

The Secret to Dealing With Difficult People

Difficult people—we all know them, don't we?

At first glance, they may not look the same. After all, different people aggravate us for different reasons and in different ways. But no matter what they do or what they say that puts us over the edge, you may be happy to know that there is a way to redeem the situation!

Think back with me for a moment. When you come across someone annoying, what's usually been your first response? Remember when you had a group project in school with the kid that just wouldn't do anything? Or when there was a team presentation at work, and you had to deal with that co-worker who was just oh-so-very controlling? Or maybe you were part of a committee where the chairperson had absolutely nothing good to say about your contributions?

How did you respond? What was your reaction?

When you were in that group project at school, weren't you just counseled to do your best and get through it? Perhaps at work, with that uber-control-freak, you found yourself just backing off and letting the chips fall as they may. And didn't you feel just a tad disappointed in yourself when you heard yourself talking trash to your peers about that super critical chairperson in order to improve your reputation and feel better about yourself?

The thing about difficult people is this: We normally, at the very least, want to get away from them. At the other end of the spectrum, however, we may find ourselves wanting to do something to pay them back for the discomfort or pain they've inflicted.

Ouch!

One thing that you don't need too much life experience to realize is this: there will always be difficult people in our lives. There will always be people who rub us the wrong way, who "get our goat," who step on our very last nerve.

So I'd like to propose a better way to deal with those inevitable challenges. While it may not be easy or fun, I can guarantee that you will never again look at difficult people with the same attitude!

Ask yourself this:

What is this person revealing about me?

Because we will have difficult people in our lives, we will always, out of necessity, react. If we look for ways to escape the situation, we lose valuable opportunities to grow emotionally and spiritually. By taking your eyes off the other person and putting your energy instead on self-improvement, you can turn the situation around.

Let's look at the situations I presented in the beginning of this piece. I'm not a psychologist, but some of my personal experiences do suggest a few possibilities:

- Not approaching the student who doesn't contribute to the group project may reflect a difficulty you have confronting others, standing up for yourself or estimating the value of your work or abilities.
- Backing off from the control-freak may reflect similar issues, or perhaps a lack of self-confidence or self-esteem.
- Trash talking your critical chairperson may indicate subtle feelings of superiority or pride, or even envy or covetousness.

And only you know in your heart of hearts what is true.

See what we did there?

By turning it around, your energies can go to working on your own issues and healing whatever hurts or pains you own, which in turn helps you grow into a healthier person who is better able to handle those very same “difficult people”!

It’s not magic, but it almost feels that way.

It’s not simple, but if practiced, it can become a healthier “go to” response.

It’s not easy, at first, but over time and as it becomes more of a habit, it will become an effective tool for positive growth.

It certainly won’t remove those difficult people from your life but it sure will put them to good use!

*Reprinted with permission from A Little R N R blog managed by Rosilind Jukic. **Pat Fenner** has been homeschooling her five children for 20 years, learning and changing her methods quite a bit during that time. Preparing for a soon-to-be empty nest, she shares what she’s learned and encourages others in the journey over at . Join them over a cup of coffee and sign up to get useful and creative parenting and homeschooling “members-only” helps. * The basis for this post came from a sermon delivered at Greenbriar Church in Albany, GA by pastor Tim Bice on April 10, 2016*