

**SECRETS TO SUCCESS**

IN DEALING WITH

**DIFFICULT**

PEOPLE



JEAN GATZ

**Secrets to Success  
in Dealing with  
Difficult People**

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## **Secret # 1:**

**“I already took a pain pill,  
so why are you still here?”**

I'll bet, like me, you've been tempted to ask that question of a difficult person in your life when you have reached your breaking point and know that you would feel SO much better if you could just **say the words**. While it may be tempting, it's probably not a very good idea (unless you just think it to yourself without actually asking the question out loud). If you're in the workplace, this is definitely not a good career advancement move – especially if the difficult person is your co-worker, colleague, customer...or especially THE BOSS!

In this book I'll explain how and why difficult people do what they do, and provide some proven, time- tested strategies for success in dealing with them.

They're based on my work with clients and audiences all over the world as a keynote speaker for over 20 years. And the best part is...none of my strategies will get you into trouble!

We are all a lot more alike than we are different. We have much in common, and we share many of the same challenges. So no matter who you are, where you live, where your work or what you do, the strategies I'm sharing here can work for you – IF you choose to incorporate them into the relationships in your personal and professional life.

You're reading this book because you probably know some people who are extremely good at manipulating

others and may even consider it a real “talent.” Have you noticed these same people fail to understand why they can’t maintain their personal and professional relationships? Or maybe they *know* why...but they just don’t care. It’s really not that hard to figure out, is it?

Difficult people manipulate others to get what they want in life. While most of us don’t mind being *persuaded* to see an issue from someone else’s point of view, no one enjoys being manipulated by another person. Being described as *scheming*, *calculating* or *controlling* won’t win any points with family, friends, colleagues, customers and co-workers. But difficult people really don’t care!

First, let’s take a look at the three types of difficult people so you can identify them in your own life. You probably already know who they are, but now you will have all the facts you need to enlighten you, along with the tools you must have to deal with them!

### **When people are being AGGRESSIVE they often...**

- Care more about getting their needs met
- Care less about finding a solution for all

- Use manipulation and intimidation
- Don't use negotiation and compromise
- Get defensive when others disagree
- Refuse to listen when others are talking
- Tend to interrupt and talk over others
- Always have to be right
- Need to have the last word
- Have trouble apologizing when wrong
- Get angry with little provocation
- Use sarcasm and insults to get their way
- Try to control others' beliefs/ behaviors

**When people are being PASSIVE they often...**



- Take the path of least resistance
- Say “yes” when they want to say “no”
- Avoid confrontation at all costs
- Put their needs last
- Are “nice” - even at their own expense
- Apologize when they haven’t done wrong
- Allow others to disrespect them
- Excuse others’ inappropriate behavior
- Give in easily when manipulated
- Over-commit
- Resent others taking advantage of them
- Have difficulty setting fair boundaries
- Whine, complain and play the “victim”

- Avoid making decisions that will hold them responsible for the outcome

### **PASSIVE-AGGRESSIVE people often...**

- Withhold attention/recognition/ affection
- Use habitual tardiness as a control tactic
- Fail repeatedly to accomplish tasks
- Procrastinate and make excuses
- Blame other people for their failures
- Overreact with anger to a situation
- Gossip/tattle/ use other sabotage tactics
- Push away the people closest to them
- Use the silent treatment as punishment
- Fear becoming dependent on others

- Are afraid of competition
- Lack empathy for others' feelings
- Withdraw physically or emotionally to “pay people back”
- Refuse to take responsibility for the consequences of their choices

While every person and every situation is different, we often forget that difficult people share one trait in common. They've realized that being difficult gives them a feeling of power, of being in control over others, and usually results in their getting what they want. It's their standard operating behavior.

How might this relate to your life at the moment? If you're in the workplace, let's go there first. Is there a coworker or colleague whose instinctual behavior is creating problems – expensive or otherwise? Perhaps that behavior is negatively impacting your level of customer service, or making it difficult for you and others to do your jobs effectively and work together as a team.

What about your personal relationships? Is there a friend or family member whose instinctual behavior is causing difficulties for you? Are minor problems, not addressed, becoming major ones? Whether the person in question is part of your personal or professional life, how much longer can you afford to avoid the issue and make excuses for that behavior because the problem isn't big enough...yet?

While you are not accountable for others' behavior, you *are* accountable for addressing that behavior and setting boundaries when it negatively impacts you or the people for whom you are responsible. We don't have the power to change other people, but we do have the power to decide how their behavior will impact us and how we will choose to respond.

Difficult people are who they are because somewhere along the way they have been rewarded for their behavior. It may have happened when they were toddlers and threw their first temper tantrum. Or it may be an attitude and behavior they developed later in life. Without a doubt, they know what works and they use it to their advantage.

If you have a few difficult people in your life, you've probably noticed that they often try to manipulate the rest of us to get what they want. We've all experienced it. Sometimes they try to make us feel worried and afraid

about confronting them. Or they whine and complain, hoping that if we feel sorry for them we won't expect much of them.

Some are notorious for being friendly and agreeable when others are around, then they sabotage us at the first opportunity – often behind our backs. Others undermine us by gossiping, tattling and spreading rumors and outright lies about others – and about us, too!

No matter what type of difficult people we must contend with in our lives, we often inadvertently reward them on a regular basis. And we do that in so many ways! We often pay more attention to them than we want to - or probably need to. Not only do we give in to them, but we make excuses for them as well. It's easier to leave them alone and do the work ourselves rather than deal with them when they're not happy.

In the workplace, some managers repeatedly reward them by giving in or giving up, rather than holding them accountable. Customers and co-workers avoid them. And to top it all off, organizations consistently reward them with a paycheck! With those sorts of rewards in place, why would a difficult person go through the pain of changing a behavior if that behavior is working so well? They know what works, and they're not afraid to use it.

Since we don't have the power to change or control another human being, all we can change or control is the way we respond to them. When dealing with difficult behavior, we always have options.

We can choose to:

1. Ignore the problem and avoid the issue.
2. Make excuses.
3. Acknowledge the problem & take action.

If you choose the third option, remember that you can communicate what you need to say without being disrespectful. It's important to:

- Do your homework.
- Stick to those facts.
- Remain objective.
- Don't allow your emotions to take over.
- Set boundaries.
- Let others know they must respect them.

If this process doesn't work exactly like you hoped it would (remember, we can't change other people) you still have options – which we'll talk about later.

Over the years I've developed several strategies that have helped me tremendously in dealing with the difficult people in my life. I've shared them with my audiences and based on the feedback I've received over the years, I know they can work for you, too.

## When dealing with difficult people:

### 1. Stop making excuses for them.

When you attempt to explain to a difficult person how their behavior is negatively impacting others, you often get the following excuse. “Well, that’s just how I am.” Difficult people have a long list of excuses for their behavior – but very few apologies. When you’ve heard those excuses over and over, you begin to believe them yourself. You might think, “Well that’s just how they are, and I’ll have to learn to live with it.”

Think again! Your difficult person is training you to lower *your* standards to meet *theirs*! What’s wrong with *that* picture? Don’t fall into that trap! Anyone can change their behavior – if they really want to. But most difficult people choose NOT to change.

### 2. Stop taking their behavior personally.

If you step back and objectively observe them as they interact with others, you will probably notice that difficult people tend to treat other people exactly the same way they treat you. This insight allows you to be more objective – and successful – in your interaction with them. Instead of taking everything so personally, you gain a sense of being in control of yourself and the situation. It’s no longer about you. It’s **all** about them.



### **3. Stop rewarding them.**

Difficult people are not stupid. Why would they make the effort to change a behavior that is obviously working for them? Now take a look around your workplace, your family and your circle of friends and notice how you and others reward difficult behavior in various ways. You don't have the power to change a difficult person's style, but you DO have the power to change your style and let them know that you are rewriting the rules of your relationship.

Sometimes it's appropriate – and helpful - to have a conversation with others who are also being impacted by the difficult person's behavior. If you can agree on how you will stop rewarding the difficult behavior – individually and as a group – you may actually see the difficult behavior gradually change over time. It's no fun anymore to be difficult. There's no reward. So why bother?

On the other hand, many of my clients have shared stories of difficult employees who were given the choice to “shape up or ship out” and chose to leave the organization rather than work on changing their behavior. They decided it was simply easier to take their difficult behavior somewhere else.

#### **4. Put some distance between you.**

Sometimes this distance can be a physical distance. If you work with a difficult person, you don't have to carpool with him or go to lunch with her. If physical distance isn't possible you can put emotional distance between yourself and that person, depending on the situation.

Even if you can't "relocate" the problem person (boss, co-worker, customer, friend, parent, spouse, child, neighbor, committee member, etc.) one option may be to "relocate yourself." If you're in a job you detest, working with people you don't respect, for a company whose values are not in alignment with yours, you have options. If you're in an unhealthy relationship without safe, secure and respectful boundaries in which you feel drained of energy in mind, body and spirit...you have options.

No matter the distance, you can still stand up for yourself and set boundaries as necessary and appropriate. In a healthy relationship, rules and boundaries can be mutually agreed upon. But with difficult people you often have to be the one to set the rules, establish the boundaries and explain the consequences if the behavior doesn't change.

You will probably have to experiment with some of these strategies until you find which ones work best

for you and *your* difficult people. Be consistent in your interaction with them, and don't give up. And last but not least, hang on to your sense of humor to help keep things in perspective.





**Secret # 2:**  
**Handling Complaints**  
**and Dealing with Angry People**

My audiences often ask, “How do I handle the angry people in my life, at work and at home?” While I do talk extensively about “difficult people” in my keynotes, “angry people” are another matter. So I’ve included some of the strategies I share with my audiences. They can often help you “de-fuse” the situation and reduce the stress in your life.

We can all agree that rational, well-planned words and controlled behavior can be used effectively to express anger, seek satisfaction and get results in a professional, assertive and adult manner. But angry, upset people don’t always act like grown-ups...do they?

To prove my point, think back to the last time you had an argument with a three-year-old... and won! It can be quite a challenge, even though you are older, wiser, and certainly bigger than your opponent. An angry person can act very much like a little kid - upset, irrational, and ready to unload their anger on you. It’s impossible for you to communicate as adults because of their childish behavior.

Using *The Six A’s* will help you bring “the little kid” up to your adult level so the two of you can talk calmly about the issue at hand.

Here’s the process:

### **1. Assess.**

Let the other person “tell her story” or “have his say.” After just a few moments of listening, you may be ready to interrupt with a very logical solution. But “the little kid” doesn’t want to hear from you yet. Let them talk. Eventually they have to take a breath, which gives you an opportunity to move to the second step.

### **2. Acknowledge the problem.**

Use active listening skills and give the person your undivided attention. Even if you think they’re over-reacting, it’s important to validate *their* perception of the situation. Phrases such as “I can see you’re upset” or “I understand that you’re angry about what’s happened” can help you connect with them.

### **3. Agree to the extent you can.**

You don’t have to agree on who’s right and who’s wrong (unless you’re at fault) but you can agree that there’s a problem or that the person is upset. Such phrases as “I understand” or “I would be angry, too, if that happened to me” can demonstrate your empathy and concern.

I am definitely not saying you should take verbal abuse of any kind from any angry person – or anyone else, for that matter! You have the right to protect yourself. Don’t

be afraid or embarrassed to call for help, walk away or hang up the phone – whatever it takes to protect yourself if you feel threatened in any way.

#### **4. Apologize to the extent you can.**

You can apologize to customers, even if it's not your fault, because it's the *professional* thing to do. Any time you're at fault, you should apologize because it's the *right* thing to do. Know the difference between accepting responsibility and offering a sincere but blameless apology. For example, if your friend or co-worker gets a speeding ticket you can sympathize, even though it's not your fault. Examples are "I'm sorry that happened to you." In a customer service situation you might say, "I apologize that you're unhappy with our service/policy."

#### **5. Act within your authority.**

In a customer service situation if you can't solve the problem or offer some help, find someone who can. In other situations you may have no power to change anything. Remember the speeding ticket? But you can choose to offer your understanding, empathy and support if appropriate. And most important, remember that anger is a very contagious attitude. So don't catch someone else's anger! Stay calm.



## **6. Assess the outcome.**

Later, when you have time, think about how the conversation went and what the outcome was. What did you say that helped resolve the problem? What did you say that made matters worse? What would you do differently next time?

Taking time to analyze the conversation will help you be more successful the next time around. And we both know there **WILL** be a next time, right?





**Secret # 3:  
Put People in Charge  
of Their Own “Stuff”!**

Most of the people in our lives are quite capable of taking responsibility for their attitudes and behaviors, understanding that they are accountable for both. We all know *other* folks who can go an entire lifetime without taking responsibility for themselves and their actions. In fact, they don't take responsibility for much of anything at all. They have too much emotional baggage – too much “stuff” to manage on their own. So they search until they find someone to unload on – often without the unsuspecting person's permission or consent. If you are that person, read on!

Do you have difficult people in your life, at work or at home, who need to take ownership of their “stuff” as it applies to their attitudes and behaviors? Even though they've made poor choices and bad decisions over the years, they refuse to take responsibility and be held accountable for the *burdens of life* they have created for themselves.

Now don't get me wrong. I understand that some people, through no fault of their own, do need our help – either on a temporary or a permanent basis. But I'm asking you to focus now on the people in your life who *can* help themselves – but choose not to. Instead, they have passed their ‘stuff’ – their problems, troubles, trials and tribulations – on to you.

Whatever manipulative process they've used to get you

involved and keep you involved, *their* burden gradually becomes *your* burden. That's because they've figured out how to manipulate you into helping them carry their burden, even when it's not your job.

Quite often they are even skilled enough to *totally transfer* their burden over to you! So now you are feeling overloaded while they are free to make more poor choices and create more problems for themselves and others. And maybe you've decided it's time to do something about it.

After spending 27 years in the home in which we raised our three children, Les and I moved to a new home a few years ago. As you can imagine, we had accumulated quite a lot of memorabilia that was not ours. Their rationale was, "Mom and Dad, you have three attics. So you have lots of room to keep our stuff until we're ready for it." But the time had come, so we invited our (now adult) children to "come over and claim your stuff." We didn't mind storing their stuff when they were in college and getting settled, but now we were not willing to pay the movers \$90 an hour to move *their* stuff to our new home where we would continue to be responsible for it.

This transfer of "stuff" was relatively easy, as the original owners (our children) understood what we needed to accomplish and were quite willing to do their

part. That's not always as easy a process when you're dealing with a difficult person. Think about your present relationships – at work and at home.

Have you been holding on to someone else's "stuff" for them? Are you tired of doing that? Does it no longer make sense? Maybe you feel sorry for them. Or maybe they've managed to make you feel guilty, worried or scared and you're having trouble standing up to them.

What is it costing you in terms of money, time, worry, stress, anger and/or frustration to continue to be responsible for someone else's "stuff"? How much longer are you *willing* to do that?

Here are some helpful questions that can bring you the clarity you need to make some changes:

- Who are the people in my life who won't take responsibility for their actions?
- Am I carrying their burdens for them?
- Is this situation temporary or have they unloaded their troubles on me to avoid responsibility?
- Does guilt, worry, fear, or some other emotion

prevent me from standing up for myself?

- Which emotion is it?
- What is it costing me in terms of money, time, worry, stress, anger and/or frustration?
- What is it costing me in terms of my emotional and physical well-being?
- How much longer am I willing to do this?
- What is one step I can take NOW to put difficult people in charge of their lives, their choices and the consequences of their decisions?







**Secret # 4:**

**Who...Me? Difficult?  
NO way! Not ME!**

I understand that this section may be hard to read, and probably not what you expected to see in a book about dealing with difficult people. It may even come as a surprise, but it's important to think about it if you want to maintain healthy personal and professional relationships. No one (including me!) likes to admit it, but sometimes the trouble we find ourselves in can be of our own making.

This happens when we unintentionally contribute to ongoing conflict and actually help to “create” difficult people – those who didn't plan on being difficult until they had to interact with us!

So let's take a look at how even the most loyal, dedicated, reliable, sincere, honest, hard-working and trustworthy people can sometimes cause problems for themselves and others. And it all starts when communication mistakes begin to happen – because people are too busy to notice.

In today's competitive global environment, it's true that management and staff in every company, large and small, are expected to work harder, smarter, faster and better – often with fewer resources and fewer people. Employees are feeling overworked and overwhelmed, and stress is on the rise.

Without a doubt, this scenario doesn't apply only to the workplace, but to our personal lives as well. People

are busier than ever. They run households, volunteer in their churches, schools and communities, go back to school to continue their education, and work part-time or full time while managing the responsibilities of paying the bills, raising and educating their children and caring for their aging parents. Some are even raising their grandchildren.

It's no wonder that communication at personal and professional levels begins to suffer when people think, "Who has time to *communicate*? There's too much *work* to be done!" While they may be right, the problem is obvious. When communication isn't working well, things will only get worse.

When we're feeling the pressures of stress we can inadvertently complicate communication problems, add to them, and even create problems that didn't exist before we got involved. One of the biggest dilemmas we create for ourselves and others is when we don't take time to *think* before we *speak*. We react *emotionally* before we stop to reflect *logically* on the best way to handle a situation or a conversation.

So how can we communicate more effectively and avoid the most common mistakes that can lead to misunderstandings, low morale, hurt feelings, anger, frustration, resentment, less productive days at work and at home, and a variety of physical ailments related to increased stress levels?

Here are some things to think about. Before you express your opinions to others, think about using these suggestions as your guide.

### **1. Control your anger before you speak.**

Some people believe that being “brutally honest” can straighten out any misunderstanding and help “clear the air.” While most people can benefit from honest communication, it doesn’t need to be *brutal* – which is defined as *cruel, mean, harsh, callous, merciless* and *unkind*. Think about it. Why would anyone appreciate being spoken to in such a way? Would you?

Unfortunately some people don’t know how to be honest *without* being brutal. But that’s really a limitation or weakness of *their* style and may have nothing to do with the recipient of their brutally honest comments. It does, however, have a *lot* to do with their ability to sustain friendships and relationships at work and at home.

### **2. Don’t exaggerate.**

Avoid phrases that begin with the words “You always...” and “You never...” When you do this, your listener immediately begins thinking defensively, “Well, I don’t *always* do that.” You get the picture. Once this happens they are no longer listening to you. They have tuned

you out in self-defense and you have lost them. More importantly, you've also lost credibility that is often very difficult to recover and reestablish.

### **3. Give the other person time to absorb what you said and then respond to you.**

Talk rationally about what you need or want to happen. Don't make demands. While sharing your thoughts is important, don't spend so much time *telling* that you leave no time for *listening*. For a dialogue to take place at least two people must be present, and that means both people get a chance to talk.

### **4. Listen with your full attention.**

Resist the urge to think ahead to what you will say when it's your turn to talk again. If you do that, then your interpretation could be off track because you weren't tuned in. At that point, don't be surprised when an exasperated friend, co-worker or family member sighs and asks, "Weren't you listening? Didn't you hear a word I said?"

### **5. Rephrase until you can agree on what the other person said and what you heard.**

Listening with your eyes for body language and facial expression, as well as listening with your ears for the

words that are spoken and the *tone* in which they are spoken can help.

All of these strategies can help when “the wires have gotten crossed” and you’re trying to untangle your conversation with less stress for all involved.



**Secret # 5:**  
**Talk to Yourself Before  
You Talk to Someone Else!**

Negotiating to get our needs and wants met is an important part of everyday communication. In fact, we all negotiate every day, a lot more than we realize. Some people think that negotiating means getting their way every time – even if it means wearing others down until they agree, give in, give up or go away.

There is a reasonable and responsible way, however, to negotiate fairly and equitably so both parties feel good about the outcome. Over the years I've learned that preparing in advance makes me a better negotiator. So I always talk to myself before I talk with someone else (especially with a difficult person) and I start by asking myself a few questions.

**What do I really need or want?** Instead of jumping in and rushing ahead, I take time to identify what's really important to me. I used to think that *everything* was essential but I learned that some lesser points are actually sideline issues. It's better to identify my non-essential issues in advance than to walk away from the negotiation frustrated because I got several of the concessions I didn't really care about, and missed out on the critical ones I really needed.

Negotiating a curfew with teenagers is a good example. They suggest a time that is much later than you would agree to allow, knowing you will set an earlier time than they would ever agree to uphold. You both know, in



advance, that you will be able to meet somewhere in the middle.

There may be concessions and bargaining involved, such as allowing them to stay out later on Saturday night if they agree to come in earlier on Friday night. If you're a parent, you already know that negotiating with a teenager about *anything* can really put your skills to the test. But seriously, it's important to be clear in your mind about what you really want or need to happen.

**What does the *other* person need or want?** I'll bet you know some people who don't even understand this question! We all know what it's like to work with someone who is always in "I/my/me" mode. But words like "we/our/us" can also create problems if used inappropriately. Think about the teams and departments in your workplace. If you and I are on the same team and we're so focused on what's important to *us*, what *we* need, and what *our* goals are, we may lose sight of what other people in other departments, branches, offices or locations need from us to reach *their* goals and succeed in *their* efforts.

The same holds true for our personal relationships. It's no fun to be part of a family or a friendship in which the other person is always focused on himself or herself. If I concentrate only on what I need, want, require, or expect I can easily lose sight of what is fundamentally

important to the other people involved. And that scenario can bring any negotiation, or any relationship, to a screeching halt.

### **Where am I willing to yield to get what I want?**

In every negotiation everyone likes to feel that they won on some point or another. If the same person wins all the time, it soon becomes apparent to both parties that there's very little negotiating taking place. Those sideline issues I mentioned earlier can become your bargaining chips if you're willing to yield on some points while holding firm to others. If you know in advance that you probably won't get everything you're asking for, what are you willing to give up in order to create a more successful outcome for both parties?

### **What issues are not negotiable for me?**

As we all know, some things are simply not negotiable. While most of the issues on which we negotiate are not life threatening, many of them are very serious matters. So I have to decide if the "non-negotiable" rule applies to a particular situation at work or at home.

**What about the other person?** To be fair, I must be willing to accept – or at least try to understand – what is not negotiable for the other person involved in this process as well. If I can do that, we've got a much better chance of working things out to our mutual satisfaction.

## What happens when I don't get what I want?

Some people think of themselves as very gracious losers ... until they actually lose at something. If you've ever observed a five-year-old in action, you've noticed how they are skilled at using various persuasive techniques to get what they want.

They can often charm their way *into* or *out of* almost any situation. When the cute tactics fail, however, they are masters at changing strategies – often in a heartbeat. They may pout, whine, scream, or stomp their feet to get their way. Adults who resort to childish antics to get their way don't usually realize how their “less than mature” behavior is affecting their credibility and their relationships.

Negotiations are rarely isolated events, especially in the workplace. Over time we develop a reputation based on how well we achieve our goals while taking other people's needs, wants, concerns and feelings into consideration. Although it feels good to come out a winner, make sure you don't burn any bridges while basking in your success.

If you got everything you wanted every time you had a conversation with someone, people might not necessarily describe you as being a good negotiator. Instead, you might develop a reputation for being manipulative, pushy, stubborn, bossy, obstinate,

inflexible and immovable. Oh... and did I mention  
“difficult”?



**Secret # 6:**  
**Strategies for Resolving Conflict**

**Here are some strategies to keep you on track when trying to resolve conflict.**

- ✓ Don't catch someone else's anger.
- ✓ Maintain your self-control.
- ✓ Identify the problem, complaint or conflict.
- ✓ Ask questions to clarify, not to confront.
- ✓ Listen actively.
- ✓ Be aware of your spoken/verbal messages.
- ✓ Be aware of non-verbal/unspoken messages.
- ✓ Focus on the present.
- ✓ Don't get stuck in the past.
- ✓ Don't try to predict the future.
- ✓ Accept responsibility for your actions.

- ✓ Be willing to admit your mistakes.
- ✓ Agree on what needs to happen next.
- ✓ Do your part to follow-through.
- ✓ Keep communication open and honest.
- ✓ Negotiate fairly.
- ✓ Act responsibly.
- ✓ Avoid manipulating others.
- ✓ Get creative about resolving issues.
- ✓ Bring people together when appropriate.
- ✓ Be ready to make tough decisions.
- ✓ Accept that you can't change anyone.
- ✓ Don't focus on who's right-who's wrong.
- ✓ Focus on the problem.

- ✓ Follow up as necessary.
- ✓ Keep your sense of humor handy.





**Secret # 7:**  
**Make Sure You're  
in Healthy Relationships!**

As I wrote in my award-winning book, ***10 Ways to STAND OUT from the Crowd***, it's important that you understand and recognize which relationships in your life have a positive impact upon your health and well-being...and which ones don't.

As adults we are responsible for meeting our own needs. When we allow our self-worth to be influenced or determined by the way we allow others to treat us, or by the fact that we don't respect ourselves, we are no longer in a good place. Those attitudes and behaviors are not healthy ones for our emotional well-being.

Each of us has value and worth. Without a doubt all relationships – no matter how respectful, loving or professional they are – will have their share of challenging moments. These may include hurt feelings, disagreements, tension, disappointment and compromise. In a healthy relationship these feelings are dealt with in an adult, respectful way and do not become toxic and harmful to you or the other person. In an unhealthy relationship the scenario may be quite different.

Here are some points to consider when you are deciding whether your relationships are healthy or unhealthy.

## People in a HEALTHY relationship:

- Enjoy being together
- Treat each other respectfully
- Trust each other
- Feel safe from abuse of any kind
- Communicate assertively
- Respect one another's privacy
- Encourage each other to pursue outside interests and activities
- Feel they have something worthwhile to offer the other person
- Experience more good times than bad times

## People in an UNHEALTHY relationship:

- Become possessive or jealous
- Are abusive in some way - physically, verbally, emotionally, sexually or financially
- Use sarcasm and put-downs to make others feel bad about themselves
- Use manipulation to get their way
- Become angry without much provocation
- Believe their way is the only right way
- Argue in public
- Are controlling
- Isolate each other from other people, activities and interests
- Use threats and intimidation

- Experience more bad times than good times
- When you're in a healthy relationship, at work or at home, you feel good about yourself and the other person because you:
  - Are proud of the other person and their accomplishments, no matter how small
  - Respect their ideas
  - Look to them for advice and support
  - Feel better about yourself when you are with them
  - Have fun with them
  - Feel safe in their presence
  - Truly like them
  - Know they are a positive and integral part of your success and well-being

## **And they feel exactly the same way about you!**

I've shared a lot of strategies in the pages of this book. Now you get to choose which ones you want to incorporate as you deal with the difficult people in your life – at work and at home. Please don't get discouraged or give up! And never forget that although you don't have the power to change a difficult person, you DO have the power to decide how their behavior will impact you. And you always have options!

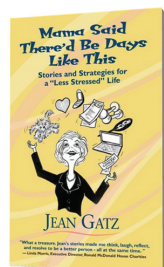
I trust that you've found this book helpful and that you'll go back to specific chapters as needed. No matter which strategies you choose to put into practice, remember this:

If you want to be...Healthy, Happy, Successful, Confident, Empowered, Energetic, Innovative and Trusted... then you must work hard to surround yourself with people at work and at home who are safe, supportive, honest and respectful. Your personal and professional relationships impact every area of your life. So make sure your relationships are the very best they can be! You deserve nothing less!

Looking for more strategies to help you deal with stress, manage change, reduce conflict and handle life's challenges? Check out my other books at <http://jeangatz.com/shop/>

## **Mama Said There'd Be Days Like This!**

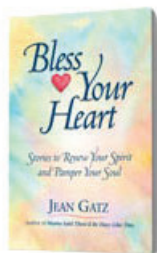
Does your day begin with promise – until you get out of bed and begin it, and then it's downhill from there? Do you feel pulled in a dozen different directions at once? Do you have colleagues, customers and kids who are getting on your last nerve? If so, this book is for you! Jean blends entertaining yet true stories with insightful strategies to help you handle change with more flexibility, make tough decisions with more clarity, communicate more effectively, and deal with difficult people – without becoming one yourself.



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## Bless Your Heart

You don't have to be a Southerner to appreciate the versatility of that simple yet powerful little phrase, "Bless your heart." Jean's original stories will make you laugh, think and reminisce about your own life experiences.



When you open your mind and heart to look at life from a fresh perspective, you can renew your spirit every single day. And that will qualify you as an honorary Southerner even if you weren't born and raised in the South... Bless your heart!

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## 10 Ways to STAND OUT from the Crowd

To be successful today, you must STAND OUT FROM THE CROWD. The question you must ask is: "What do you bring to the table that's so unique and memorable that people CHOOSE to be your customer, colleague, coworker, employee, leader, partner or friend?" Jean's award-winning



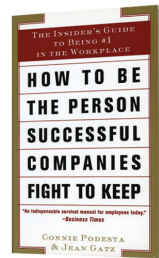


book gives you the tools you need to OUT-THINK old ideas and OUT-SHINE past performance in your personal and professional life.

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## How to be the Person Successful Companies Fight to Keep

Jean doesn't just talk about taking charge of your career. She literally wrote the book on it! From interviews with hundreds of decision makers, Jean learned how they determine which employees they would fight to keep. Jean will help you look at your future and understand what today's organizations expect from employees at every level. With insight and humor, Jean shares the skills you must demonstrate to remain employable and marketable in challenging times. Keep your options open and develop a plan to build the career you want and deserve.



<http://jeangatz.com/shop>

## **Wait! There's more! Keep reading!**

If you enjoyed this eBook, be sure to visit my website at [www.jeangatz.com](http://www.jeangatz.com). It's jam packed with lots of additional free resources, quizzes, articles, videos, ideas, strategies and solutions to help you create and sustain the life you want to have – now and into the future.

And if you ever need me to deliver my message “in person” at your next event, I'm only an email or phone call away!

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### **Let's stay in touch!**

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