame, and check back if it is longer. If someone has been waiting a while, prepare for frustration and the need for de-escalation before you begin your discussion.
- 6. Send Listening Signals**—Meaningful looks are wasted over the phone. Use of meaningful grunts is effective: "Hmmm," "Huh!," "Wow," "yeah." Use of short phrases or sentences is positive as well: "Then what?" "No way," "Sure," "You're kidding."
- 7. Sound Prepared, Even When You Are Not**—Gather as much information as possible prior to a discussion. If necessary and possible, keep resource materials nearby (books, computer), but be aware of multi-tasking as it 'sounds' as if you are not listening.
- 8. Concentrate**—You can close your eyes if you want. Strategies to help concentrate may include closing your eyes or staring at an area (like a wall).

Whine and Cheese (Overcoming whiners)

There are three types of complaints: Helpful, Therapeutic, and Obnoxious. The helpful draws attention to a problem, but offers up a solution. The therapeutic is a way of venting, but will then focus on solutions or getting a perspective. The obnoxious complainer (or whiner) wallows in their own self-pity, not looking for solutions or answers, but more for support and sympathy.

Four Whiner Don'ts:

1. Don't agree with the whiner as it will only encourage them to keep going.
2. Don't disagree with them as they will feel compelled to repeat the problem.
3. Don't try to solve their problem for them—you can't.
4. Don't show emotional frustration with them as they see this as rejection.

Putting a "Cork on the Whine."

1. **Have the correct attitude approach.** It is important to have patience, compassion and commitment. ***Check your own attitude.***
2. **Listen for the main points.** The more you show listening skills, the less their emotional whine. ***Pencil and paper may help as taking notes allows you to go back over their comments and clarify. It will also show your genuine interest.***
3. **Interrupt and get specific.** Use your notes and caring attitude to interrupt, clarify, and ask for specifics. ***Take command of the conversation. Put the responsibility for solutions back onto the person. Facilitate answers.***
4. **Shift the focus to solutions.** Help them stay on topic, refocus them. Ask them what they want or what they need from you. ***It is not your job to solve their issues. You can be there to help them look at reality. Be a mirror for them.***
5. **Show them the future.** Be willing to "help" them find the answer. Set up a meeting for them, get them a phone number or name of a person, etc. ***This is a time to be supportive without doing the work for them.***
6. **Draw the line.** If they become cyclical in the whining, move toward developing a strategy/plan. ***"I understand the issue, but how are you going to solve this?"***

A HUMOROUS STORY

The late Billy Martin was a former major baseball player and manager for many years. In his book, *Number 1*, he shares a humorous story that illustrates the dangers of picking up on someone else's anger.

Billy Martin was hunting in Texas with his friend, baseball star Mickey Mantle. They were going to hunt on the ranch of a person that Mickey knew. When they arrived at the ranch, Mantle told Martin to wait in the car while he checked with his friend. Mantle's friend quickly gave them permission to hunt, but asked Mantle to do him a favor. He had a pet mule that was going blind and lame, and he didn't have the heart to put the animal out of his misery. He asked Mantle to shoot the mule for him.

When Mantle came back to the car, he pretended to be angry. He scowled and slammed the door. Martin asked him what was wrong, and Mantle said his friend wouldn't let them hunt. "I'm so mad at that guy," Mantle said, "I'm going out to his barn and shoot one of his mules!"

Mantle drove like a maniac to the barn. Martin protested, but Mantle was adamant. "Just watch me!" he shouted. When they got to the barn, Mantle jumped out of the car with his rifle, ran inside, and shot the mule. As he was leaving, though, he heard two shots, and he ran back to the car. He saw that Martin had taken out his rifle too. "What are you doing, Martin?" he yelled.

Martin yelled back, face red with anger, "We'll show that son of a gun! I just killed two of his cows!"

DIFFICULT PEOPLE

1. *Avoid labeling others. When we start off by judging the person, it colors our viewpoint, reduces our listening skills, and sets us up for a defensive posture.*
2. *Don't be too quick to respond. Take some time to think of an answer. This isn't a race or a tennis match. The more pensive and thoughtful you are in your response, the better chance to slow down the other person's negative flow.*
3. *You probably won't change the person. It is easy to think "why don't they change" but realize they are who they are. If they do change, fantastic. But more importantly, we need to learn how to work with different people.*
4. *Find a way to support them and agree with them. They are use to arguments and have lots of comebacks, attitudes, and nonverbal posturing. Don't get into a combative situation with them.*
5. *Practice effective communication and learning mindsets. Listen to what they say. Separate their attitudes from their words. Attempt to figure out what they really want and need from the conversation.*
6. *Don't get trapped into being difficult as well. Remember, it is easy to respond with a "fight fire with fire" attitude. Be who you are...which is hopefully not a difficult person. 😊*

STRATEGIES FOR DIFFICULT PEOPLE?

- ✚ AVOID being defensive- it is easy to feel frustrated and “attacked” by difficult people. Stay away from attacking them or making it a contest of wills.
- ✚ BE CAREFUL of revenge attitudes- when we are hurt emotionally, a revenge concept may occur. “You hurt me, so I hurt you.” This is a lose-lose proposition.
- ✚ STAY in charge- be calm and keep your thoughts clear. Don’t let this type of person get you riled up and upset. Be firm, be clear, and set boundaries.
- ✚ DON’T take things personally- they do this to everyone.

AND....

- Look at yourself and make changes within. You can only control you! “Life is 10% what happens to you and 90% how you react to it.” Be in charge of you!
- Ask questions, listen to responses. Make the person responsible and accountable for their comments and actions. You don’t have to challenge them in order to state facts and impressions.
- If possible, minimize contact with this person. Make contacts short, sweet, and to the point. You don’t need to be rude, but you can “move along in life.”
- Be careful to not fall into the trap of “gossiping” about this person with others. It will change nothing except make your attitude toward this person more negative. It will make future interactions and any chance of impacting them in a positive way very difficult.

THINGS YOU CAN SAY TO YOURSELF TO KEEP A LID ON YOUR ANGER

It is not uncommon for children to become upset and then work themselves into a frenzy as they repeatedly play the same “tapes” or “phrases” in their mind. This sets up a self-escalation of their anger. Below is a list of phrases to help people change their “self-talk” approaches. These are great strategies to share with your own children or with students.

1. “It is not worth it to get angry.”
2. “I won’t make a big deal out of it.”
3. “I’m not going to let this get to me.” This is one on my personal favorites.
4. “I can’t always expect people to act the way I want them to.”
5. “I’ll use my sense of humor and make a joke of this.” Be careful as this can turn into sarcasm and create further problems.
6. “He/she would like me to get angry. Well, I’m going to disappoint him/her.” This type of thinking allows the individual to stay in charge and in control. Teachers may do well to remember this one the next time a student begins to purposely “yank your chain.”
7. “I don’t need to prove myself.”
8. “As long as I keep cool, I’m in control.”
9. “I’ll grow up not blow up.”
10. “I won’t get in a fight.”
11. “I won’t be a fool—I will keep my cool.”
12. “I won’t be mean.”
13. “Losing my temper means trouble for me because...”

While these phrases may seem vague or too simple, the problem with many of our students is that they don’t think in these terms. We need to help them get these types of phrases into their heads. You may need to write them on note cards, have them say it out loud, share their thoughts with another person. Changing our self-talk will help change patterns of behavior and avoid becoming a high maintenance person.

ARE YOU A WORRYWART?

Anxiety and worry can overwhelm a life. An individual will often become dependent on people, their opinions, and perspectives. Students in our schools become “clingons,” refusing to operate without adult approval or directions.

To find out if you are apt to be anxious, take the following quiz.

1. I am considered by others to be serious-minded. a. Rarely b. Sometimes c. Often
2. I think about my home when I am away from it. a. Rarely b. Sometimes c. Often
3. I have trouble falling asleep. a. Rarely b. Sometimes c. Often
4. When someone is angry or displeased with me, I don't forget it quickly.
 a. Rarely b. Sometimes c. Often
5. Others would judge me to be overly conscientious in the things I do.
 a. Rarely b. Sometimes c. Often
6. I dwell upon my duties at work or home when on vacation.
 a. Rarely b. Sometimes c. Often
7. Compared to my friends, when I make a mistake it bothers me a lot.
 a. Rarely b. Sometimes c. Often
8. When someone is cold to me my first thought is: Have I offended him or her?
 a. Rarely b. Sometimes c. Often
9. When I leave home I return to make sure the door is locked, stove is off, etc.
 a. Rarely b. Sometimes c. Often
10. I have had significant changes in my eating habits. a. Rarely b. Sometimes c. Often
11. When with strangers I feel I might be inadequate. a. Rarely b. Sometimes c. Often
12. For a routine medical check-up, I worry what the doctor might find.
 a. Rarely b. Sometimes c. Often

To tally your score, give yourself one point for each “a” response, two points for each “b” response, and three points for each “c” response.

A score of 12-15 points: You're low-key, easygoing, and fun to be around.

A score of 16-24 points: You're an average worrier, like most people (how reassuring).

A score of 25-36 points: You're a high-powered worrier. It would help to challenge your untested assumptions about the things that bother you. Keep a record of your specific concerns and see if they actually pan out as badly as you fear.

CUTTING THE CORD OF THE CLINGON

This person likes to stay connected to you. They lack independence and need frequent affirmation they are doing things correctly. Whether it is your six-year-old daughter, a fifteen year old in your biology class, or the next-door neighbor, this person creates a claustrophobic aspect within the relationship.

CHARACTERISTICS: To say this person is clingy is obvious. They create a stifling environment within the relationship. They are needy people that can't get their needs met...it is like a black hole. They use guilt to keep people connected. If others are enjoying themselves, the clingon wants to be a part, fearful of missing out on something. While they outwardly appear to "care" about others, most of the energy of the clingon is devoted to their own needs. This smothering approach usually pushes people away, only reinforcing their initial relationship insecurities.

MOTIVATION: Low self-esteem is often the root of the clingon psyche. This person wants to be a part of your world, literally. They obtain some vicarious pleasure from your good news and pacify their inadequacies with your bad news. "See, it happens to you too." Clingons use the neediness as a bridge to other people. It is their way of getting close to others. They are crying out to be needed.

STRATEGIES:

- a. Examine your own innate desire to help. The clingon is counting on your good nature to stay connected.
- b. Avoid the guilt. The clingon will use guilt to keep you tied to them. It is not your job to raise their self-esteem. Be kind and friendly, but they need to have their own intrinsic sense of worth.
- c. Evaluate the needs the person really needs. What they are draining from us is not what will meet their needs (that is why is can be insatiable).
- d. There is a bottomless pit. No matter how much you give, it will never be enough.
- e. Say no, and don't feel guilty. Again, you are not responsible for their life and happiness. They try to "make you" feel this way, so battle it. Set boundaries. "I prefer you not call me after 8 p.m. at night." (or not at all). "I don't mind you asking questions, but you must try two problems before I answer your questions."
- f. Help them find a place of independence. If possible, give them tasks to complete without you. Let them work in groups or with other people. Allow them to make mistakes and grow from their errors.

This person definitely needs help, but not the kind they seek. Use of group work, cooperative learning, peer tutoring, cross age tutoring and other styles of learning may be beneficial. Before allowing them to engage you, set parameters and guidelines for them. This may seem cruel or harsh, but it will save you energy and actually allow you a more positive connection to the person.

Think of one person that fits into this category. Write out an action plan for your next interaction with them listing interventions and personal insights.

DO YOU KNOW A CONTROL FREAK?

THINK OF A PERSON OR PEOPLE WHO COME TO MIND WHEN YOU HEAR THE PHRASE “THE CONTROL FREAK”. CIRCLE THE “Y” IF THE STATEMENT IS TRUE ABOUT THE PERSON AND CIRCLE THE “N” IF IT IS NOT TRUE.

- Y N This person hangs on to projects forever because he or she demands perfection.
- Y N Most people would describe this person as picky or critical.
- Y N This person loves order and established routines.
- Y N This person’s controlling behavior alienates others.
- Y N Sometimes I suspect this person snoops around in private places.
- Y N This person makes me anxious.
- Y N Like a bulldog, this person holds on to the way he or she wants things done.
- Y N Once this person decides on something, it is settled; all other opinions cease to exist.
- Y N This person can be indecisive because he or she continues to mull over an idea and puts everything else on hold.
- Y N If this person doesn’t like something, he or she says so.
- Y N Most people are surprised by this person’s demanding style.
- Y N This person has a certain way of doing things and almost never budes.
- Y N Hardly anyone would describe this person as flexible and easygoing.
- Y N If this person does give in to another’s idea, he or she doesn’t fully jump on board with it.
- Y N If the slightest thing is out of place, this person will find it.

Scoring: Total the number of Y’s you circled. If you circled ten or more Y’s, you are certainly in a high-maintenance relationship with *A Control Freak*.

Adapted, with permission, from “High Maintenance Relationships” by Les Parrott III

COPING WITH THE CONTROL FREAK

- Face the Control Freak within

Recognize my own need for control. *Evaluate your own personal need for control. Is this bad? Are there times that control is important? In a workplace setting, is there a place for control?*

- Don't take it personally

They want it their way. It doesn't mean your way is wrong. *Avoid being defensive. Because a person disagrees with you or wants something to be done differently, doesn't mean we are wrong or should feel put upon. It may not be about you, but more about the job, the environment, other people, etc.*

- Go with the flow (of the "freak")

Dot "I's" and cross "T's". Ask them what they need or want. *Be organized, clear, and specific in your work style.*

- Find the need and focus on it

Is there a way to give the control freak what they need without compromising my own needs? *Know what you want, what are your limits, and how far you will bend without breaking.*

- Drown the Freak

Meet the Need!! Send notes, phone calls, emails. *Inundate them with information. Leave no stone unturned. Answer all questions and concerns.*

- Define your role

How do they see my role? Your role? *Defining this area is critical to working with this person.*

- Fish or cut bait

Know when there is a brick wall. Do the best you can. *There may be a time to make some difficult decisions: press forward or stop.*

HERE IS YOUR FINAL TEST.

DO YOU SING BEFORE BREAKFAST: HOW HAPPY ARE YOU?

1. I cease to enjoy a game when I am losing badly. TRUE FALSE
2. I can enjoy a joke when it is on me. TRUE FALSE
3. I am pleased when a friend receives praise in my presence. TRUE FALSE
4. If a person cuts in front of me in a line, I always openly object to it. TRUE FALSE
5. I get bored easily with hobbies. TRUE FALSE
6. I daydream often. TRUE FALSE
7. I wish for many things. TRUE FALSE
8. I am overweight. TRUE FALSE
9. I enjoy reading fiction. TRUE FALSE
10. I hate to go to bed. TRUE FALSE
11. I think I am attractive and/or personable. TRUE FALSE
12. I take criticism well. TRUE FALSE

SCORING—Give yourself one point for each correct answer.

1.False 2.True 3.True 4.False 5.False 6.False 7.False 8.False 9.True 10.False 11.True
12.True

A score of 9-12 points: Compared to others, you are quite a happy person. You seem to maintain a good balance between what you expect out of life and what you actually receive. High scorers like you are socially well adjusted. You are attractive to others because of your live-and-let-live attitude.

A score of 5-8 points: You have your ups and downs but for the most part, you are moderately happy. There's no burning desire to change your life. You'd probably have an uplifting effect on someone who is less happy than you, but at the same time, you could benefit if you associated with those happier than yourself.

A score of 0-4 points: You could be much happier. Somehow, you've developed a perspective on life that is a bit lopsided. Review each of your answers and try to figure out how you can change your perspective.

Recognizing & Working with Personality Dragons by Barbara Taylor

Personality dragons are habits, behaviors and personality traits caused by underlying fears that keep people from being successful. There are seven dragons. When out of control, they become self-fulfilling prophecies:

- Greed — Lose everything you want
- Impatience — Slows you down
- Arrogance — People judge you
- Stubbornness — Brings authority down on your head.
- Self-Deprecation — Others put you down
- Martyrdom — Provokes others to hurt you
- Self Destruction — Lose control ultimately.



The Greed Dragon

How you may feel or react when encountering someone with this dragon:

You may feel sorry for them and keep trying to give them things to compensate for them never having enough, especially when they panic, run out of money, lose their home, their car breaks down, they don't get enough attention, etc. Or, you may want to keep things from them — not leave valuables around, not allow them to attend meetings, not tell them things, feel invaded by their neediness, etc.

How it hurts the person:

Greed tends to fixate on something — money, time, attention, food, things, etc. Symptoms can be hoarding things, binge/purge, anorexia/bulimia, lack of pleasure in what is accumulated, constantly looking for “more” of whatever they are fixated on. People seem to look hungry all the time.

If they fixate on money, they may accumulate a lot, then lose it somehow. They may always be asking for loans, cannot seem to pay their bills or may have credit problems. If they fixate on food, they may be the first in line and last in line, always take the biggest piece, try to keep others from having what they want, etc. People with Greed may slide to Self-Destruction.

How it affects the workplace:

Poor decision-making, lost opportunities because they push too hard or want too much, low morale, lack of responsibility, bankruptcy, never being satisfied no matter what is given (time off, money, promotions, more influence, etc.), never being grateful for what they do have.

How to improve communication:

A person with greed is always afraid they will be left out, so may show interest even when they are not really interested. Include them when it is appropriate. Make sure they do not dominate all the time in meetings or grab all the attention. They need firm limit setting. Say no if appropriate. Make them follow the usual procedures for advancement and not expect special treatment. Treat them with respect and kindness, just like everyone else.

The Impatience Dragon

How you may feel or react when encountering someone with this dragon:

People feel pushed by someone with impatience and tend to slow down — rather than hurry up — as the impatient person wants. Managers may demand, “I want it yesterday,” which leads to disrespect by their employees who come to assume that all the manager’s demands are unreasonable. Or, people may try to rush with the impatient person and make mistakes, or later find out that they should have waited.

How it hurts the person:

People with impatience are never in the present. They are always thinking about what is coming up, worrying about being late, never enjoy what they have or where they are. People with Impatience will slide to Martyrdom occasionally.

How it affects the workplace:

They make mistakes due to rushing, have accidents, interrupt other people, take on more than they can handle, are late to meetings or miss deadlines because they tend to over-commit. They can offend others who don’t respect their deadlines or promises. They miss what is in front of them because their mind is always somewhere else or worrying about something in the future.

How to improve communication:

Remember that people with impatience are afraid because time might run out before they get to do what they want to do. Ask them to slow down when talking. Make them repeat themselves. Try to get them to look at you during communications. Be patient with them and be a role model for them. Remind them that there is plenty of time to do whatever is needed. Help them make or set realistic deadlines. If they take on too much, help them cut down their “to do” list.

The Arrogance Dragon

How you may feel or react when encountering someone with this dragon:

You may want to smack them for being so obnoxious. You may want to criticize them, call them names or talk in disrespectful ways about them. You may want to break through their arrogance and tell them how you really think. People are rarely honest with an arrogant person. They may tell them off or not give any clues about what you think — both are dishonest responses.

How it hurts the person:

Underneath their brave exterior, they feel inferior and insecure. Arrogant people are very self-conscious. Because of their fear, they have too much attention on themselves. They can be very shy. They want to be “special” but are afraid they will be overlooked or ignored so they feel they have to brag and strut to get approval from others.

They cover their shyness, self-consciousness and aloofness by trying to appear perfect so they will not be criticized. They may have been subjected to very harsh criticism and have learned to defend

themselves. They can be very critical and judgmental of others. People with Arrogance slide to Self-Deprecation occasionally.

How it affects the workplace:

They are very defensive, very critical of others, holding themselves aloof as a protective barrier from being judged. They project a protective barrier between others and are afraid to relax. That means all their energy is focused on themselves instead of the other person.

They don't hear what you say and respond based on their own pre-conceived notions rather than on the actual situation. They may make statements that seem to be full of confidence even when they are completely wrong. They will refuse to accept the blame or responsibility for anything that is wrong or for being responsible for miscommunications.

How to improve communication:

Never humiliate them or put them down in front of co-workers. You can praise them publicly, but criticize them in private if needed. Give them your complete attention. Gently remind them that they are part of the team. Help them get the focus off themselves by asking them how they can support their customers, co-workers or team members. Help them acknowledge the contributions of others in addition to themselves. Never offer criticism without offering praise first. Do not surprise them. Give them plenty of time to give their best efforts. Be warm and friendly even when they seem aloof. Let them know it's OK to be human. Help them feel connected to others, the group, the team, etc. Compliment them in a gentle and sincere way.



The Stubbornness Dragon

How you may feel or react when encountering someone with this dragon:

People will try to push the stubborn person harder to get them to move faster. Or, they may become more stubborn themselves, leading to a stand-off.

How it hurts the person:

Stubborn people resist changes that threaten their sense of security. They stall on giving answers and participating in their workplace as a team member. They may grit their teeth or become upset easily when someone want to change something. They tend to say "no" very quickly without listening to what is being asked of them. When pushed or rushed, they get angry and dig in their heels even more. People with Stubbornness can slide to any of the other dragons.

How it affects the workplace:

Stubborn people become known as roadblocks to progress, ridiculed or ignored until it's too late. Then, they become even more difficult because they are being pushed even more. They can sabotage projects, avoid decisions and create havoc for others who need to get things done.

How to improve communication:

Remember that a stubborn person is feeling afraid that you might want to change something that they are attached to. They may feel that that you are too controlling for them.

Give the person extra time to adjust to whatever is changing. Don't surprise them. Never make sudden demands. Give them options and choices. Be casual in your approach. Be calm with them. Ask them for input on issues, rather than telling them what to do.

The Self-Deprecation Dragon

How you may feel or react when encountering someone with this dragon:

You may want to blame them or make derogatory comments about them. You may ignore them, not feel sympathy for them, bypass them because they usually won't/don't participate, not want to embarrass them, not praise them because they always get flustered by it.

How it hurts the person:

They have a constant fear of failing or being embarrassed. They will not volunteer for assignments or projects they are capable of handling. They are always blaming themselves or putting themselves down. People with Self-Deprecation slide to Arrogance occasionally.

How it affects the workplace:

Because they may feel unworthy, they may feel responsible for things that are not their fault, make excuses for their own failings or become defensive when questioned about anything, whether it is their fault or not. It is hard for them to be active participants on a team because they are also so defensive or apologetic. They may not take on their share of the team responsibility. They usually have trouble asking for help when they need it so others on the team may not know when they get into trouble.

How to improve communication:

Point out their strengths. Thank them for their contributions. Don't let them engage in self-deprecating talk. Don't let them apologize unnecessarily. Don't make up things that are not true to over-compensate for their lack of confidence. Never humiliate them in a meeting or in front of their co-workers. Never shame them. Try not to put too much pressure on them in front of others. Provide them with a respectful, supporting, kind approach.

The Martyrdom Dragon

How you may feel or react when encountering someone with this dragon:

You may want to sympathize with their problems and go along with them that the world is out to get them. You may feel exhausted after spending time in their presence because they are always so sad and unhappy. You may want to run away from them, not invite them to meetings or events because their attitude is always so negative. You may cringe when they start complaining. They often have a whiney tone of voice that irritates people.

How it hurts the person:

They feel like they have no choices — that they are trapped. It immobilizes them and keeps them from taking action or making choices that would solve the problems they seem to

experience. Disasters and bad luck seem to follow them around. People with Martyrdom will slide to Impatience occasionally.

How it affects the workplace:

People complain a lot and are always talking about their problems, which are numerous. They manipulate others into feeling sorry for them or taking on their responsibilities. Their ability to work on a team is damaged because no one wants to work with them due to their bad attitude. They waste an incredible amount of energy that could be directed toward productive endeavors. They can drag an entire office down with their constant complaining and whining.

How to improve communication:

Remember that people with martyrdom are afraid of being victims. They are fairly convinced that they will have to work too hard and that others will get away with things while they do not. They try to be extra good and yet resent it at the same time.

Don't let them volunteer for extra work. Don't take advantage of their hard-working nature. Be kind and generous with them. Don't fall for their endless crisis, unending problems and apparent bad luck. Hold them accountable. Help them to see that they have other options and choices. Help them to see their responsibility for a problem they are having. Require them to take their complaints to someone who can help them. Don't bail them out.

The Self-Destruction Dragon

How you may feel or react when encountering someone with this dragon:

You may feel a sense of impending loss of control when you are with them or thinking about them. You may feel afraid for their safety or health and well-being. You may feel a sense of hopelessness to help them. You may have a feeling of being unable to help them, a feeling of pity, loss or confusion about what they are doing. You may have a fear that they won't be able to get through whatever is going on with them.

People have a look of panic in their eyes and give off a feeling of panic or desperation. They may express that their life has no meaning or does not make sense to them.

How it hurts the person:

Self-Destruction can result in drug addiction, alcoholism, excessive smoking, suicide attempts, dangerous or illegal activities, brawling, recklessness and other self-destructive behaviors. It can also show up as destruction of their own belongings or those of others, or physical/personal assaults on others such as fighting or attacking others in extreme cases. Rock stars that do drugs are good examples. People with Self-Destruction slide to Greed occasionally.

How it affects the workplace:

In the workplace, self-destruction results in sabotage, inattention, time loss, poor decisions and accidents, as well as losses due to substance abuse. These people are rarely team players.

How to improve communication:

Recognize the signs of self-destruction. Remember that underneath the person feels desperate and out-of-control but may appear cavalier to cover it up. Be firm with them and give a strong response. Never cover up for them, hide their absence, drunkenness, drug use or theft. If you are the supervisor, take strong and appropriate disciplinary action with warnings of future consequences. Follow through. They need to have strong limits set; leniency does not help.

SUMMARY: The name “dragons” comes from fairy tales. Dragons are not invincible and can be defeated. Personality Dragons never want to be seen and they will do everything they can to disguise themselves or trick you — just like fairy tale dragons. Facing them takes courage and defeating them requires extreme courage and persistence.

When you push for personal growth, the dragons resist. Facing your own fears and insecurities is the first step. Facing the dragon and telling the truth is what beats the dragons. Only you can defeat the dragon and you cannot do it alone — just like in fairy tales, where you must gain someone else’s help to defeat the dragon. Getting rid of personality dragons frees up tremendous energy and vitality that can be directed toward being more successful. Moving beyond the dragons unleashes your natural gifts, talents and abilities.

REMEMBER...NEVER, NEVER GIVE UP!!!

The manager of the Cleveland Indians, Tris Speaker, said of Babe Ruth: “He made a great mistake when he gave up pitching. Working once a week, he might have lasted a long time and become a great star.”

Jim Denny, manager of the Grand Ole Opry, fired Elvis Presley after a 1954 performance and said, “You ain’t goin’ nowhere son. You ought to go back to drivin’ a truck.”

The president of Decca Records said of the Beatles in 1962, “We don’t like their sound. Groups of guitars are on the way out.” Alan Livingston, president of Capital records, on the verge of the Beatle’s first U.S. tour in 1964, said, “We don’t think they’ll do anything in this market.”

Do you think Walt Disney faced any Critics? Trying to sell the idea of a mouse with a falsetto voice?

Disney was said to have asked ten people what they thought of a new idea, and if they were unanimous in their rejection of it, he would begin work immediately.

We are fortunate to be able to spend our days pouring into the future lives of young men and young women. What a privilege and honor. Yes, there will be ups and downs in life and struggles along the way. Like a roller-coaster ride, there will be unexpected changes and times when we feel like our stomach has been turned inside out. However, at the end of the day, regardless of what has happened, I have made a commitment to say... “WHAT A RIDE!”

ENJOY YOUR DAY AND BRING JOY TO THOSE AROUND YOU.

HIGH MAINTENANCE BEHAVIORS AND INTERACTIONS **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

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Turner-Bumberry, Tracy. *2, 4, 6, 8 This Is How We Regulate.* PESI Publishing, 2018.. Activities to assist in teaching mindfulness and regulation (grades P-12). www.publishing.pesi.com

The following two books are written by your instructor and contain a faith based perspective and biblical references. These are available on line or through bookstores. Both books are available in CD format as audio books.

What To Do When Words Get Ugly. Michael Sedler. Revell Books, 2016 (edited/revised edition). Examines the topic of gossip and how it impacts people. (Adult) www.bakerbooks.com 1-800-877-2665

When to Speak Up and When to Shut Up. Michael Sedler. Revell Books, 2006. Communication book discussing conflict and encouragement. (Adult) www.bakerbooks.com 1-800-877-2665 **(over 400,000 copies sold).**