



# No People Problems!

By Rob Orloff

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## About the Author

Rob Orloff wrote his ebook to show his readers the best ways that he has found to deal with people in common personal or business situations.

Almost all of us have problems dealing with some people at times.

Rob feels that this is very important and that his ebook can help anyone to make improvements with simple strategies and a little effort.

Rob says, "I am not any kind of expert but I've always done fairly well at starting and maintaining good, strong business and personal relationships.

"Everyone hits bumps in this area at times and the consequences can be really serious and long-lasting."

"My book can help people prepare for their encounters by showing them what has been successful for me and many other people of different backgrounds."

"I just share workable suggestions and some background information which I researched. Some suggestions are well-known, while others are less common, and they are all worth considering. My ebook lets the readers work out which suggestions they believe are most likely to help them in various situations and prepare for the various situations in advance."

"That can help them achieve better outcomes in the future. I hope that many people will also use some suggestions from my book to improve and strengthen connections which they feel are showing any signs of strain."

"Sometimes, getting a fresh point of view helps us to make a breakthrough which we may have wanted but had not been able to bring about."

"My book is based on my own experience and research, which the reader can get tips from when they may need them. I have gained a lot of benefits which would probably not have come my way if I hadn't consciously worked to improve how I dealt with other people. Some things, which I thought were attracting people I wanted to be closer to were probably having the opposite effect."

"I hope this will help you just as much as it has helped me."

## Introduction

I hope that you will find my ebook helpful even if you are already fairly good in your personal and business dealings.

Almost every one of us has areas where we believe our skills can be improved and there is no more important area of activity for any of us than how we deal with and are dealt with by other people.

I think there is a good chance there are some ideas and tips which might be new to you, at least in the way that I suggest that you apply them.

I focus on simple, straight-forward methods because they, in my experience, are most likely to achieve lasting and worthwhile results.

I believe these tips include many ways that will provide positive results if applied in the right situations.

There are many "tricks" which can get some results fairly quickly but may cause problems later on when their use becomes known.

I believe that many tactics which work for one person in a particular situation are not always as successful when somebody who has a different background and personality tries it for themselves. SO, I ask that you read the whole book and then look at those suggestions which most closely fit your own personality, needs and background. But, don't ignore the other ideas because you may find that some can be adapted to bring more benefits to you,

I believe that my book can help you by laying out many of the factors involved so you can consider them when you are not under immediate emotional, and possibly physical, pressure.

I have included some information and suggestions about some relevant issues such as motivation and dealing with stress because these are things which affect many people in some way that can make us more likely to have conflict or other problems in our personal and business relationships.

And, they can also seriously affect our ability to get good results when we try to make improvements in those same vital relationships.

## Techniques

There are many ways which we can help to manage our own stress.

Here are some which I have heard good reports about or successfully used myself.

Your results will probably be different from other people.

Some techniques may not suit you at all.

Don't go too far out of your comfort zone unless you start to see progress or at least some signs of positive effects being likely from the method you decide to try.

### *Focus on what's Important*

Our first question might be, "Am I currently putting my efforts and resources into any tasks which do not have value to me, just because they may have had in the past?" More simply, "Am I doing or supporting with my personal resources (which could be better used elsewhere) any projects which I don't need to be done?"

There can be things which are worth the time we put into them even though there is no direct measurable benefit.

They could be things which give us enjoyment, build better relationships (family, social and business) or give us a clear, relaxing break from what we do and even think about for most of the time.

Relaxation and fun are good for our spiritual well-being and actually do improve our ability to achieve better results in whatever work we do.

Carefully consider all your commitments. You may decide that some commitments you have are costing too much time, energy or other resources. Maybe your circumstances and priorities have changed since you started doing a particular task and you may find you can redirect that effort to another task with more benefits than you currently get.

When you survey your current situation, you may find that some things could, and even should, be done by other people.

You may have started doing them because you wanted to help someone for a limited time and kept doing it when they never seemed willing to take it on themselves again.

When we feel that we are doing something which is costing us too much in money or other resources (or where our efforts are taken for granted), that can affect our attitude and self image negatively to the point where it degrades our general enjoyment of life.

You may still want to take on part of the task, but get some help with it. Or, you may be at the point where you feel you need to pass it over to someone else entirely.

Ask yourself, "Could I ask someone to help me with something or would doing the activity as part of a group improve the results and my enjoyment of the activity?"

A friend had been doing the flowers for her church for several years, but was finding it harder as she got older. She felt that her enjoyment and the time she had for her other activities suffered.

But, she hadn't wanted to ask anyone to take over, or even to share the responsibility, because she worried that nobody would come on board and she would be obligated to continue.

Also, my friend was afraid that some people would say she was deserting the responsibility despite her years of enthusiastic effort and fenerous donation of flowers.

When she mentioned it at a committee meeting, she got strong support. The other members said they were ready to help in whatever way suited her best.

They admired the work she had done and her flowers. They worried that she was under strain from the work but hadn't wanted to make any comment which made her feel under any sort of pressure to change unless that was really what she wanted.

The main point really is that anyone in the group, with everyone's best



interests at heart, could have saved a lot of worry if they had just asked in a meeting or privately whether she wanted some help.

Many of us want to help but we hesitate to ask personal questions of others because we don't want to seem intrusive. If you can help someone, make the offer privately or at sometime when you feel it would be appropriate.

And, many of us don't ask for help because we fear that we might be misunderstood or the help we need may be refused. If you need help, ask a friend or family member, or contact an organization in your area.

Don't wait for someone to find out you need help, even if it is just a sympathetic ear.

You will find that most people are as willing to help you as you are to offer help to others.

### **Mind Movies**

When some people are preparing for an important meetin, whether social or business, they find it helpful to consider the possibilities and then run a mental movie of possible scenarios, so that they can decide what will be their best approach.

Then, they use the mental movie which ends with their preferred outcome to prepare for their encounter with that particular person or group.

This is like practicing a sporting technique. You are making yourself familiar with every necessary move and reinforcing the message in your subconscious that you are fully capable of achieving the result you desire.

In fact, this is acknowledged by many recognized athletes as an essential part of their preparation for contests and also as proven support for improving and sustaining their ability to perform the routines they depend on in each contest they have.

### **Refocusing**

Sometimes, we come to a point in our thinking about a problem or potential situation that we are unable to think of any good ideas which we might use.

Sometimes that might be because we are overwhelmed to some extent by the amount of detailed information we have gathered about the project or we may just have no idea about which action we should take to have the best result for us and those we support.

If for some very good reason, we cannot get advice from anyone else, we can change our focus on the problem very simply.

Just choose a time and place where you will be undisturbed and unobserved.

Relax but remain alert.

Now, imagine that you are a knowledgeable and capable friend and that you have been asked to review the particular situation.

This simple, imaginary change in focus can help you remove your personal constraints from your thinking about that subject.

Instead of looking at you and your situation from inside yourself, as you did with the mind movies I explained above, you are looking from outside.

That will usually give you a more unbiased view of all the factors involved.

### ***Refocusing #2***

Another way of refocusing which is often helpful when we cannot see our way forward to a certain objective is to imagine that we have achieved our goal.

Then, from that perspective, we start to think back through the steps which got us to the successful conclusion. They are often easier to visualize from the summit of the mountain, rather than from those very low foothills where we are currently, with all the pressure we are feeling.

### **Your Mind Can Visualize it and You Can Achieve it!**

The biggest barrier for some people when they try to use this proven technique is that it is very hard for them to be that imaginative. They cannot surrender their personal control. However, a few tries will usually put holes in that barrier and the results will probably encourage developing the knack behind this method.

It is also likely that your newly minted connection to your subconscious will

provide other insights in the future which will repay the effort and time you had to invest to achieve it.

### **Remove Bad Memories**

An interesting variation on the mind movie technique which I explained before is creating a movie in your mind which may help you to remove some of the strength of a memory which is troubling you.

Past regrets and concerns can have a negative effect on our current self-image and our confidence about what success we might achieve in the future in those areas which relate to that memory.

This tip was suggested by a well-known author of self-help books years ago. We could probably take this a bit further with cheap modern technology.

The original suggestion was to create a simple movie like before but extend its scope.

The movie would show us a movie containing the details of the troubling memory.

After the details of the memory were shown, the movie would start to buckle and burn until every trace of it was entirely destroyed.

Then, the author suggested that we ran this imaginary movie again.

When the memory was shown we froze the image on the screen and then mentally crushed the whole screen into a tiny pellet and threw it away.

If you wanted to, I think you could make the actual movie with free computer programs on almost any computer.

But, I think it would be better to keep the old memory as an image just in our imagination. "Crush" it, "burn" it and throw it away.

Then, make an inspirational movie about our achievements, our aspirations or those things which we enjoy most in our lives.

Put the movie as a screensaver on our computer and watch it every day.

If you can't produce a movie with the equipment you own, you could use a program like the free IrfanView to make a slideshow on any Windows based

computer.

I know that can be helpful and enjoyable because that's something I did myself.

You can also make attractive motivational videos at low cost or even for free online at <http://www.animoto.com/>

The free videos are limited to 30 seconds but you can make as many as you like.

Their fees are low for the Pro version which allows longer videos and a wider range of other options. These can be use for motivational and other videos or even short video greetings which you can share with others.

### **I "Prescribe" Relax!**

Time to relax is an essential requirement to maintain our health and have good communication with the people around us. I feel that we have mostly forgotten how too but we would start improving our ability to do so if we realized the benefits we miss out on by letting stress rule our lives and ruin our futures.

If you don't look after your own health, it will cost you more money, you will have more and bigger disappointments, and you will be older sooner.

### **Most Important Entries in Your Diary**

I suggest that you include as many as possible of the milestones in the lives of all members of your family as **essential appointments**.

We all have to decide at times whether we give higher priority to another commitment or go to the event which the family member is involved in.

You can get someone to record the event for you. While you are all still together, that might seem to be good enough for looking at when you want to try to bring the event to mind years later.

But, truly, there is nothing that can compensate you for actually missing their first school concert, fishing trip or ..... (fill in the rest yourself) if you had any chance of being there.

When you have the memory created at the event in your own mind, it can be recalled at any time – no special equipment needed.

And that memory can help you to remember when the work gets hard, the real reasons that you are doing it and that can be a great inspiration which helps you to succeed.

## **What Causes People to Become Stressed?**

In this section, I want to list some of the things which commonly cause many of us to start to develop stress.

I hope that examining these things may help you to be able to handle the actual events better

### **Possible Bad Outcomes**

Many people are not stressed about what is happening but what might happen.

If there is something you hope won't happen:

- Questions which might be asked in an exam, interview or other future event.
- Bad results of a medical or other test.
- Being denied a raise or promotion.
- Being refused a loan

Just becoming upset or hoping that you will be able to avoid the results is unrealistic.

The stress which you create for yourself in the time leading to that event will probably cause any negative outcome to have much greater impact on you because you will be less able to cope mentally and physically.

These situations may cause stress for people during their school years. And, being unable to deal effectively with that stress can cause problems which continue to affect them throughout their whole lives.

The core problem is that they have allowed themselves to accept a possible negative outcome as almost inevitable and started to suffer from its potential effects too soon. If they look realistically at the thing they are worrying about, they will see that they still have time to take action before it reaches a climax.

They can get more information or take some action which will help them to influence and deal with whatever actually happens.

Really, the only practical strategy is to do what you can to be prepared to deal with the actual outcome in the time before the event.

Just thinking about those questions will make you feel uneasy and could build up the potential harm which you only *think* might befall you if you are confronted with the event.

Taking direct action, however limited you may think your ability is, to prepare for the possibility is more likely to produce a good result for you. When you direct your focus at the actual problem, instead of focusing on the worst possible consequences, you enlist a powerful ally – your subconscious! If you focus on pain, it will prepare for pain. If you focus on positive action, the under-used 85% of your brain is alerted to help.

It is an established fact that stress, whether due to real or imagined pressure, will have an ongoing effect on your self-image and your health.

If you worry about the possibilities for days or even longer, you might suffer more from that than the actual event. And, you still will have to actually deal with the outcome.

Remember that our mind, which I heard described as the "fertile field for our darkest thoughts", can easily develop possible outcomes that may be much worse than the worst things that could actually occur.

Take time to consider all the realistic possible outcomes and then take action to improve your actual response. You can reduce any potential harm.

Approaching problems in a positive way is not just good for our chances of a successful outcome, they will also make it more likely that people we ask for information or help will be more likely to assist.

That is likely to also increase our ability to deal with other potential problems in the future. We will have proved to ourselves that we are more capable than we had previously let ourselves believe.

The benefits will increase each time we tackle another challenge whether it is small or large.

## **How Attitudes Affect Outcomes**

The factor which most affects the outcomes which we get in our lives is probably the attitudes which we approach each day and each person with.

This section gives some tips about dealing with people when they are exhibiting negative attitudes.

Of course, we also need to examine our own behavior and make sure that we don't put a barrier between us and other people or better outcomes because of the attitude we adopt in some situations.

This section shows some problem attitudes and gives some suggestions for making or repairing the connections you may have with people that exhibit them.

It's important to remember that they may only show these attitudes with certain people or in particular situations.

They may not know that these attitudes are having a negative effect on you or other people.

Think about your relationship with the person in that light and you may find something which you can do to help ease the effect of their attitude on you.

Sometimes, that may involve changing your response to the behavior which they display.

### **Unhappy with Life**

If someone seems to be always complaining when you meet them, you might make some suggestions how they can try to improve their situation. But, you will probably be wasting your time. As a friend said, "Some people are only happy when they are complaining!"

You may have to listen to their complaints and try to accommodate them because of a personal or business relationship with them.

You may think that, if they don't seem to ever do anything except complain, there probably is little you can do to help them. But, that is not always true.

When you are not obliged to listen and act on their complaints, try to



avoiding subjects which they are likely to become argumentative about.

Don't offer your time or other resources to help them fix any problem you feel that they can fix themselves unless they are ready to commit their own resources to the fixing it.

They may put the whole responsibility on you for resolving the problem but not be ready to tackle any part of it themselves.

Usually, the only way to get their problems resolved is to let them to decide on some resolution which they can accept ownership of and are prepared to contribute to.

Any solution you offer is likely to be answered with more problems which may only be insignificant distractions.

If you do not work directly with them or have any other obligation to them, you may be able to reduce your contact with them by a certain amount.

Spending more time than necessary with them will probably make you less enthusiastic about whatever they complain about and will also tend to give the impression that you share their more unreasonable views.

If they are people you have a generally good relationship with, it may be tempting to quickly offer help. That's a natural and admirable personal trait, but you must be ready to set boundaries on your commitments or you will probably find that you have time pressures because most other people they know won't keep on listening to their negativity.

Be firm but polite about sticking to reasonable boundaries if the demand on your own time becomes excessive or the pressure becomes unreasonable.

Otherwise your own schedule, and even your health, may suffer without any advance toward a positive outcome occurring.

## **Pessimism**

The common view which most pessimists have about themselves is that they are truly realists and that they are the only people that recognize the dark spot or potential flaw in something which other people (the "Pollyanna's")

don't realize is there.

If you mix with someone that is sometimes pessimistic about things which you are involved in together, give them a fair hearing and then say, "I really like to do this. What would you suggest might make it more enjoyable (or successful) for you?"

This may help them change their examination from the "obvious" negatives to looking for ways to improve the idea. Over time, they will come to understand that you are willing to listen to their negative points sometimes but are more interested in the positive aspects of things, including your time with them.

### **Self described Geniuses**

The people who sometimes come across as "know-it-alls" may genuinely have much knowledge or have almost none that is generally useful or original.

The problems occur when they are unable to stop telling everyone else what should be done whether they want to know or not.

Or, they will insist that their preferred way is the best solution without giving any consideration to anything else.

Dealing with them requires some tact while continuing to move the project forward.

Listen to and thank them for their input.

Then:

- Acknowledge their input by repeating the most relevant points back to them in your own words. Avoid getting into a discussion about anything which is irrelevant or likely to cause significant delay.
- Ask them for their views on the other options which are being considered. Encourage any input which is positive.
- Continue to involve them in discussions and they will usually become more co-operative with the others who are involved.

- Give them the responsibility for making progress on the common task in an area where they have demonstrated some interest and practical ability.

### **Late Finishers**

Sometimes your plans are damaged because of inaction by other people who are also involved in the project.

These people may claim to be waiting for the rest of the information they need, but it is often that they have fear of being found even partly responsible for anything which does not work out 100% successfully.

They may have an over-developed fear of responsibility or have suffered in the past when they got blamed and disadvantaged for someone else's action or inaction.

Ask them for suggestions about how to move the project forward? That will usually get them thinking about positives instead of negatives.

Then, they have a choice of giving you some suggestions or offering some other practical support. The least that could happen is that you will find out the reason for the delay and be better able to deal with it.

### **Careless with Time**

You probably know one or two people that keep everyone waiting for them to arrive or always want to stay around when everyone else is ready and wanting to leave?

The experts suggest there may be several factors which encourage people to continue this sort of behavior.

**Easier to be late:** Some people just find the effort to keep appointments too hard and some let the failing become a habit (Like Alice in Wonderland's White Rabbit)!

A friend was very upset when she first was very late for a party. She got a very sympathetic reaction from those who knew her well. She started to say, "I just can't get organized!" whenever she was late.

This happened more often as time went on. It hurt her reputation and she paid a cost in her social and business activities.

Eventually, she took action to become more organized. She had lost some opportunities but more started to come her way once she was able to show that she started to care for other people's time.

**Emotional connection:** Some people like the concern shown by their friends and, maybe, don't realize the degree of upset they cause.

**Demonstration of their power:** Some people do this because they feel, perhaps subconsciously, that it demonstrates that they have a degree of power or emotional control over the other person.

**Delaying an encounter:** Someone may have conscious or suppressed fears about someone at the meeting, or concerns about the discussion. So, they delay their arrival or try to avoid it altogether.

### ***Resolving the Lateness Problem***

Until the person who has this tendency is able to acknowledge the real reason for their lateness and actually starts to take steps to deal with it, the late arrivals and deterioration in their relationship with the other people involved will continue.

Unless the other person or group has some control over that person, they won't get any positive change by exhibiting anger or showing they are upset. But, they may be able to encourage that decision by deciding to act more independently to show that they will not let their schedules be affected by the other person's problems.

When they arrange to meet, they might say that they can only wait until a certain time and anyone that is not on time will have to meet up with them inside the venue.

### **Bullies**

These are the aggressive warrior types that try to get their way by pushing hard. People that use these tactics may also make direct attacks on your personal and professional standards.

They expect their tactics will shake your self-confidence and make you less able to negotiate any advantage. Often, they will welcome an audience because they believe that may reflect well on them.

The best way to deal with this is to keep calm and have your responses well researched and practiced.

Remember that they probably used this method successfully in the past. Don't waste time or energy – give them facts and professionalism.

But, make it clear by your reaction and positive attitude that their aggressive attitude is not having the sort of effect which they intended.

## Helping Children to Socialize and Thrive



When we are young, we adjust the way we behave in response to the instruction of our parents and others who are close to us.

But, many people don't realize that young children adjust their responses even more because of the behavior which they observe in the people

which they associate with.

They continue to adjust their attitudes and actions as they see what gets the best results for the adults and older children around them.

What we demonstrate to our children through attitudes and actions will probably have a more significant impact on what they believe and their views and actions throughout their lives than anything which we say that does not match our actions.

The experts assure us that the basic settings are established in large degree in just the child's first few years, up to our first year or so of schooling in most countries.

The children learn how to feel about themselves and how to deal with others from us. We have to be aware of that responsibility and make the very best of it that we can.

We can't leave it to teachers when our children get to school – a lot of their beliefs and values are already firmly set in place by then.

How to get along with other people is rarely part of any formal education system. Even the most dedicated teachers don't have enough time to give much individual help in those early years when it is so important.

So, as children, we are usually forced to sink or swim among the swirling mass of young children from a wide variety of backgrounds, social and economic status and outlook.

Many children have problems in this time. This is often because those in authority over them and responsible for their care have been too busy to put in the time and effort to give them a solid and very reliable framework of values to guide them through the rest of their lives.

This is likely to cause uncertainty and doubt about their potential and their self-worth which may continue to cause trouble for them and the people they try to associate with at later stages of their lives.

Their opportunities to make the best of what is available to them, personally and professionally, may also be reduced as a result.

## What We can Do to Help our Children

It is very hard for every parent to give their children as much attention as they want with the pressure they are under.

But, some of these tips may help to make that a little easier.

### Two-way Communication is Vital



The most important thing is to work at having a comfortable and open dialog between everyone in the family.

This can make it easier for the children to ask questions of the parents and vice-versa.

A lot of the concerns which might arise through those important growing years can be reduced that way.

My parents tried to answer any questions we had although their answers were in line with their views, faith and knowledge, and modified to be comfortable for us at our current level of maturity.

But, we don't have to wait for questions to discuss something with our children. If something occurs in your neighborhood, ask your children what they think about it.

Having this link can help when either you or a child has something important which they want to discuss.

### Promote Positive Attitudes and Actions

Providing support, understanding and firm guidelines can help them when they get to the stage where they also take on the most important job that anyone ever is likely to have in their lives – being parents of their own children.



That time we spend being role models, guidance and confidants to the next generation is the most important and can be the most enjoyable part of our lives.

### **Don't Avoid Questions or Situations**

Sometimes parents are reluctant to discuss something which their children asked about. That may be some aspect of sexuality, a community issue or some serious incident which some members of the family are involved with.

If the topic is avoided, children are likely to become more interested than they already were. The reluctance to share information will increase the attraction of the topic. They may start to rely on wrong, even dangerous information from other people.

You may have to ask for professional advice from experienced people that you know but that could be worthwhile because it can help to keep the vital channel of communication and trust between all of the family thriving.

## Don't get Personal

When someone criticizes something we have said or done, it's very easy to react as if they had personally attacked us.

That is understandable but unwise. Any sort of instant, unthinking reaction can have serious and lasting consequences.

At the least, it is likely to seriously reduce any prospect of a good outcome from the current discussion. I said "discussion" because it only becomes an argument if a second party adds some heat to the discussion.

If you disagree with what someone says about you or something you did, your best chance to get a fair outcome which all people concerned are comfortable with it to keep the discussion on a professional level where everyone's views and input is respected.

It is not often easy to maintain a calm appearance and professional manner when you feel under pressure but a forceful response will probably derail the discussion and limit your chance of getting any sort of satisfactory outcome for either of you.

When the other person finds that your response to their approach is not affected by their attitude, you have a much better chance of making progress on the matter.

While people are arguing, nobody is winning.

Even if you were to win a particular argument, the possibility of continuing your professional or personal association with that person and those close to them in the same manner as before is unlikely. If you demonstrate that you can be reasonable and cooperative when you are criticized, you are likely to forge a stronger connection with the other people involved.

Even when the outcome leaves them dissatisfied, most people will accept



that you have listened and responded professionally.

It is worth achieving a compromise where possible.

That is probably not something that people think about when you are criticized, especially if you feel that the criticism is unreasonable. But, a negative response will, of course, just worsen an already heated situation.

If the other person feels that they weren't given a hearing, they are likely to spread their views about you far and wide. Whether or not their original criticism is justified, you need to at least listen and respond to the grievance.

In most cases, a lot of the heat and any after-effects could have been avoided with a little thought and willingness to listen.

## Common Signs of Stress

Sometimes, we may think that someone has an attitude which causes problems with their work or getting along with people when the basic reason may be that they have a problem dealing with the effects of stress that may not always be directly related to the conflicts which are the visible outcome.

For people that are affected by stress, there can be several problems:

- Their friends, family or colleagues at work may not realize that there is a problem which may need some care and understanding or even professional treatment because they don't react in the same way or may not have similar stressors to deal with themselves.
- The outward effects of the stress may appear to be more likely to be related to a medical condition rather than effects on the person's ability to handle their work or personal responsibilities.
- The longer the person feels stress, the greater the effects and the less likelihood that they will be able to deal with it or even want to make a serious attempt.
- Stress may cause or encourage headaches, stomach upsets, emotional problems, sleep problems (which may cause them to fall asleep on the job).



Over time, a person who has these sorts of problems may develop actual medical symptoms. They can cause disruption to the group through their actions, comments or because they are unable to do their share on

common projects.

If you have these sort of problem, consider having a preliminary consultation with a professional advisor. As a first step you could ask your doctor on your next visit.

## **Avoiding People Problems**

The best way to avoid "people problems" is to not that someone that you have a problem with on a particular occasion as likely to always be a problem.

They are individuals who, like all of us, are probably happily getting along with almost everyone most of the time.

If you look deeper, without prejudging them because of one encounter or, perhaps, what you heard about them from another person, you will probably find that:

**They aren't the problem and you aren't the problem.**

**The problem is the problem.**

The more willing we are to cooperate with other people, the better. Usually, two people can fix almost any problem quicker and with less fuss than any one person, however clever that they may think that they are!

When we look for the things which we have in common with the people we meet, rather than focusing on differences between us, we will be better prepared to appreciate them and their qualities.

## Labeling People

### Putting People into Groups

Every book and most articles which try to help you to deal with problems in business and personal relationships usually have a section which attempts to fit everyone that the reader might deal with into categories and label them.

That reflects the fact that we all tend, to some degree, to put labels on people and other living creatures. Then, we can assign them to groups according to any characteristics or attitudes which we believe they have in common.

That's because we are used to grouping and labeling various things in our lives so that it is easier for us to deal with them. We just have to decide on how to deal with one thing and then apply that method every time we encounter something which we have put into the same group.

That can be helpful to a certain extent but it is likely to have some limitations.

This habit may cause problems for us. We can label all the plants that we grow into groups because the differences between individuals are not always as significant or long-lasting. There can be marked differences between people of a similar background.

We must always keep in mind that all people are complex creatures.

And, it's important to keep in mind that we change our attitudes according to experience, surroundings and what we may want in a particular situation.

We need to recognize that few, if any, people will fit completely comfortably into the pigeonhole as only an aggressive person or only a perfectionist.

They may also exhibit some attributes which we might not expect of such a type, either regularly or in certain situations.

So, always be aware that people are not robots and appreciate and welcome the different aspects which they display.

That's just one of the things which make us humans so interesting.

With that said, there is some advantage to knowing some useful tactics which experts in this area recommend for dealing with some of the most common attitudes which you will meet in your daily life.

One problem which comes from the habit of putting everyone in "instant" categories is that many people continue to use their rapid first impression of someone for evermore. Unfortunately, many people give less consideration to the people they meet than what movie they will watch that night.

If we take the time to get to know them, we would probably find they are a unique mixture of attitudes and aspirations just like ourselves.

If we ask ourselves, might some people have formed negative impressions of us and our behavior from one encounter when we weren't at our best, the answer is probably, "yes."

We would all probably like a second chance to reconnect with some people we may have slighted or just got off on the wrong foot with in the past. But, that can be very difficult if they have assigned a permanent sticky label to us after that first encounter.

That, of course, may cause problems for them as well as for us, because they are unlikely to learn things which we know that could be very helpful to them or to have much of an opportunity to share their knowledge with us.



## **Pressure and Stress**

Many people are confused about pressure and stress.

**Pressure** is what is applied to us from outside of ourselves.

**Stress** is the reaction we have to some or all of that pressure.

Some stress is good for us. It is part of our inheritance from ancient mankind. It protected them by signaling our internal systems to prepare for fight or flight.

Sometimes we are not able to handle some pressures we face in those basic ways.

When we have stress which we can't handle and cannot get away from the situation serious, and even life-threatening consequences are possible.

If we want to reduce the level of our stress and how much of it we suffer from, it is important to understand that it is something we have to take an active part in dealing with.

Don't blame anyone else for some of your stress. Other people can pressure us in many ways but the stress we feel and suffer as a result of that pressure can only be controlled or eliminated by our own active and informed intervention.

Stress can be reduced. It is usually something which people can start to treat themselves.

But, if we have been allowing serious levels of stress to affect our lives, work and relationship for some time, we might benefit from some professional advice from our doctor or other medical advisor.

An appointment with your usual doctor may be very helpful in clearing some concerns from your mind and showing you what options are available to you.

### ***Help is Available***

If the stress is starting to overwhelm you, your best course maybe to seek help through your employer, medical adviser, family or some community organization.

I know of many people that have continued to suffer without seeking help because they felt it would be a sign of weakness. They saw that the people around them seemed able to deal with the problems in pressure they face without apparently suffering like they were.

They had forgotten that we are all individuals. Many of the people they knew might suffer as much or even more stress than they did themselves. But, they were likely to display different reactions.

The important question to ask yourself is, "Am I controlling this stress so that it is not having an impact on my quality of life, work performance or relationships?"

If you are not sure, look for signs of improvement or any that your situation might be deteriorating.

Remember that the effects of the stress you have will reduce your effectiveness in all areas of your life and your ability to insure a better future for yourself and your family.

You have to decide whether you can deal with it yourself or if you need help to do that.

You may get that help from a professional counselor or your doctor.

It can be dangerous to leave high levels of stress untreated. The effects can be serious for everyone involved.

## **Making Good Connections**

Using these principles when approaching other people will improve the quality of the connections which we expect to achieve. That may seem outside our comfort zone through their behavior or for any other reason in business or social occasions is almost certain to increase our enjoyment of the occasions and result in increased engagement with those people in the future.

### **Take Their Views and Desires into Account**

Few people are very unlikely to change their mind, action or attitude because of something you say unless they are shown a benefit for them in making the sort of change which you want them to make.

You cannot wish a change in them or the situation; you need to do something to encourage them to come around.

Avoid arguing or pressuring them.

Most people will switch off and you may also cause the problems they have to become worse.

### ***Review the situation***

Although you might be able to do that during an encounter with one or more other people, you are likely to get much better results for everyone involved if you have thought about all the details and balanced the advantages of the possible outcomes before you are actually in the situation.

Before you make a decisive move, you need to be sure that you are fully aware of the real situation.

Are you sure that you understand what they want and why they are acting the way they are.

What is their motivation for their approach with you and the project or goal? What you see as an unnecessary delay may also be perfectionism, caution, or pessimism about the likely outcome.

Be sure that what you say or do is the best available thing to help you and

the other person move nearer to the ultimate goal which includes as much as possible for both of you or the groups which you represent.

Unless they take ownership of the plan to improve their situation, there is likely to be little improvement.

### ***Focus on the Best Outcome for Everyone***

If we want to win every point in a discussion, we are likely to alienate some of the people involved. That attitude is also likely to mean that everyone who takes part will probably gain less from it than they could have if there had been more willingness to negotiate in a meaningful way.

"Trying too hard" is common with people that are obsessed about a topic, whether it's the value and quality of their product or themselves.

Word of mouth really is the best form of promotion but it really only has measurable value when it comes from the mouths of people that don't have any obligation to you rather than from your own mouth.

### ***Demonstrate the Behavior You Expect***

Keeping a professional and responsive attitude will get you nearer to whatever goal you are seeking even when the other person is confrontational.

Responding to them in a similar manner to what they are displaying may give you some sort of temporary satisfaction but is also a guaranteed to drive you further away from a positive lasting relationship with them. It will also usually ensure that you have a much harder task to ever be able to achieve your common goal.

One tip which I have found can be a good way to avoid some irritation to other people in a discussion is to avoid using the word, "should". We hear it and most of us use it every day with statements like, "You should match the prices at the major stores" or "Someone should have prepared a copy of the report for everybody."

If you want someone else to do something for the benefit of the group, try something, "If you could do this, I will do this? Is that fair?"

Although "should" seems to be a harmless word, it actually implies that someone other than the person who is speaking had an unspoken responsibility to do what the speaker just mentioned and they let down everyone else that is involved.

If the speaker just puts the obligation on someone else, their statement will probably be seen as a complaint to the other people even if that is not what was intended.

### **It's Not Your Problem**

One of the most important points is that you should not interfere with any other person's life beyond what you might accept them interfering with yours.

If you agree to help somebody with a problem, remember the importance of focusing on the outcome which is most likely to help them be happier and more productive. Any stake which you may have in the outcome must be regarded as less important than the outcome for them.

So, help them where you can but don't try to make a difference in someone's life by making a difference in them.

And be sure to avoid trying to do anything which you are not qualified to try. Many techniques used by professionals are explained briefly in self-help books but they are only intended as a general source of information.

The professional has years of experience of training which enable them to know how and when to use particular techniques and, most especially, when not to.

Even when a technique has proven to work for us, we cannot safely assume that it will be equally beneficial for someone else. It may not work at all!

## **Reduce Problems with Communication**



Improving our ability to actively listen to other people and respond in a way that helps our interaction is the most important but neglected skill we could improve.

Some experts say that many of us don't realize that there are problems with our usual communication style.

It's easy to understand why we all think we are communication experts; because we've been doing it since shortly after we were born!

It's easy to improve the effectiveness of our communication.

Just focus on the person or group that we are with. But, keep our focus on them, no matter what distractions are around.

It's amazing how quickly our hearing and our retention of information will improve. People that work at being good listeners don't have as many arguments and they also seem to make friends more quickly than those that concentrate on just talking.

### **Handling Other People's Problems**

When someone gives you some information or asks for your help with something, always make sure you understand all the details which they share with you.

Ask them to clear up for you any points which you do not understand clearly. This will reassure them that you are really listening and give them a chance to get the situation they are concerned about clearer in their own mind.

Don't take sides about any problem that does not directly involve you. Avoid any involvement in that sort of problem unless one of the parties involved expresses a strong, sincere desire for your help..

### **Get Value for Value.**

This point may seem hard but it is one that will help to ensure that you get an outcome which you will feel is fair.

If you are involved in a negotiation, try to consider all aspects of it and find

those which are most important to the people who may oppose you.

The better that you understand what they really want (not just what they say), the better chance that you will get the sort of result that you are working toward.

I often find that the various people in a negotiation may attach widely different values to particular factors. Sometimes, you may be asked to allow some benefit to the other person or group. You may think that has little value. So, you might think that giving way on that point at an early stage could make them more willing to give a little when you ask for something later on.

But, there is no obligation on them to reciprocate because you gave the concession willingly.

If you give way without any discussion and then cannot get any similar concession from them at any point, you may feel that they are being unfair although they just asked and you agreed.

Such minor misunderstandings have soured relations between people for years. Just remember that the only obligations on each party are those agreed during the discussion.

**Please always get all business agreements in writing and use your own legal advisor.** It does not imply a lack of trust.

I am not suggesting that you be inflexible in all negotiations. If you seem completely focused on what you demand and make no allowance for the desires of the other people involved, you will probably fail to get the level of enthusiastic input which you could get.

I suggest that the time for flexibility is after all the details are agreed and written down. Then, you can make a small concession or add some other benefit for the other person. You will find that is appreciated and helps to improve the chances of further deals with those people in the future.

### *Managing Others*

If you are managing the efforts of other people, remember the first rule for

managers, "**counsel in private, praise in public**".

You will always get better results all round when the other people that work for you believe you are in charge but that you are working *with* them instead of just making sure they do their work.

### **You Don't Know exactly How they Feel.**

When someone suffers a dramatic loss in their life, we often say, "I know how you feel."

But, though you may know all the details of a person's background and some tragedy that has befallen them or someone close to them, you cannot really know "how they feel". Counselors report that this one well-intended comment is probably the one which most upsets people that are in mourning. We mean it to help them feel our sympathy but its effect is usually not good.

Similarly, it is often hard for other people to appreciate the effect of some disappointment on someone else. The death of a pet, loss of a job, having to move to another area can be devastating to some but maybe not to people who have different life experiences and values.

Don't judge unless you are qualified and required to do so.

Remember that the best you can do for someone who has a problem is to help them find the way that best suits them to get out of it.

Support them while they do it if they indicate that they want you to. But, don't undertake that sort of obligation if it is likely to be difficult for you to fulfill it without serious disruption to your own needs and obligations.



## **The Best Way!**

The best way to start almost any sort of communication is to smile at the other person.

Yes, that works just as well when we are communicating over the phone or through the Internet.

If you smile at someone, they will probably smile back. If you don't, neither of you will have as good a day as you might have had.

The best reason to smile is when you see someone that needs one.

***Check your smile and improve it if necessary.  
Some people have not used theirs for so long,  
the corners have slipped right down!***

That's true for many people. They probably haven't seen their smile for years. We tend to think that we don't change. Well, maybe, but most of us could tweak the smile we use so it's 100% perfect instead of just 90%

## **People are the Solution!**

Instead of thinking that People are the problem, I have learned that they are the solution.

Most people are just as good-natured and helpful as we will let them be. Many people have exceeded any expectations I had greatly when given a chance, even if they have not shown any great ability or enthusiasm before.

The best way we can get better answers from other people is to learn to ask better questions.

I have recommended a positive attitude throughout this book because it's the best, most powerful and cheapest tonic I know.

You can give it to everyone you meet and you will still never run out.

I wish you an abundance of wealth, health and friends.

***Rob Orloff***

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