



Deeper Dive Consulting

Tips for Reducing Stress in Personal & Professional Relationships

Your personal and professional relationships can be some of the biggest stress inducers in your life. The boss who doesn't give you credit, the son who doesn't do his homework, the spouse who seems to care about completely different things. Dealing with people brings unique challenges that make it very different than other sources of stress.

Here are a few tips for reducing your stress in interpersonal relationships.

Tip: Know Your Boundaries

One of the biggest sources of stress comes from inadvertently crossing undefined boundaries.

For example, let's say one of your unsaid boundaries is that you really value your time and hate it when people are late to meetings. Instead of making it clear to your co-workers that lateness is a boundary however, you've just kept silent about it and built up stress as that boundary was inadvertently crossed constantly.

Instead, recognize and define that as a boundary for you and make it clear to the people you work with that if they want to meet with you, that's a boundary they have to respect.

Know your boundaries. Know what's acceptable to you and what's not and stick to your guns.

Tip: Have Honest Conversations

Honest conversations are some of the most difficult conversations to have. But they must be had, or other people won't really know what you're experiencing and things won't ever change.

Share with other people what's really going on for you and how you're feeling. Share with them how you're perceiving them and their actions and how it's impacting you.

Don't point fingers. Just share the impact their actions have on you, and also listen to what they have to say. At the end of the conversation, try to come up with real actionable steps to change the situation.

Tip: Accept People As They Are, or Get Them Out of Your Life

There are two places in relationships that have no stress at all: When you accept people as they are, exactly as they are, and when they're gone.

Anything in between, where you “like them in general” but “can’t stand this one thing about them” is bound to cause you stress.

If someone’s going to be in your life, do your best to accept them *just the way they are*. Avoid focusing on their imperfections. After all, you’re not perfect either – But you’d prefer it if others related to you without focusing on your imperfections as well, wouldn’t you?

On the other hand, anyone in your life who you truly can’t bring yourself to accept, try to just get them out of your life.

Of course, life is never quite that simple. Co-workers who you have no choice over, family members who stress you out, etc are just a part of life. But if you make it a rule of thumb to either just accept people or avoid the people you don’t like, you *will* reduce a lot of stress.

Dealing with people is a whole art in and of itself. People can be a great source of stress in life, but they can also be a great source of joy. Learn to define your own boundaries, learn to have honest conversations with the people in your life and learn to either accept people or avoid the people who you don’t really like.