

5 Steps to Dealing with Any Difficult Person in Your Life

By Hervé Da Costa, Get-It-Done Coach

Is there a difficult person that has become a problem in your life? : A moody boss, an angry partner, an attacking mother-in-law, a negative colleague. They cannot be ignored any longer. When it is too much, it is too much. Here are 5 powerful steps to deal with that now.

1- Be self-honest and find out what got you there in the 1st place

Why is this happening to you? This can hard for you. Ask yourself: What am I doing wrong? What would I do next time? What am I not willing to do? Am I refusing to acknowledge something? Am I the real problem? In what way? What am I gaining from this crazy situation, really?

Be honest, stop fooling yourself or this will happen to you over and over.

2 – Evaluate their needs, evaluate your needs

A difficult person has a problem: they need something from you or something you are doing is a problem or a threat for them. Find out what it is. You may have a partner weighing over 300 pounds, watching TV all day and asking you to watch TV with them... all day! He/She may be afraid of your success and feeling abandoned. A boss might be critical because he does not get what you do all day. Find out.

Now, evaluate the cost to you. Is it dragging you down? Are you willing to take decisive action? If not, wait for the pain to become unbearable, read this later. If yes, take a deep breath and read on.

3 – Don't try changing them, give them gutsy feedback

You cannot change anyone; however make them understand clearly what they do, how they do it, when they do it and what the impact is on you. Your feedback needs to be very specific. It looks like: “*Patrick, when you screamed at me yesterday, I felt abused and disrespected. This is not acceptable to me.*” Don't say “*Patrick, you are being a jerk*”. It will not help. Find your guts and give feedback. There is no way around it. You may need to say it for the length of your relationship with that person.

4 – Develop and learn your options

Knowledge will help you get out of this with less emotional anguish. Refine your plan of action. Ask people, ask a coach, inform yourself, and do your homework. Evaluate the scope of the problem and its impact. This is hard work. Evaluate each option: what do you gain or lose? Be thorough and creative. Do not act in anger and patiently prepare. You are sharpening your weapons. Re-do step 1 through 3. Doing that may simply stop it there. Good because step five is to be used when all else has failed.

5 – Declare war!

You have done your homework courageously. You are still not seeing progress. Now, it is time to declare war. I mean battle, no prisoners, no mercy, and to the very nasty end. Drop a big stone on that animal behavior. There is no stopping, no regrets, no more self reflection. You are letting them know clearly that it is not OK with you and why. This is about your survival and you are simply making yourself the most important person in your life. This may be a painful process; it may be about separation or going to court. When it is done, take time to grieve and take care of yourself. Then celebrate your courage. Amazing job!

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