DEALING WITH DIFFICULT AND DEMANDING STUDENTS: THEY ARE PEOPLE TOO!!!

What we will cover:

- Our perceptions of Difficult Students
- What are they really conveying to us?
- How do you deal with them?
- Sharing of Best Practices: This will involve YOU!

What are our perceptions of Difficult Students?

- Lazy person: “They waited to the last minute and now want me to respond with the utmost urgency.”
- Slow learner: “I have repeated myself for the 10th time and they don’t get it.”
- Momma’s Boy/Daddy’s Girl: “Now I have the parent calling me because they are not responsible enough to follow my instructions.”
- Repeat Offender: “What is he/she upset about now?”
What are they really conveying to us?

Top Five things they convey:
1. HELP! I want your help.
2. I DON'T UNDERSTAND. I am confused and unclear on the jargon.
3. BAD Customer Service Occurred. Here is my issue and my advice on corresponding.
4. I am giving you a SMOKE SCREEN about my issues. Other issues I am dealing with in my personal or work-related issues.
5. Here's an Opportunity to fix a mistake!

How do you deal with them?

✓ It Starts with YOU. (The Resident Expert)
  - Accept what you can and cannot control.
  - Realize your power.
  - Refuse to be a victim.
  - Resist seeking Revenge.
  - Consider what you contribute.
  - Model Success.

* This information was taken from Dealing with Difficult People: 83 Ways to Stay Calm, Composed, and in Control by Susan Fee

How do you deal with them? Cont'd....

✓ Communicate Assertively
  - Respect individual rights.
  - Own your message.
  - Confident the behavior, not the person.
  - Make your point without qualifying it.
  - Establish boundaries.
  - Maintain eye contact.
  - Monitor your Volume.

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How do you deal with them? Cont’d....

- Manage Your Emotions
  - Accept responsibility
  - Give yourself permission to feel.
  - Experience without JUDGING!
  - Avoid going to extremes.
  - Interrupt the cycle.

- Calm Angry Situations
  - Stay Composed
  - Seek to understand first.
  - Paraphrase to increase understanding.
  - Check perceptions.
  - Introduce facts carefully
  - Drop defensiveness.

- Reduce Stress
  - Set Reasonable goals.
  - Monitor your thoughts.
  - Listen to your body.
  - Learn when to say "No."
  - Let go of guilt.
  - Replace Unhealthy habits.
How do you deal with them? Cont’d....

- Rebuild Relationships (Whether you’re Dr. Phil or Oprah Winfrey)
  - Acknowledge Past Mistakes
  - Move Forward
  - Create a Mutual Plan
  - Share Expectations
  - Negotiate Boundaries
  - Build Trust
  - Commit Fully
  - Know when to let go

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What are you doing?

Please Share your Best Practices

Additional Reading Sources

- “Dealing with Difficult People: 83 Ways to Stay Calm, Composed, and in Control” Author Susan Fee
- “Dealing with Difficult People” Author Roberta Cava
- “10 Tips for Dealing with Difficult Employees” Author Deborah Centeno, Ph.D.

Thanks for allowing me to Share with you on Today!!!!!
Dealing With Difficult People

83 Ways to Stay Calm, Composed, and in Control

by Susan Fee
Introduction

Dealing with difficult people can be challenging! Their behavior is often offensive and condescending leaving you emotionally and physically drained, and distracting you from focusing on more important issues. You may end up feeling angry, resentful, and stressed. But, difficult people can also serve a positive purpose. Think of them as teachers, and the lessons they share are all about you. Every encounter teaches you about your own strengths, weaknesses, hot buttons, and boundaries. Once you learn the lesson, difficult people cease being a problem in your life.

You are a teacher too; you teach others how to treat you by what you allow. This is a powerful concept that is not intended to place blame or shame, but rather to reinforce that you have the power to change your outcome! There’s no guarantee that somebody will stop being difficult, but you get to decide whether that person will negatively impact your life.

Deciding to take responsibility for your outcome is the first step. Difficult people will continue to cross boundaries and chisel away at your self esteem until you decide it’s no longer acceptable. Use the tips in this booklet to take back control, communicate more effectively, and liberate yourself from the difficult people in your life!
About the Author

Susan Fee is a licensed counselor and serves as adjunct faculty for several colleges teaching interpersonal communication, public speaking, and psychology. She is also a corporate trainer and executive business coach offering customized programs on communication skills, conflict resolution, and managing your emotions.

Susan is the author of Positive First Impressions: 83 Ways to Establish Confidence, Competence, and Trust and My Roommate Is Driving Me Crazy! Solve Conflicts, Set Boundaries, and Survive the College Roommate from Hell (Adams Media).

For more information on Susan’s services, books, and products visit www.susanfee.com or www.myroommateisdrivingmecrazy.com.

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It Starts With You

1. Accept what you can and cannot control. The more you attempt to control the actions of others, the more frustrated and helpless you will feel. The only person you have control over is you.

2. Realize your power. You can influence any relationship by how you choose to respond, even without the cooperation of the other person. The tiniest of changes creates a ripple effect causing others to respond differently too.

3. Refuse to be a victim. Blaming others for your misery means you have also made them responsible for your happiness. Instead of waiting to change until other people do, reclaim your power and determine your own outcome.

4. Resist seeking revenge. Trying to “get back” or cause other people to suffer keeps you connected to them in negative ways. harboring resentment requires you to stay angry and is ultimately self-destructive. Instead, seek to better yourself.

5. Ask a different question. If you want a different result, ask a different question. Asking questions like, “Why does this person keep doing this to me?” keeps you thinking like a victim. A more powerful question is, “What can I do for myself right now to improve my situation?”
Shift your focus. Constantly complaining about difficult people (even when they are not around) takes a lot of energy, eventually leaving you depleted. Instead, focus on people and activities that give you energy.

Consider what you contribute. No relationship is one-sided and no one can push your buttons unless you reveal your control panel! What you allow, you teach.

Pay attention to patterns. Are you a magnet for difficult people? Recurring life patterns are a reflection of your communication habits. They can help teach you what to do differently so history does not repeat itself.

Model success. Notice when you deal effectively and positively with others. What changes when you are around difficult people? Monitor the differences in your communication style and consistently emphasize the skills you use during successful interactions.

Communicate Assertively

Respect individual rights. Assertive communicators respect their own rights and the rights of others. Speaking assertively is taking ownership of your feelings and requests. Aggressive communicators violate the rights of others by blaming and refusing to listen. Passive communicators allow their rights to be ignored by not speaking up.

Own your message. Starting sentences with “you” as in, “You make me so mad!” comes across as accusatory and can make the other person react defensively. Instead, own your message with “I” as in, “When this occurs, I feel angry.”

Establish boundaries. Determine what treatment you consider to be acceptable and unacceptable and consistently communicate it through your words and actions. If you never share your boundaries with others they will not know when they have crossed the line.

Confront the behavior, not the person. Separate the person from the problem by defining what he or she is doing (or not doing) that is causing difficulty. Behavior is a choice and can be adapted whereas expecting people to change their core personality is unreasonable.

Make your point without qualifying it. Phrases such as, “Maybe I don’t know what I’m talking about,” or “This may be a stupid question,” undermine your abilities in the minds of others and make you sound less confident.

Eliminate fillers. Words such as, “um,” “like,” or “you know,” muddle your message and make you sound unsure of yourself. Pause in place of using fillers to command attention.
Drop tag questions. Ending sentences with, “Okay?” or “Is that alright?” weakens your message. Ask for feedback by saying, “That’s my opinion, what’s yours?”

Kick “but.” Saying, “I respect you but…” sounds contradictory because “but” cancels out whatever precedes it. Deliver a consistent message by replacing “but” with “and” as in: “I respect you and I need some things to change.”

Stop trying and start doing. The word “try” communicates a lack of commitment. You’ll be taken seriously when you stop trying and start doing.

Speak at the proper rate. Fast talkers can be perceived as being nervous or dishonest, while slow talkers can be perceived as unintelligent. Speak at a rate of approximately 150 words per minute. Figure out your rate by reading 150 words from a magazine out loud and timing yourself.

Monitor your volume. Speaking too softly detracts from your message and communicates weakness. Speak loudly enough so that people can hear you the first time, but not so loudly that it makes them back away.

Avoid uptalk. Statements delivered with an upward pitch sound as if you are questioning yourself. This confusing way of speaking is referred to as “uptalk” or “valley girl.” Speak with authority by ending statements with a downward pitch.

Match your words with your actions. When speech and body language are inconsistent, we believe what we see over what we hear. Actions really do speak louder than words.

Maintain eye contact. Look directly into the eyes of the person you are addressing. Shifting your gaze anywhere else makes your message less believable.

Perfect your posture. Stand and sit up straight. Posture speaks volumes about your confidence level.

Manage Your Emotions

Accept responsibility. As an adult, no one can make you feel a certain way without your permission. Blaming others for “making” you feel guilty, angry, or sad is an indication that you’ve turned your power over to them.

Give yourself permission to feel. Unexpressed emotions build until they rule you in unintended ways. You may become irritable and tense, cry unexpectedly, or snap at others. Acknowledging your emotions helps you stay in control by letting you choose when and how to release them.

Experience without judging. Emotions are neither good nor bad, neither right nor wrong. Feeling a certain way does not make you a good or bad person. Emotions are simply an honest assessment of what you are experiencing in the moment.
Use the information. Feelings are powerful resources to help guide you in decisions regarding comfort level, personal safety, motivation, impulse control, empathy, and relationships. Pay attention to their messages.

Identify the feeling. Experiencing a flood of emotions can be overwhelming. Focus on the most intense feeling, describe it, and define it as best you can. Once you name it, you can begin to manage it.

Acknowledge early warnings. Ignoring uncomfortable feelings does not make them go away, only grow more intense. Pay attention to your body’s early warning signals like stomach flutters, racing heart, muscle tension, and the whispers of instinct.

Recognize triggers. What happens right before you become emotionally charged? Knowing what triggers your hot buttons will teach you when to interrupt your pattern of response and do something differently before you feel overwhelmed.

Avoid going to extremes. Behavior that is repeated excessively to the point of reaching extremes may be an attempt to mask uncomfortable feelings. If you are exercising to the point of exhaustion, overspending, or working too much, ask yourself, “What feeling am I trying to avoid right now?”

Respond responsibly. No matter what you are feeling, you always have a choice in how to respond. Feeling angry is not an excuse to express it in ways that may be harmful to yourself or others.

Interrupt the cycle. Creating space between recognizing your feelings and responding to them will help you feel more in control. Take a deep breath, go for walk, exercise in moderation, listen to music, or do anything else that gives you time to choose the best response.

Concentrate on deep breathing. Calm down immediately by shifting your attention to deep breathing. Inhale through your nose, expanding your diaphragm (your belly will push out slightly, but your shoulders should not move). Exhale through your mouth, doubling the time it took for your inhale.

Write in a journal. Putting your feelings down on paper provides distance and a new perspective. Write the truth without worrying how other people might react. This is a private journal for your eyes only. Keep it in a safe place.

Calm Angry Situations

Stay composed. The most effective way to de-escalate an angry person is to stay calm. Matching anger with anger incites more of the same and signals to the other person how to push your buttons.

Seek to understand first. Listen without judgment or interruption until you fully understand the other person’s
message. Responding too soon will fuel the anger.

39 Paraphrase to increase understanding. Once a person is done talking, restate his or her main concerns to make sure you understand.

40 Check perceptions. People become angry when they perceive a situation to be unfair, feel a loss of control, sense fear, or experience deep frustration. Your perception of reality may differ dramatically from the other person’s, so make no assumptions.

41 Offer empathy. See it through the eyes of the other person and attempt to understand what he or she is experiencing. Even if you have shared similar experiences, avoid saying, “I know how you feel.” You’ll never know exactly how someone else is feeling. Instead say, “It sounds like you’re feeling frustrated,” or “I can only imagine how you must be feeling.”

42 Introduce facts carefully. As emotional intensity increases, one’s ability to reason decreases, making it difficult to listen to the facts. Telling angry people they are being irrational is wasted energy and can even escalate the situation. Offer empathy first, facts second.

43 Drop defensiveness. Becoming defensive takes the focus off the angry person and puts it on you. Soon, you become the problem instead of the other person’s behavior.

44 Step aside. Angry remarks can feel like verbal daggers. Instead of acknowledging them, imagine stepping aside and letting them hit the ground. If you catch the dagger and throw it back, the battle continues.

45 Encourage time-limited venting. Blowing off steam can be beneficial, but if it becomes an unending rant, angry people can grow increasingly agitated because they start obsessing. Limit their venting to two minutes before narrowing concerns.

46 Narrow concerns. Once a person vents, narrow down many concerns to the most important by asking, “Out of everything you mentioned, what’s the number one thing you want to focus on solving right now?”

47 Clarify intentions. Help contain unfocused ranting by asking a person to clarify the intention of the conversation. What outcome is he or she hoping for?

48 Focus on the future. Avoid dwelling on the past since you can’t change it. Focus on what needs to change in the future in order to prevent further problems.

49 Apologize when appropriate. Admit mistakes immediately. Sincere apologies require accepting responsibility for your actions without making excuses, acknowledging how your actions affected others, and committing to specific changes for the future.
Handle Threats

50 Take threats seriously. Threats are a way of instilling fear through intimidation. Examples include comments or notes regarding your physical safety, job security, harming others, or property damage. Do not bother confirming whether the action was intended as a threat. What matters is how it made you feel.

51 Report the behavior. Not every threat will be acted upon, but most acts of retribution or violence begin as threats. Document and report all threats to the proper authorities.

52 Maintain an appropriate distance. Touching an angry person or approaching too quickly can signal an attack, escalating threats to a physical level.

53 Get support. Never put yourself in a situation where you are alone with someone who is making threats. Attempting to appease a person by agreeing to meet alone is dangerous and reinforces the threatening behavior.

54 Have an exit strategy. Maintain access to an exit and know how you will leave the situation if necessary.

55 Allow the other person to save face. Challenging threats increases the likelihood a person will act on them in order to avoid shame and embarrassment. Allow the individual to save face (escape embarrassment) in the moment by focusing on problem solving rather than drawing attention to the threat.

Direct the conversation. A statement followed immediately by a question allows you to assert your boundaries while offering a way to save face. For example, “I am willing to listen to you and problem solve as long as the threats stop now. What issue do you want to discuss first?” Note that if you only make a statement, it will come off as a threat.

Reduce Stress

57 Set reasonable goals. Even though dealing with difficult people can be stressful, it can also motivate you to make positive changes. Start by setting reasonable goals. Limit conversations, phone calls, e-mails, and topics you are willing to discuss with them.

58 Listen to your body. Unhealthy levels of stress can take a physical toll. Examples include headaches, stomach upset, muscle tension, reoccurring injuries, hair loss, or disruptions in eating and sleep patterns. These symptoms are your body’s warning signals to make changes now.

59 Monitor your thoughts. Obsessing about people and situations that are stressful leads to more stress because what you focus on expands. Think about what you want more of in your life and what you can do to achieve it.

60 Align values with actions. Determine what you value in life and support it with behavior. Saying you believe one thing and then doing the opposite creates stress. If you say you value your well-being, take actions to support it.
Learn when to say, “No.” Every time you say yes in order to please others, you are saying no to yourself.

Let go of guilt. What are the reasons for your guilt? If it’s about something you regret, then apologize and behave differently in the future. If you are feeling guilty for not living up to the image and expectations others have determined for you, let it go.

Choose friends wisely. Determine the people you want in your life by how you feel after being with them. Do you feel better or worse? Associating with people who make you feel worse only adds to your stress.

Turn off technology. Information overload keeps you from truly decompressing. Go one day without turning on your phone, TV, radio, or computer and see what happens.

Engage in hobbies. Remind yourself of what you like to do that brings you joy, comfort, and satisfaction. Usually, the more stressed you become, the less you engage in such activities. Making time for hobbies will help you feel more balanced.

Discover new passions. Continuing to grow and learn keeps you excited about life. Mastering new skills boosts confidence. When you feel good about yourself, you attract more positive people into your life.

Schedule a massage. Treat yourself to this luxury, it’s worth every penny. You’ll feel pampered, relaxed, and rejuvenated.

Replace unhealthy habits. Overindulging in food, alcohol, or drugs may offer temporary relief, but ends up making you feel worse physically and emotionally. Replace unhealthy habits with improved nutrition and increased exercise.

Create a stress-emergency kit. Prepare a personalized kit of items that you can count on for an instant mood adjustment. Examples include favorite pictures, CDs, inspiring quotes, scented candles, phone number of a good friend, or small art/craft projects.

Volunteer. The quickest way to make a difference in your life is to help make a difference in someone else’s. Choose a cause that supports your values; invest your energy and watch it multiply in ways you never expected.

Adopt a pet. There’s nothing like the unconditional love of an animal.

Spend time in nature. Get inspired by nature’s resiliency. Despite repeated exposure to fires, harsh weather, and human destruction, it still manages to survive and thrive. So can you.

Talk to a counselor. Chronic stress can make you feel like you’re in a black hole with no lifeline. Talking to a counselor can help you learn ways to help yourself.
Forgive. Holding a grudge anchors you in the past while forgiving allows you to move forward. It’s a gift you give yourself, not the other person. Forgiveness does not excuse past actions or mean that you will forget, only that you release yourself from dwelling on past anger.

**Rebuild Relationships**

Gain mutual support. Both people must want to rebuild a damaged relationship and commit to making changes. If you are the only one willing to do this, go directly to the last tip.

Acknowledge past mistakes. The best predictor of future behavior is past behavior. In order for the relationship pattern to change, past mistakes must be acknowledged.

Move forward. Once mistakes have been addressed, do not dwell on the past or use it as ammunition in moments of weakness. Focus on how you want things to be different in the future.

Create a mutual plan. Change requires actively choosing new ways to interact. Mutually create a plan for what you will do differently to prevent another breakdown.

Share expectations. Relationships derail when expectations are assumed rather than communicated. Describe expectations in terms of behavior so that each person understands what the other is thinking.

Negotiate boundaries. Discuss what behavior is fair and what’s off-limits. Establish consequences for actions that cross the line. If you continue to spend time with a person who treats you poorly, you teach that the behavior is acceptable.

Build trust. The only way to build trust is to demonstrate consistent behavior over time.

Commit fully. Improving bad relationships is not easy, so you should expect challenges and setbacks. Both individuals must choose to commit fully, exploring every option before calling it quits.

Know when to let go. Not every relationship with a difficult person can be saved. If you reach a point where you are investing more energy and effort than you could ever hope to receive in return, it’s time to cut ties and go your separate ways.
10 Tips to Promote YOUR Business with this Booklet!

(It can even be customized for you.)

1. Use this booklet for staff trainings to improve customer relations and increase sales.

2. Decrease potential conflicts, stress, and employee turnover by giving every new hire a copy of this booklet.

3. Include this booklet with your product or services as a value-added bonus.

4. Create a unique product sales piece by customizing this booklet to promote your business and purchasing a licensing agreement from Susan Fee.

5. Give this booklet as an incentive for completing a questionnaire or survey.

6. Offer this booklet as a gift to the first “X” amount of people who enter a drawing or come to your store.

7. Provide this booklet free with any purchase during a specific time, with a certain purchase amount, or when opening a new account.

8. Encourage trade show and convention traffic by offering this booklet at your booth.

9. Provide copies of this booklet to people and organizations that can refer business to you.

10. Package this booklet with a note thanking a client or individual for helping you.