

HOW TO DEAL WITH NEGATIVE PEOPLE

by Johanna Kern

Negative people have a problem for every solution.

They can drain our energy and spoil our joy of life.

Some people advise to avoid them simply – but it's not always possible because

sometimes such persons are our relatives or coworkers.

It is important to remember that someone's negative behavior is not a reflection of who we are. It only shows us what kind of person they are and what issues they may be dealing with.

Some of us are more prone to negative thinking than others. It can depend on our genetics, or it can be a result of childhood experiences. According to scientists, most humans tend to ponder more bad experiences than positive ones. It is because of an evolutionary adaptation that helps us avoid danger and quickly react to a crisis.

Negative people usually are that way because they feel they lack warmth and love. Often, they protect themselves from the world with their negativity. The good news is that our brains can be re-trained and our thought-patterns can be altered. In neuroscience, it is described as "experience-dependent neuroplasticity" –

which essentially means that our thoughts and experiences shape our brains. Just as we can train our muscles, we can train our brains.

We can never react to the negativity of our family, spouse, or a friend with our negativity – that will not solve the problem.

HERE IS WHAT WE CAN DO:

- When you first converse with them provide a listening ear and let them know they are not alone – but draw a line somewhere.

However, if they continue to dwell on problems after a few conversations, it is time to disengage. Switch topics, don't let them pull you in their negativity. Nod or give simple reply such as "Hm" or "I see." Each time they say something positive – reply enthusiastically – when you do it often, they will soon be more positive in their communication.

Whenever they criticize anything or anybody –

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remember that they probably mean no harm, but they are simply caught in their negativity.

Don't let it get to you: take it as their point of view and respond as above.

When they dwell on topics that trigger their negativity – switch to lighter topics, such as new songs, movies, hobbies – anything that they may feel more positive. Caution: talking about the weather or shopping can easily trigger their negativity. Stay focused and avoid such topics.

IMPORTANT: Be mindful how much time you spend with them.

According to scientists, even when our stress and worry are completely hypothetical – even if we just focus on the media news and not on any situation taking place in our own life – the amygdala and the thalamus in our brain aren't able to make the difference between what is

real to us, and what is not.

Our brain reacts to hypothetical stress in the same way as it does to actual stress.

Their negativity will affect your wellbeing and, unfortunately, that's the truth. Limit the frequency, duration of phone calls or conversations as much as you can, even if they are your own family. It would help if you stayed positive in life, to live a happy life.

- Set a limit to how long your interaction with them will be and don't go over that time.

ALSO IMPORTANT TO REMEMBER: We need to be diplomatic, compassionate and very patient with negative people. It sounds hard to do, but it can happen if we want to improve our relationship with a negative person that we care.

- Be sincere, and show them the upsides in life.

Over time, small steps toward a positive outlook on life may help them overcome their negativity.

Remind them that it is possible to change our life situation and achieve what we want. Of course, we need to put some effort into it – nothing will resolve itself without our willingness to help ourselves truly. Not only talk about it.

Studies show that different therapeutic techniques like deep relaxation and techniques to reprogram our subconscious can re-balance our brain. This change doesn't happen instantly and at least 30 days of practicing a particular technique are required to experience significant changes. (Even better – 6 weeks, as this is the time required to alter neural pathways in our brain.)

However, if everything fails and if nothing we do works for the negative person in our life – we need to

take care of ourselves and stop trying. Could you not consider it a failure? Consider it the time when you learned your strength and had an insight into how easy it is to spoil our happiness.

Life is to be precious to be wasted on negativity.

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