

Pondering Point

With 6 billion people in the world, we are bound to run into difficult people. They might be people who are negative, people who oppose our ideas, people who anger us, simply do not like us – or for whatever reason, make it hard for us to get from point A to point B. What makes them so “difficult”? We do; we give them that title. Until we decide to label them as such, they are just regular people. **Dealing with “difficult people” can be emotionally taxing and unpleasant.**

When we run into a situation with a “difficult person”, we may lose all sense of self and at times even get defensive. Often, these people are not aware that they are doing anything to upset us. Other times, they are looking to get an emotional reaction from us. It is our job to keep our heads clear. Once our emotions are out of the way, we can look at the positive aspects of these experiences and benefit.

These situations can force us to learn more about ourselves. We may find that the person causing friction is the other person, is us or is the combination of both. Here is opportunity to celebrate our growth in every situation, even those that show us the kind of person we don't want to be. **The choice is ours to learn from those experiences and to realize the affects those actions have on others.**

What makes a person DIFFICULT?

How do you handle a difficult person?



Imagine... finding a way to be grateful to those people that have tried to make life difficult.

— From Pondering to Practice —

Activity

When you are with a difficult person, these tips may help.

- When you see someone go into attack mode or get extremely defensive, recognize that it's useless to argue with them as they are emotional and truly can't hear what you are saying.
- Realize that the person may be feeling very insecure about something.
- Don't continue to push their buttons because it may only get worse.
- If the person is under stress, see if it is possible to reschedule your conversation until a calmer time.
- Keep your own sense of self-confidence.
- Speak up for yourself. Don't allow yourself to be verbally abused.
- If they are often overly defensive or often attacking others, you may want to reevaluate the relationship and, if possible move on.

Self Reflection Activity

Think about the last run-in you had with a difficult person.

- *Why do I label this person as difficult?*
- *Can I possibly be the difficult one?*
- *What were their expectations of me?*
 - *What do they want from me?*
- *Were their expectations or requests valid?*
- *How did they make me feel during our conversation?*
- *What did I do to keep my emotions in check?*
 - *What could I have done better?*
- *What did I learn from my experience?*
 - *How can I avoid being difficult to other people?*

“Eventually we will find (mostly in retrospect, of course) that we can be very grateful to those people who have made life most difficult for us.”

- Ayya Khema, (Born to Jewish parents in Berlin, Ayya escaped Germany and survived for 4 years in a Japanese prison-of-war camp until it was liberated by the Americans in 1944)