

Coping with College Series

Dealing with Difficult People

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The holiday season is fast approaching. For college students, this season includes finals, visiting family, and, for some, graduating and starting a new job. It's a stressful time, and having to deal with difficult people makes it even harder.

Although there are many types of difficult people, certain traits are common. For example, many of us have encountered people who are hostile or aggressive. They seem to shoot down every idea others offer, discounting it before they even consider the suggestion. You might also be familiar with the generally friendly, but still annoying, know-it-all. These individuals are always glad to tell you the "right way" to do something.

So what are the best ways to handle difficult people? First of all, remain calm. Take a few deep breaths, count to 10 and keep your cool. Becoming upset will only make the situation worse. Secondly, think about your reaction. It could be that your first impulse when faced with a difficult person has as much to do with your personal issues as it does with the other person's behavior. If this is the case, try to remain objective and evaluate the other person based on the actual merits of what they have to say.

Remember, the holidays can be stressful. Don't let difficult people create more stress for you. By practicing these techniques, you can have a more peaceful, enjoyable holiday season.