

# HOW TO DEAL WITH ANNOYING PEOPLE

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# Contents

A Note from the Authors

Introduction

## Part I:

### The Four Social Styles of Annoying People

1. Everybody Has Annoying People Problems. . . . .	15
2. What Annoys Us About Others. . . . .	19
<i>Why we get annoyed by other people and why we become one of those annoying people</i>	
3. Determining Your Social Style . . . . .	31
<i>Identify your specific social style based on your patterns of behavior</i>	
4. The Strengths of Each Social Style . . . . .	37
<i>Where each style shines and excels</i>	
5. The Weaknesses of Each Social Style . . . . .	47
<i>Where the four styles annoy other styles with their weaknesses</i>	
6. Secondary Social Styles . . . . .	57
<i>Finding your secondary style and what makes you unique</i>	
7. The Annoying People in Action . . . . .	67
<i>How each social style acts and reacts in different settings</i>	
8. Identifying Social Styles in Others . . . . .	75
<i>How to observe social styles in other people</i>	
9. What Annoying People Value and What Really Annoys Them . . . . .	85
<i>Discover the values and irritants for each social style</i>	

10. Annoying People with Their Backs Against the Wall . . . . .	91
<i>How to respond to each style in conflict and how to adapt to meet the needs of each social style</i>	
11. How to Lead Annoying People . . . . .	105
<i>Each social style needs to be approached differently—learn how to lead each style</i>	
12. How to Follow Annoying People . . . . .	115
<i>Each social style has a specific style of leadership—learn how to adapt to follow a particular leader</i>	
13. Selling to Annoying People . . . . .	125
<i>Everyone makes decisions differently based on specific social style—learn how to sell your ideas to each specific style</i>	
14. The Compatibility of Annoying People . . . . .	133
<i>Certain social styles are more compatible with others—some create “double trouble”</i>	
15. Dispelling Ten Stereotypical Gender Myths . . . . .	145
<i>Some differences are attributable to social styles, not gender, as many myths proclaim</i>	
16. Mottos and Sayings of Annoying People . . . . .	157
17. The Foundational Basis for the Four Social-Styles Concept. . . . .	165
<i>Where the social-styles concept originated</i>	

## PART II:

### Conflict Prevention and Resolution

18. What Is Conflict? . . . . .	173
<i>Identifying and defining conflict</i>	

19. Ten Myths About Conflict . . . . .	181
<i>Common misunderstandings about conflict</i>	
20. The Positive Power of Confrontation . . . . .	187
<i>Confrontation done properly can be very positive</i>	
21. Dealing with Conflict Mentally . . . . .	193
<i>Conflict starts inside your head— how to work through the process</i>	
22. What Is the Issue? . . . . .	201
<i>Conflict arises over different issues— identify your conflict issues</i>	
23. Three Approaches to Resolving Conflict . . . . .	207
24. Making the Confrontation . . . . .	215
<i>When you have to confront someone else, there are specific steps you can take to make it a positive experience</i>	
25. Choose Your Words Carefully . . . . .	225
<i>The words you use during confrontation and conflict will determine the outcome</i>	
26. Observing Body Language . . . . .	233
<i>Learning to be observant of body language will help you to understand yourself and other people better</i>	
27. Listening to Reduce Conflict . . . . .	245
<i>Conflict often escalates due to a lack of true listening skills—learn how to avoid this</i>	
28. Dealing with the Response to Confrontation . . . . .	263
<i>How to cope with the different responses to confrontation you will inevitably face</i>	

29. When You Are Confronted . . . . .	273
<i>What to do when someone confronts you about your behavior or the behavior of someone else</i>	
30. The Influence of Power in Conflict . . . . .	287
<i>Learn the many different power plays that are used in the midst of conflict</i>	
Closing Thoughts . . . . .	299
Bibliography . . . . .	305
About the Authors . . . . .	309

# Everybody Has Annoying People Problems

*Conflict is normal in human relationships.  
It arises because we do not understand  
the other person's perspective, vision,  
decisions, or behaviors.*



I am so sick of Sue coming in late! She always has some lame excuse.” Kelly was venting to Pat over a cup of coffee.

“What’s even worse,” Pat responded, “is that her boss is too lazy and apathetic to do anything about it.”

“Yeah, I noticed!” Kelly jumped in and added some more fuel to the fire. “He’s been grating on my nerves, too. He acts like he has a phobia when it comes to making decisions.”

“No wonder nothing gets done right around here!” Pat was getting fired up, too.

“Well, when you and I rule the world, things are going to change!” Kelly lifted her coffee cup in a gesture of triumph as she clanged it against Pat’s cup. They both laughed as they made their way back to their seats.

I was speaking at a corporate training session when I overheard that conversation during a break. It is not an uncommon

exchange in the workplace, because everyone has annoying people problems.

When was the last time someone annoyed you? Most likely within the past hour! Different things annoy different people, but everyone gets annoyed. Someone moves too slowly or too quickly, someone is too impatient or too lenient, someone is too loud or too shy...the list goes on and on.

The differences that exist between individuals are usually the basis for misunderstanding, disagreement, and conflict. All too often, we expect other people to think and respond as we do. We do not give consideration to their specific social style or personality. If we make quick decisions and can juggle five things at once, we expect them to do the same. If we are prompt and always on time, we assume that other people will also be on time. If we are patient and thoughtful, we become offended by someone who is impatient and less sensitive.

The areas of potential conflict are endless. Until we learn the social styles of people, as well as our own, we will remain in a cycle of frustration, misunderstanding, and conflict.

It is impossible to live without conflict. Getting along with other people takes time and effort. The trail of broken relationships and continual conflict leads to frustration and misunderstandings in regard to behavior. There is good news. There are practical tools available to assist you in your efforts to get along with people. This book will equip you with some of the following important tools:

- ◆ A program for understanding your own social behavior and the social behavior of other people
- ◆ A means for understanding how you perceive other people and how they perceive you



- ◆ Tools for creating and improving work and personal relationships
- ◆ Techniques for reducing tension and conflict
- ◆ Suggested tips for improving your communication skills
- ◆ Help for increasing your tolerance for those who are different from you
- ◆ Tools for resolving conflict once it arises

You will never be able to completely avoid conflict when you deal with other people. You can, however, discover why others annoy you and why you annoy them. That is the first step to reducing potential conflict in your life and working your way toward a more peaceful existence.

The basis for getting along with people is found in the words of Jesus Christ. One day a religious leader approached Jesus and asked Him to identify the greatest commandment in the Law. Jesus replied, “‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments” (Matthew 22:37-40).

Jesus commanded that we must love our neighbors as ourselves. But who are my neighbors? My neighbor is anyone other than myself: family members, friends, fellow workers, even strangers. My neighbors include even my enemies. My neighbors are those who rub me the wrong way and make me feel uncomfortable.

Jesus directed that we love our neighbors with the same type of love that we have for ourselves—to the same degree and with the same proportion. To the extent that we guard our own feelings, we

should care for the feelings of other people. To the degree that we try to reach our own hopes and dreams, we should help other people to achieve their hopes, dreams, and potential. That is not an easy assignment, especially since we often find it difficult to fulfill our own goals.

It is one thing to talk about loving my neighbor, but it is another thing to actually do it. When my neighbor is nice to me, it is easier to love him. But when he is impatient, angry, grumpy, or aloof, loving him becomes difficult. And getting along with my neighbor is even more difficult when I am not getting along with myself. Have you ever been dismayed or disappointed with your own behavior? Have you ever asked yourself, “Why did I do that?” Have you put your foot in your mouth so often that you had to learn to whistle through your toes? Loving ourselves and our neighbors would be so much easier if we understood ourselves and our neighbors better.

The process of understanding our behavior and the behavior of others is difficult, time-consuming, and often draining. It is a struggle we will all face on a continual basis until we meet our Creator. But there is good news: There are workable methods for understanding behavior and improving relationships. It is entirely possible to begin to fulfill Christ’s command and truly love our neighbors as ourselves.

As you make your way through this book, you will discover that there are four basic social styles that constitute “annoying people.” And you will be one of them! As you discover your own style, you will discover the differences and commonalities you share with some of the other styles. You will discover ways to predict behavior in other people and yourself, and learn to adapt your own behavior to get along better with other people. This process will pave the way to conflict prevention.