



HOW TO COMMUNICATE
with a person who is
Critical, Negative & Stern

Critical, Negative & Stern PRO's & CON's

The Critical person has many positive qualities. They are usually logical, factual, accurate and go by the book. They are continually looking for better ways to do things. Although introverted, they will speak up when they think something is wrong or needs to be improved. To be sure you're dealing with this type, let's take a look at some of their characteristics.

Here are some traits of a Critical person:

- Restrained
- Precise
- High Standards
- Analytical
- Sensitive
- Accurate
- Cautious
- Compliant

Research shows that only 14% of the population is Critical. Of course there are some types of professions (accounting, engineering) and business areas (IT, Quality) where the percentage may be higher. In general though, this means that 86% of the population may have challenges communicating with this personality type.

Let's look at some of those challenges. Because Critical people tend to express themselves in a negative, skeptical manner, it is difficult for others to deal with them. While other people may see possibility, Critical people look at what's missing. They are the "glass is half empty" people of the world.

While others might try to help them, they are usually resistant to suggestions. They might prefer to complain and bemoan their circumstances rather than believe that things can get better.

Even though they themselves are sensitive to criticism, they won't hold back their criticism of others. Critical people tend to live in a world that is black and white, right and wrong. They tend to be judgmental and may give the impression that they are "holier than thou".



SPECIFIC TIPS

- ❖ **Do not be touchy-feely.** This style prefers to keep their distance and is uncomfortable with public displays of affection. So keep interactions professional and impersonal.
- ❖ **Don't disagree with them directly.** This will only make them defensive and have them dig in their heels. It's better to ask them if they can see the situation from a different perspective. Is it possible that there is a different interpretation. Because they don't want to be seen as narrow-minded (although they may be), they may try to come up with an alternate opinion.
- ❖ **"As-is" the conversation.** This means telling the Highly Critical person what it is like for you to communicate with them. When I have been hired to coach this type of person, they are usually resistant to suggestions. And yet they say they want my help. I have had to tell Critical people that I don't think I can help them because of their lack of willingness to consider other possibilities. Then I share a few examples of their resistance. Usually this has them become a bit more open – for a short period of time. So if all else fails, tell it like it is.

Critical, Negative & Stern #1 MISTAKE

THEY NEED: INFORMATION, INFORMATION, INFORMATION

#1 Mistake Most People Make When Communicating with a Critical Person

Most people try to use emotion and personal persuasion when communicating with a Critical person. They believe that personal experience and the stories of others are compelling.

However, a Critical person is persuaded by tangible facts, statistics, and valid research. Objective reasoning is more likely to get results than subjective information such as gut feelings and intuition. So leave your feelings and opinions out of the equation and just stick to the facts!

USE DATA AND EVIDENCE!

ACTION PLAN

Now that you have learned more about the Critical behavioral style, take a moment and think of some people you know who may fit this description (customers, employees, work associates, family, friends or even casual acquaintances). Then, fill out the table below.

	NAME OF PERSON	MY CHALLENGES COMMUNICATING WITH THEM	TIPS FOR COMMUNICATING MORE EFFECTIVELY
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“There’s nothing particularly wrong with pessimism. Optimism is broad-based thinking; pessimism is detail-oriented thinking.” ~ David Rakoff

Critical, Negative & Stern COMMUNICATION DO's & DON'Ts

- ✓ Approach them in a rational, serious and direct way.
- ✓ Use a thoughtful approach. Build credibility by looking at all sides of each issue.
- ✓ Prepare your case in advance
- ✓ Present specifics and do what you say you can do.
- ✓ Better to under-promise and over-deliver
- ✓ Draw up an "Action Plan" with scheduled dates and milestones.
- ✓ If you disagree, prove it with data, facts or testimonials from respected sources.
- ✓ Provide them with the information and the time they need to make a decision.
- ✓ Allow them their space.

- X *Don't be disorganized or messy.*
- X *Don't be casual, informal or personal.*
- X *Don't force a quick decision.*
- X *Don't be vague about expectations or fail to follow through.*
- X *Don't over-promise or exaggerate.*
- X *Don't be abrupt and rapid.*
- X *Don't appeal to opinion or feelings as evidence.*
- X *Don't use closes or incentives to get the decision.*
- X *Don't touch them.*



“ Both hope and pessimism are deeply contagious. And no one is more infectious than a leader. ”

~ John Ortberg