

Negative Personality Traits



Warm up:

- What personality traits annoy you the most?
- Do you get more annoyed by rude or lazy people? Why?
- Are you someone who gets grumpy sometimes? Do you know anyone else who does?
- Would you prefer a friend who is rude but honest, or a friend who is polite but dishonest?



1. Read the sentences below and match them to the traits in the box.

stubborn	arrogant	pretentious	bossy
greedy	spoiled	dull	condescending

- "Ok stop talking right now and just do as I say, I don't have time for this!" *bossy*
- "I mean, obviously I'm going to be the best athlete at my university, I'm kind of an athletic freak of nature. They don't call me 'The Beast' for nothing." *arrogant*
- "My father bought me a BMW for my birthday, but he bought me the wrong one! I specifically asked for a BMW 7 series, and he got me a 3 series. It doesn't even have heated seats!" *spoiled*
- "My company is doing great at the moment, but if I fire 10 more people before Christmas, I'll be able to afford a helicopter by April!" *greedy*
- "Ok sweetie, you did your best but why don't you let the people who know what they're doing take over now?" *condescending*
- "My main hobby is making Excel spreadsheets that rank different seasons of all the television shows I watch. Would you like to see them? I made them into a 3-hour presentation." *dull*
- "I don't care if it's faster to upload it to the cloud than sending it as an email, that's the way I've always done it, and I'm not about to change now." *stubborn*
- "I don't really 'make coffee' in the traditional sense. I engage in an authentic and spiritual procedure to extract the coffee bean's true inner flavour." *pretentious*



Which of the above sentences would bother you the most if you heard someone say it?


The fine line between good and bad

Sometimes there is a very fine line between good and bad personality traits. For example, when exactly does confidence become arrogance? When discussing this, we often use language that makes it clear that our opinions are just impressions.

Eg. "He seems a little bit arrogant to me."

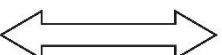
"She comes across as stubborn, but I think she's just very determined."

"I get the impression that he's quite paranoid, he doesn't trust anyone."

 2. Read the statements with a partner and decide together if they sound more like the negative or positive trait shown above the statements.

Condescending / Arrogant  Confident

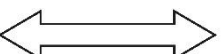
Bruno: "I've been driving for about 15 years longer than you have, so I'm almost certainly a better driver, which means I should be the one to drive. If you want you can drive on the highway, but for the more difficult sections it should be me in the driver's seat."

Stingy  Frugal

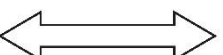
Claudia: "In winter I always wait as long as I can to turn on the heating. Sometimes I will wear two or three layers in my apartment rather than turn on the heating. I can afford to pay for the heating, but I just don't see the point in wasting money."

Paranoid  Cautious / Sensible

Greg: "I have a lot of usernames and passwords that I need to keep track of, far too many for me to remember. I know I could get a password manager, but what happens if the password manager gets hacked? That's why I keep all my passwords on a piece of paper which I hide behind my desk."

Bossy  Decisive

Ollie: "Alright, everyone, I know I'm not the captain but we're changing the plan. From now on, I want the wingers running straight back every time we lose the ball. No more long shots. Pass first and wait for the right opening. Just stick to the roles I've given you and follow my instructions. If we all do exactly what I say, we'll win this."

Stubborn  Determined

Lana: "I don't care if everyone thinks she can do it better just because she's a professional artist. Give me a few days and I will show you that I can draw just as well if not better than her. I'll stay up all night if that's what it takes."



3. Read the article and answer the questions below.

Pretty much everyone has experienced rudeness at some point. A stranger cuts us off in traffic, a coworker makes a sarcastic comment, or a friend cancels plans without apologizing. These small moments may seem unimportant, but they can leave us feeling hurt or angry for hours. But it's difficult to know how forgiving or empathetic we should be towards those who are rude to us.

Many people take the approach that showing empathy and patience is more helpful than reacting with anger. However, being too empathetic can mean that rude people get their way, and in the end you can end up actually encouraging their behaviour. Others feel that rude people need to be dealt with harshly, making sure they pay for their bad behaviour. The downside to this is, you often end up getting sucked into conflicts that will leave you feeling much angrier than if you had just walked away. The key is finding a healthy balance.

Rudeness is not always a sign of a bad personality. Often, it is a reaction to stress, pressure, or personal problems. Someone who is tired or worried might snap at others without meaning to. In these cases, their behaviour reflects their situation, not their true feelings about others.

Some people are rude because they feel insecure. They may worry that others are smarter, more successful, or more confident than they are. To protect themselves, they act cold, bossy, or condescending. By putting others down, they try to feel stronger.

For example, a student who feels unprepared might laugh at others' answers, or an employee might blame colleagues for small mistakes. Their behaviour is unpleasant, but it often comes from fear rather than cruelty.

However, not all rude behaviour is so forgivable. Some people are intentionally rude because they want power or control. They may use insults, guilt, or embarrassment to influence others. This is manipulation.

Unlike insecure people, manipulative individuals often understand exactly what they are doing. They might interrupt you constantly, criticize you in public, or make you feel responsible for their problems.

Here, empathy alone is not enough. If we always try to "be nice," we may allow them to continue their behaviour. In these cases, setting clear boundaries is essential. Saying no, limiting contact, or calmly confronting the behaviour can protect us from emotional harm.

- a) What is the downside of being too understanding to rude people? *You can encourage their behaviour*
- b) According to the article, what 3 issues can cause rudeness? Which of these 3 do you think is the worst? *Stress, insecurity, or being manipulative*
- c) Do you think being insecure is an acceptable reason for being rude?
- d) Do you agree with the article? How do you normally deal with people who are rude to you?

4. Ellen and Toby are housemates. Listen to their conversations, answer the questions, and describe their behaviour using some of the vocabulary from the previous exercises.

Conversation 1

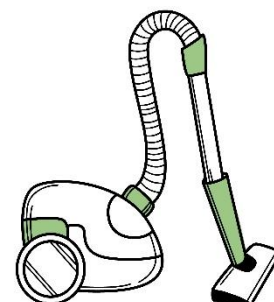
- Why doesn't Toby want to see *Captain Universe*? *He thinks it sounds like Hollywood garbage.*
- What is *Colours of Sadness* about? *It's a 3 hour black and white movie about a colour blind painter who only paints dying people.*
- How does Toby feel about dubbed movies? *He thinks they are bad because you lose the original emotion from the actors.*

Toby seems *condescending, arrogant, pretentious*

Ellen sounds ... *annoyed, disappointed, offended*

Conversation 2

- How did Ellen know the plates weren't Jenna's? *Jenna is a vegetarian, and the plates have meat on them.*
- What are two reasons Toby doesn't like the list of chores he's been given? *He needs to be involved in making choices, Jenna and Ellen aren't on the list, and he has to vacuum and mop 3 times a week, which he thinks is too much.*
- What is Toby's complaint about Ellen and Jenna's cleanliness? *They leave make-up in the bathroom*



I get the impression Ellen is ... *bossy, condescending.*

Toby comes across as *Dishonest (tried to lie about the dishes) surprised, offended.*

Conversation 3

- How much does Toby think he should pay for the electricity bill, and what is his reasoning for this? *He should pay 50 dollars because he uses less electricity because he doesn't use a hair dryer.*
- Why does Ellen think that Toby uses more electricity? *He spends more time at home, and he uses his gaming pc.*
- What did Toby buy last week, and why does this make Ellen angry? *He bought a TV. This means he was lying about not having enough money (manipulative, dishonest)*

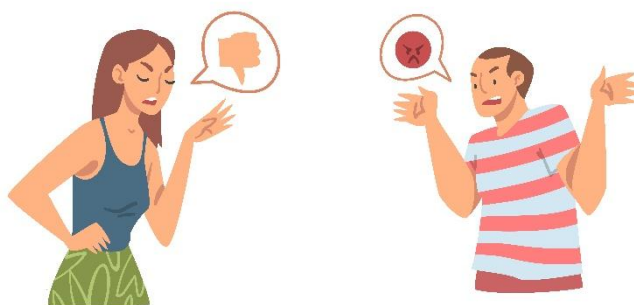
Ellen sounds ... *frustrated*

Toby seems ... *stingy, manipulative, dishonest*



5. Ask and answer the questions below with a partner.

- Do you think people are ruder today than they were in the past?
- Have you ever stopped being friends with someone because of their personality? What happened?
- What is a negative personality trait you think you have?
- If someone is rude to you, are you good at just 'letting it go'?
- Would you rather live with someone who is dull or someone who is pretentious?
- Are there any negative traits that you think a lot of people from your country have?
- Have you ever had a really negative impression of someone and then later realised you were wrong? What happened?



Transcript

Conversation 1

Ellen: Hi Toby, do you want to come and see a movie with Jenna tonight? I thought it would be nice a nice way for us to get to know each other now that we've all moved in together.

Toby: I guess that could be nice. What movie are you going to see?

Ellen: We want to see Captain Universe, it's the latest Marvel movie.

Toby: Oh my god you're not serious, are you? You don't actually like that Hollywood garbage?

Ellen: I mean, I know it's not exactly a cinematic masterpiece, but sometimes it's nice to just watch a movie where you can just turn off your mind.

Toby: Honestly if you like stuff like that then I'm not sure you've ever turned your mind on in the first place Ellen.

Ellen: Excuse me?? Are you seriously insulting my intelligence because of my taste in movies??

Toby: Oh my god, calm down, don't get so emotional. I'm just saying we could actually go and watch something good instead of Galaxy Captain

Ellen: It's Captain Universe.

Toby: Whatever. Let me check what's on at the cinema... ahhh there's a French film called The Colours of Sadness, I've heard about this apparently it's amazing.

Ellen: Ok... what's it about?

Toby: It's a 3-hour black and white film about a colour blind painter who only paints people who are dying.

Ellen: That... sounds like the most depressing movie I could ever imagine.

Toby: I know right? It's so cool. The reviews say that more than 50% of the audience usually leaves the cinema crying!

Ellen: I mean... I really don't want to watch a sad film tonight Toby. And besides, it's a French film, is it dubbed? Because I hate subtitles.

Toby: Oh please, dubbed movies are terrible, you lose all of the emotion from the actors. I only ever watch movies in their original language. And I mean...you can read right? I'm sure you'll be fine with subtitles.

Ellen: You know what Toby, I might just go and see Captain Universe with Jenna.

Toby: Ok suit yourself, enjoy your brain-dead garbage.

Ellen: Yeah...thanks.

Conversation 2

Ellen: Toby, those are your dishes in the sink aren't they?

Toby: Ummm.... No. I don't think so. I'm pretty sure they're Jenna's

Ellen: Jenna's a vegetarian, and those dishes have clearly had meat on them. I know they're your dishes, and they've been there since yesterday.

Toby: Ok fine, they're mine, so what? It's not the end of the world if I leave two plates in the sink.

Ellen: It's not the end of the world but it's gross and I'm sick of it. I've made a list of chores around the house that you're going to follow from now on. Take a look.

Toby: Ellen what the hell? You didn't even ask me about this, if we're going to organize house cleaning I need to be involved. You can't just boss me around like this.

Ellen: To be honest I don't think you know the first thing about cleaning a house, so it looks like I'm going to have to organize it for you.

Toby: Let me have a look at this... wait you want me to vacuum and mop 3 times a week?? Are you crazy, that's way too much... and you and Jenna aren't even on this list.

Ellen: Well me and Jenna are clean people, so we don't need a list telling us what to do.

Toby: Ha, you think you're clean?? Have you seen the state of the bathroom? Why do you and Jenna always leave make up everywhere?

Ellen: I mean where else should we put it? It belongs in the bathroom.

Toby: Sure, but at least leave it in a bag or in the drawers.

Ellen: This is not the point of this conversation Toby. The point is you need to clean your dishes, and from now on I expect you to follow this list if you want to keep living here, and that's final.

Toby: Are you saying that if I don't vacuum 3 times a week you're going to kick me out??

Ellen: That's exactly what I'm saying. Keep the list, I have my own copy, and I'll be checking to make sure you do your chores.

Conversation 3

Toby: Hey Ellen, we have a new electricity bill, it's about 300 dollars for the last 3 months.

Ellen: Another one? I feel like we just paid off the last one. So I guess that's about 100 dollars each.

Toby: I don't think that's fair actually. I think I should pay about 50 dollars and you and Jenna can split the rest?

Ellen: Huh? But the bill is 300 dollars and there are 3 of us, why should you pay less??

Toby: Well, you guys use hair dryers almost every day, and those things use a lot of electricity.

Ellen: You've got to be kidding me. You use your gaming pc all day every day, I'm pretty sure that uses a whole lot of electricity. And besides, you spend more time at home than either me or Jenna, so if anything you should be paying more.

Toby: I mean sure, but I almost never leave my room, and you guys are always leaving lights on all over the house! I'll tell you what, I'll pay 75 dollars, and that's my final offer!

Ellen: Your final offer? Toby this isn't a negotiation, we split the bill 3 ways, you have to pay your share.

Toby: But you know I'm broke right now... if I pay 100 dollars I won't have enough money to eat. Do you really want me to starve Ellen?

Ellen: Wait you really don't have enough money for food?

Toby: No I don't, and if I pay 100 dollars I'll have to start skipping dinner.

Ellen: I didn't realise it was that bad, I'm sorry. If you really need it I'd be happy to lend you some cash... wait.. didn't you buy a big screen TV last week?

Toby: I mean... yeah I did, but it was on sale.

Ellen: God damnit Toby. Pay the bill, 100 dollars by Friday, no more excuses.

Toby: Fine. It was worth a shot.