

Are You Difficult to Get Along With?

Objective

To identify ways to respect others and improve your relationships.

You Should Know

Relationships can be hard work, and ideally each person is capable of compromising, communicating clearly, listening attentively, trusting fully, and being kind. Unfortunately, not everyone is capable of healthy, balanced relating. You may find it difficult to trust others, or you might withdraw when you find yourself getting too emotionally involved. Maybe you have a hard time understanding and listening to the needs and feelings of others.

Which of the following statements describes you? Check all that apply.

- People use what I say against me.
- I have difficulty considering other peoples' points of view.
- People have told me I am self-absorbed or selfish.
- Most people are untrustworthy.
- I never feel like I am good enough.
- I often consider revenge when I have been treated unfairly.
- People have told me I am argumentative and confrontational.
- I am much more interesting and important than other people.
- I sometimes use passive-aggressive behavior to get my needs met (for example, I use "the silent treatment" or frequently blame others for my mistakes).
- I sometimes use attention-seeking behavior to get my needs met (for example, threatening to harm or kill myself or exaggerating stories to gain sympathy).
- I feel threatened when my partner/friend/family member spends time with others and gives them attention.
- I have a difficult time listening when other people talk unless it somehow affects me.

Review the statements you checked off, and describe how these behaviors might negatively impact your relationships.

Are there any behaviors you might consider changing? If yes, which ones? If no, why not?

What to Do

In healthy relationships, your feelings – and those of others – are equally respected. You are comfortable saying say “no” to each other, and you are able to ask for what you want and need. You treat each other with respect and dignity. You are able to see other peoples’ points of view and to understand their feelings.

The letters G – I – V – E are an easy way to remember steps you can take to improve your relationships:

G: Be **Gentle** in your interactions with others. Avoid critical comments, attacks, and threats when you are angry or uncomfortable.

I: Show **Interest** in others. Be attentive and listen to others. Do not interrupt or change the subject.

V: Validation. Show a nonjudgmental understanding of what the other person is feeling, thinking, or experiencing. You might say, “I understand how you must feel,” or “I can see this is very important to you.”

E: Use an **Easy** manner with others. Try to be easy-going and use humor. Avoid bullying others or making them feel guilty.

Now, try incorporating one or more of the GIVE techniques next time you are with someone who frustrates, upsets, or annoys you. Use the chart below to track what happens.

Situation	The GIVE Technique You Used	How You Used the Technique (what you said/did)	How the Person Reacted	How it Made You Feel

Which of the GIVE techniques was most difficult for you? Explain.

What can you do the next time you are faced with a challenging situation? Which GIVE technique(s) will you most likely use?

Describe other situations where the GIVE method could be useful (for example, the workplace, a family gathering, or a phone conversation with a friend)?

Reflections on This Exercise

How helpful was this exercise? _____

(1 = not very helpful, 5 = moderately helpful, 10 = extremely helpful)

What did you learn from this exercise?
