

Balanced Living

July 2024



Communicating with Difficult People in Difficult Situations

At work and outside of work, you're going to encounter difficult people. The better you know how to communicate with them, the smoother your time together will be. Follow the pointers below to better learn how to connect with difficult personality types.

Types of Difficult People

Silent types are people who don't say much. They tend to offer minimal opinions and usually provide yes and no answers. Below are some tips to help draw a silent type out of his or her shell.

- Ask questions that require the silent type to elaborate.
- Encourage them to express themselves. Talk about topics that you know they are interested in.
- Wait until the silent type speaks up. Be silent until they do.

Self-appointed experts act like they know everything there is to know. They may think they have all the answers and may downplay everyone else's ideas. Below are some tips to help deal with a self-appointed expert:

- Do your homework. Compile facts before you deal with this type.
- Avoid confrontation. Try to steer the conversation to wherever is most beneficial.
- Ask them questions. By seeking them out for answers, you'll be more likely to win them over.

Threateners bully others. They use words and actions to belittle others and to get what they want. Below are some tips to help you navigate a conversation when you encounter a threatener:

- Be formal and professional. Don't play his or her game; instead stick to what you know is of the right way to treat another person.
- Don't respond to their threats. Instead, move on to other points.

Dealing with an Angry Type

If someone becomes angry with you, try to limit conversation until the situation calms down. When it does, ask the person questions and show your concern; try inquiring about what you can do to help or what the person thinks would make the situation better. Don't draw judgment of the angry person. Instead, draw facts rather than opinions. Think about why the person is angry and what factors caused the anger to arise. See if there is anything you can do to alleviate the situation. Sometimes you will have to say "no" to difficult and angry types. When saying no:

- Try to make it as positive as possible. Say something like, "It's really unfortunate that we can't..."
- Sandwich the "no" around positive or neutral statements. Try to add some light to the situation.
- Give alternatives that would be acceptable, and explain why the proposed suggestion deserves a "no."
- Try to identify with the person you are saying "no" to. Put yourself in his or her shoes, and see if you can help the person further.

Tips for Dealing with Difficult Types

Whether you are dealing with a silent type, self-appointed expert, threatener, or other difficult type, follow these general tips to learn some other ways you can communicate when with a frustrating personality:

- Focus on the good. Find something they are doing right.
- Ask them about something that they have accomplished. What have they done that's been successful? Ask them to elaborate on it.
- Customize your approach to the person. Some people require a quieter approach, others respond to more of a headstrong one.
- Don't antagonize the person, and try to have conversations where you don't criticize the person. If you need to offer constructive criticism, do it gently, when you have the facts. Afterwards, add in something that the person is doing right.
- Be a good listener. Really listen to the person, even if he or she is irritating.
- Avoid being judgmental and try to stay objective.
- Practice the discussion ahead of time. Think about what the person may object to and consider your responses.
- See if you are doing anything wrong. Analyze your attitude and behavior towards the person. Is it fair?
- Don't be too emotional when dealing with the person.
- After you try some of these tips, see if there is any improvement on how you deal with difficult people. Learn from your mistakes and acknowledge your progress

Written by Life Advantages - Author Dr. Delvina Miremadi ©2024

Choosing Kindness

You might not always be mindful about whether you are being kind toward others. Choosing to be kind can have far-reaching effects by putting positive energy into the world. You might make a difference in someone's day while also boosting your own mood. Here are some benefits to choosing kindness and suggestions for making it part of your daily routine.

Your Overall Wellbeing

Incorporating kindness into your life can positively affect your mood, outlook, and self-esteem. Additionally, it can help lower blood pressure and stress levels. By being kind to others, you are also reaping the benefits. Don't focus too much on how others respond or expect anything in return; aim to be kind for the sake of being kind.

Be Mindful of How You Communicate

When interacting with others, consider your tone of voice, non-verbal expressions, and how you are communicating overall. For example, during class discussions, you might not always see eye to eye with other students. Try to understand where other people are coming from when they have a differing opinion. Pay special attention to how you deliver your point of view. You can do so in a way that is tactful and expresses kindness and respect for your classmates. This will help to increase your empathy and connectivity with others.

Cut People Some Slack

Sometimes you might get caught up in how you want an interaction to play out or how you want a situation to unfold. When it doesn't go your way, you might feel annoyed by someone else's actions. It can be easy to judge others, without knowing what they might be going through in their lives at that moment. Try to cut people some slack and show them kindness even when they don't seem to be approaching you in the same way.

Show Your Gratitude for Others

Make sure to show your appreciation for others when they do something kind for you or go out of their way to help you. Other people appreciate being recognized for their efforts. It's easy to have thoughts of gratitude, but make sure you actually show and verbalize it. A big part of kindness is thanking others when they are there to support you and reciprocating when the opportunity arises. Also, this has the benefit of strengthening your relationships.

Being Kind to Yourself

Consider whether you are kind to yourself most days—in your thoughts and self-talk. Some people find it more challenging to be kind to themselves than others. If you want to put more kindness out into the world, start with yourself.

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Mind Over Money: Creating a Spending Plan You Can Stick To

It may not say so in the job description or on the business card, but we are all managers. We manage our time. We manage our health. We manage our households, our families and our kids (even if it sometimes seems as if they're managing us!). Then there's our money. Anyone who has cash coming in and bills to pay needs a plan for managing day-to-day finances. Why bother? Because creating and following such a plan is rewarding to your bottom line and your peace of mind. Want to stress less about money? Want more control over your financial present and future? Want a clear idea of how much money you can afford to spend, to save and to share? Then you need a household spending plan. Here are a few keys to managing a day-to-day budget:

Itemize. Start by making a detailed list of income and expenditures. Income is what you earn from your job, plus money coming in from other sources, such as Social Security, stock dividends, etc. On the expenditure side, there are non-discretionary expenses (financial commitments and necessary living expenses, from mortgage, rent and student loan payments to food and transportation costs) and discretionary expenses (things you choose to spend on, such as dining out, vacations, etc.). Your tallies of the money you take in and spend over the course of a month provide the basic parameters for a spending plan.

Find a framework for your plan. Once you've itemized, look for an easy-to-use, readily accessible method for the numbers you'll be tracking. While you could create such a framework yourself with a pen and paper or a basic spreadsheet, a host of eminently affordable and easy-to-use online tools help you establish and maintain a spending plan via computer or smartphone. "Do whatever fits your lifestyle — whatever is easiest for you," advises Christine Parker, CFP®, of Parker Financial in La Plata, Md. Websites such as Mint.com do most of the heavy lifting for you. Mint.com offers a range of online personal finance tools, along with a downloadable app for the iPhone, Android and iPad. They're useful and — here's an important consideration for the budget-minded — they're FREE!

Choose pillars to support your plan. Decide on a few simple commitments that will help you stick to the plan, and incorporate those into it — things like "use cash instead of credit cards whenever possible" or "pay my entire credit card balance each month."

Read up. Guidance and info on household budgeting abound on the Web. Start by accessing a downloadable guide, [*Budgeting: Managing Your Money With a Spending Plan*](#) that includes a budgeting worksheet.

Be flexible. For example, rather than hold yourself to a specific dollar amount for a certain line item, give yourself a range. For unforeseen events (health crisis, job loss, etc.), have an emergency fund for covering costs that run beyond what your budget can accommodate, so you won't have to rely on credit cards in a pinch. Revisit and revise the spending plan as circumstances change, such as if you get a raise or have a child.

Keep your eye on the prize. If you find yourself straying from your spending plan, remind yourself why you pursued a household spending plan in the first place. "It's good to remember what you're trying to accomplish — what you're working toward," explains Parker. Rather than give up on the plan, revise it so it's easier to stick to.

Reward yourself and members of your household for their hard work sticking to the spending plan. Establish incentives for following the plan — a new book, dinner at a favorite restaurant, an outing to the movies, etc. A modest reward can go a long way.

Get assistance. One meeting with a financial planner can net you a professionally prepared cash flow analysis, plus budgeting ideas you may not have considered. Visit the Financial Planning Association's national database at www.plannersearch.org to find a personal finance expert near you.

Financial Planning Association (FPA) ©2024

Webinar Now Available:

Household and Individual Budgeting

This webinar will help enlighten & clarify how we manage our money, budget daily or annually. We will review key principles, the importance of living within our means, the value of a budget and to creating a safety & security account. In this session we will explore beliefs & mis-perceptions, the simple money principle and ways to manage and improve cash on hand.

Log-in any time this month to watch the webinar!

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What Exactly is Environmental Health?

You've heard of environmental health, but do you know what it really means? If not, you're far from alone!

Environmental health plays a crucial yet often overlooked role in our daily lives. It's about the interplay between our surroundings and our wellbeing, focusing particularly on how pollutants and chemicals affect us. As we navigate through streams of cars, swaths of plastic, and mazes of processed goods, understanding and reducing our chemical exposure becomes vital for a healthier life.

The air we breathe, the water we drink, and the homes we live in are often laced with unseen chemicals and pollutants. From industrial emissions and vehicular exhaust to household cleaners and pesticides, these substances can have profound effects on our health, contributing to respiratory issues, allergies, and even long-term diseases. But fear not! Taking steps to minimize these risks and enhance our environmental health is within reach.

- **Go Natural in Household Products:** Swap out harsh chemical cleaners for natural alternatives. Vinegar, baking soda, and lemon are not just old wives' tales; they're effective, eco-friendly cleaning agents.
- **Embrace Organic Foods:** Whenever possible, choose organic to reduce exposure to pesticides and chemicals. Wash fruits and vegetables thoroughly, or better yet, grow your own!
- **Improve Indoor Air Quality:** Regularly ventilate your home to reduce indoor pollutants. Houseplants can be natural allies in absorbing harmful substances and freshening the air.
- **Choose Safer Personal Care:** Opt for personal care products with fewer chemicals. Look for paraben-free, phthalate-free, and fragrance-free labels to reduce your daily chemical load.
- **Educate and Advocate:** Stay informed about environmental issues and support policies and practices that aim to reduce pollution and chemical exposure.

This Men's Health Month, let's shift the narrative. Let's celebrate strength in vulnerability, courage in seeking help, and pride in emotional resilience. By focusing on emotional health, we can support a future where men's wellbeing is holistic, encompassing both the physical and emotional spheres. Here's to a healthier, more emotionally connected world for all men.

Source: <https://newsinhealth.nih.gov/2016/12/making-healthier-home>



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Enjoying Summer Safely

Finding the Best Sunscreen for Your Skin Type

Summer is upon us, and hopefully, you are looking forward to time in the sunshine, soaking up some vitamin D and all the other benefits of spending time outdoors. However, before you pack your beach bag, it is essential to remember to bring sunscreen.

The sun's rays, while invigorating, can pose serious risks to your skin. Prolonged exposure to ultraviolet (UV) radiation can lead to premature aging, sunburn, and even skin cancer. Sunscreen acts as a barrier, protecting your skin from these harmful effects. It's not just about avoiding sunburn; it's about long-term skin health.

Choosing the right sunscreen for your skin type is crucial for adequate protection with minimal adverse side effects. So, here's a guide to help you find the best option for your skin type:

Oily or Acne-Prone Skin:

- Opt for non-comedogenic, oil-free formulas.
- Gel-based sunscreens can help reduce shine and prevent breakouts.

Dry Skin:

- Cream-based formulas provide additional moisture.
- Seek hydrating sunscreens with ingredients like hyaluronic acid or glycerin.

Sensitive Skin:

- Mineral-based sunscreens with zinc oxide or titanium dioxide are less likely to irritate.
- Look for products labeled as fragrance-free and hypoallergenic.

General Tips for All Skin Types:

- Always select a sunscreen with at least SPF 30.
- Ensure it offers broad-spectrum protection against both UVA and UVB rays.
- Apply 15 to 30 minutes before going outdoors to allow sunscreen to properly bind to your skin.
- Reapply every two hours, especially after swimming or sweating.
- Don't forget your lips! Use a lip balm with SPF to protect your lips from sun damage.

Source <https://www.byrdie.com/things-to-look-for-in-a-sunscreen>



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UV Safety Awareness Month

As July unfurls its sunny days and invites us to beaches, picnics, and hikes, it's the perfect time to spotlight UV Safety Awareness Month. This observance is not just a reminder of the sun's power but a call to action to protect ourselves against the harmful effects of ultraviolet (UV) rays. Understanding and respecting the sun's strength is crucial to enjoying the summer safely and healthily.

UV radiation from the sun is the main cause of skin cancer, the most common type of cancer in the United States and worldwide. However, it doesn't stop there. Excessive UV exposure can also lead to cataracts, weaken the immune system, and cause premature aging of the skin. The good news? Most of these conditions are preventable with proper sun protection.

Embrace the Shade: Seek shade, especially between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m., when the sun's rays are strongest. An umbrella, tree, or a canopy can be your best friend during peak hours.

Wear Protective Clothing: Long-sleeved shirts, pants, and wide-brimmed hats offer a great line of defense. You can also opt for clothing with a high Ultraviolet Protection Factor (UPF) for added safety.

Apply Broad-Spectrum Sunscreen: Use a broad-spectrum sunscreen with an SPF of 30 or higher. Apply generously and reapply every two hours, or after swimming or sweating, to maintain optimal protection.

Don't Forget Your Eyes: UV rays can harm your eyes too. Wear sunglasses with 100% UVA and UVB protection to shield your eyes and the delicate skin around them.

Stay Informed: Keep an eye on the UV index, which provides important information about daily sun intensity and necessary precautions.

As you enjoy the radiant summer days, remember that UV safety is a daily commitment. This July, let's pledge to be sun-smart, spreading awareness and protecting our skin, eyes, and overall health. Celebrate UV Safety Awareness Month by making sun protection a habit, ensuring that every summer day is both fun-filled and safe. Shine on, but shine responsibly!

Source: <https://www.aad.org/member/advocacy/promote/uv-awareness>

We know it is not always easy to juggle everything & realize simple tips can help provide a different approach.
Your EAP is here to help with family, work, health, well-being & legal issues.

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Chicken, Spinach & Feta Wrap

Ingredients

- 1/2 cup whole-milk plain strained (Greek-style) yogurt
- 1/4 cup crumbled feta cheese
- 2 tablespoons finely chopped oil-packed sun-dried tomatoes
- 1 tablespoon dried oregano
- 2 teaspoons grated lemon zest
- 1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1/2 teaspoon crushed red pepper
- 1/4 teaspoon ground pepper
- 2 cups shredded rotisserie chicken
- 4 (10-inch) whole wheat tortillas
- 4 cups packed fresh baby spinach

Directions

1. Stir yogurt, feta, sun-dried tomatoes, oregano, lemon zest, garlic powder, crushed red pepper and pepper together in a large bowl; mash with a fork until mostly smooth, about 1 minute. (Alternatively, process in a blender until creamy, 30 to 45 seconds.)
2. Fold in chicken, coating with the yogurt mixture.
3. Arrange tortillas on a work surface. Place 1 cup spinach and about 1/2 cup chicken mixture in a line in the center of each tortilla.
4. Fold bottom edge and side edges over the filling; roll up burrito-style. Cut into halves before serving.

Nutrition

Per Serving: 1. Wrap

Calories: 282 | Protein: 31g | Carbohydrates: 23g | Dietary Fiber: 2g | Saturated Fat: 3g | Sugar: 0g | Sodium: 534mg | Cholesterol: 84mg

Source: : <https://www.eatingwell.com/chicken-spinach-feta-wraps-8422309>

A Closer Look at Resilience: Practice Self-Compassion

Building resilience is a popular wellness topic. Almost anything that helps you develop physical and emotional strength, and the ability to face adversity and overcome it, can be lumped into this life skill. One resilience-building skill you may have overlooked or never heard mentioned is practicing self-compassion. Self-compassion is not just avoiding being self-critical or treating yourself with kindness and understanding like you would a friend. Its purpose is more far reaching. People who practice self-compassion are less overwhelmed by negative emotions when faced with adverse events. They develop more positive reflex responses. This mindset in turn links to an ability to maintain a balanced perspective, not lose their cool, and more easily troubleshoot problems. Positive self-talk habits are patterns of reacting to what we see and hear around us, so self-compassion will be a new skill if you frequently do not engage in positive self-talk. The action step of course is to avoid berating yourself when mistakes happen and try speaking to yourself kindly. Acknowledging that everyone makes mistakes and realizing daily life frustrations are inescapable surprises we all face are key. Ironically, practicing self-compassion is essential if your initial attempts to build this new habit of personal resilience don't come quickly. Keep trying.

He Swore He'd Stop Drinking

Seek support and guidance if you are living with a partner affected by an alcohol use disorder. As you focus on the substance user's behavior, a downward spiral of your health may begin, including neglect of your own physical, emotional, and mental health needs. Other areas of your life may then suffer. Neglecting self-care can lead to burnout, resentment, and a decline in overall well-being, making it tougher to intervene. Successful recovery of a substance use disorder often begins with the nonaddicted partner's awareness and determination to stop this downward cycle. A qualified professional or the EAP can explain how, offer resources, and help you get your sanity back.

What Neurodivergent Employees Want You to Know

Supporting neurodivergent employees to be healthy, happy, and productive is a growing focus in today's workplace. Neurodivergent individuals—those usually diagnosed as being on the autism spectrum—often have unique needs. Here's what they want you to know: 1) Learn about autism and neurodivergent worker issues and check your biases. 2) Understand each person is unique—we're not all the same. 3) Be clear, concise, and direct in your communication. 4) Ask about preferred methods of communication—oral or in writing. 5) Be patient in anticipating a reply or response to allow extra time to process information. 6) Be mindful of possible sensory issues pertaining to boundaries and personal space, loud sounds, and bright lights. 7) Understand social differences—small talk, eye contact, and social activities may be avoided. 8) Be specific and direct with feedback. 9) Seek out special skills. These might include our ability to stay focused, creativity, and problem-solving. By incorporating these practices, workplaces can become more inclusive and supportive of neurodivergent employees, allowing them to thrive and contribute fully to their teams. Learn more at the Association for Autism and Neurodiversity at www.aane.org.

Stress Tips from the Field: Make Stress Management Routine

Life naturally includes various forms of stress, whether from challenges, responsibilities, or unexpected events, but you don't have to feel stress before practicing stress management. Regular stress management practices can help you maintain a calmer state of mind, help prevent stress from building up, and allow you to handle challenges with greater ease. And stress management goes further. Effective stress management can enhance connections with family, friends, and colleagues. How? Reduced stress fosters greater patience, empathy, and presence in your interactions, promoting more harmonious and supportive relationships. Why? An improved emotional state fosters deeper connections, enhances communication, and helps resolve conflicts more amicably!



Parental Conflicts – Helping Kids Not Suffer

Follow these practices to reduce potentially harmful effects on kids when adult arguments happen: 1) Avoid personal attacks by focusing on the issues and avoiding personal insults or name-calling. 2) When disagreements are heated, strive for a calm and respectful tone. 3) Choose a private place and time to discuss sensitive issues. 4) DO: Demonstrate healthy ways of resolving conflicts (active listening, compromise, negotiating). 5) DO: Apologize and make amends—show it's normal to end on a good note after a conflict. 6) Offer reassurance that a conflict does not mean the household is unstable or children aren't loved. Tip: After a conflict, review these tips. You'll acquire greater ability to manage heated discussions in healthier ways. Learn more: talkingparents.com/parenting-resources/fighting-in-front-of-kids

Xylazine – Worsening the Fentanyl Crisis

A drug called xylazine, which is an animal tranquilizer, has been found mixed with the illicit opioid fentanyl in drug busts throughout North America. The Drug Enforcement Administration wants the public to be aware of this deadly mixture because it may undermine the effectiveness of life-saving opioid medication given to reverse an opioid overdose. Principally, this is Narcan®, a nasal spray available over the counter in places like drug stores, convenience stores, and online. Xylazine is not an opioid; hence drugs like Narcan® may not be effective, and it may undermine the overdose treatment. The message is don't give up on administering the intervention until emergency help arrives. Follow instructions of first responders.

Source: www.fda.gov/drugs/drug-safety-and-availability/fda-alerts-health-care-professionals-risks-patients-exposed-xylazine-illicit-drugs

Is the EAP for Me: “It’s Not Me, It’s My Coworkers”

If you're feeling stressed by interactions with coworkers or customers, the EAP can be a valuable resource. Many employees seek help from the EAP for this very reason, making it one of the most common concerns addressed. The EAP professional will guide you to focus on one or all of the three broad strategies that fit nearly all difficult employee situations: maintaining professionalism (staying calm, responding professionally, and keeping the focus on the work situation); setting boundaries (defining and communicating your limits regarding unacceptable behavior and assertively reinforcing them); and seeking the right kind of manager/organizational support, if needed. The goal is to help you create positive relationships and productivity allies among all those with whom you interact, and the EAP is the best source of help to make that happen.

Be a Better Listener at Work

At work, you will build stronger relationships, solve more problems, and help customers feel valued if you practice “active listening.” Active listening is a communication technique that demonstrates you are fully and effectively listening to another person. While listening, they know you understand what they are saying because you are reflecting their message and recognizing their verbal and nonverbal cues. Finally, you give feedback that reassures the speaker you have a mutual understanding of the discussion. So, here are the keys: Demonstrate attention, actively show understanding of what is being communicated, respond to nonverbal cues, validate the speaker's feelings by expressing empathy, and paraphrase what you heard.

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