

## **Bullies, Tyrants, and Impossible People** by Ronald Shapiro & Mark Jankowski

Types of Difficult People include the Situationally, Strategically, and Simply difficult. Tyrants are only as powerful as the effectiveness of their irrational and deceptive tactics, but the rational dispersion of those situations renders the bully as powerless. The largest challenge is commonly maintaining integrity while dealing with such deceivers. The recommended NICE method includes Neutralizing your emotions, Identifying the bully's type, Controlling the encounter, and Exploring available options.

The Situationally Difficult are those stressed by a situation that they previously faced or are presently facing. Examples include Traffic, Family Fights, Raised Rent, Health Problems, Missed Sports Event, Missed Business Promotions, etc. They might shut off all communication for days or make ultimatums, and are often unsatisfied even when they get their way since they remain stressed.

The Strategically Difficult are those that use deceit and try to get others to play by their rules. The strategies imposed include False Authority, Good Cop/Bad Cop, Ultimatums, Fake Deadlines, Silence, Tantrums, Venue Control, Intimidation, Blindsiding, Denial, Bluffing, Contract Control, and Scarcity. However, these individuals can often be out-thought

The Simply Difficult are those that are irrational, spiteful, threaten others, lack empathy, have convenient amnesia, can never be satisfied, and have a reputation for their behavior. The situations imposed can feel like bad dreams in that the nonsense feels real until a person is detached from the lunacy. The simply difficult will even do themselves harm in order to hurt others and are often irretrievably difficult beyond resolution.

It can help relieve pressure to practice breathing exercises which help in stressful situations where you might otherwise hyperventilate. It can also help to change venues like from the hallway and into an office away from the public where an ego may be more tender. Anger can be counteracted with a short break, good joke, or entrance of a third party. You can actually smile your way out of aggravation as a means of de-escalation.

In certain situations, you can ask questions in an attempt to allow the difficult person to understand their irrationality on their own, but a difficult person will not suddenly change and become more reasonable without intervention. Difficult people tend to act in ways intended to cause a reaction as a means to gain control over others. It's important to neutralized emotions which allows a person to act rather than react. It's smart to learn about your opponent's background, style, quirks, characteristics, position, goals, self-image, and reputation. It can help to focus on their gestures, language, humor, demeanor, and anecdotes that are indicative of their character before facing them. You should be willing to walk away if it's an available option.

The most effective means of dealing with a difficult individual is by balancing the perceived power. You cannot get a difficult person to just rationally arrive at a sensible compromise until you demonstrate that their tactics are powerless against your rational control and redirecting of them. Ignoring them will typically prevent solutions, rational responses will fall on deaf ears, and emotional responses will only escalate the situation. You can identify and label the other person's emotions. You may be shaking inside when you confront a bully, but will often still appear confident on the outside and that's all that matters. You can often use their unreasonable rules to your advantage by recognizing non-obvious ways to achieve your desired results by carefully outthinking them.