

TIPS FOR HANDLING PRICKLY PEOPLE WITH CARE

ADAPTED FROM *GET ALONG* BY ARNOLD SANOW AND SANDRA STRAUSS

With each interaction, we have to answer whether this **close encounter of the prickly kind** is worth addressing or letting go. If it is worth addressing, try some of these tips:

- Take a problem-solving perspective
- Change your responses
- Consider your potential role as “victim”
- Establish/maintain boundaries
- Plan positive responses
- Decide in advance how you’ll respond
- Practice visualizing the new response
- Project confidence
- Observe your thoughts and emotions
- Use positive self-talk
- Focus on breathing to bring down emotions
- Keep your cool
- Use assertive strategies *consistently*
- Seek support

Most importantly, we should avoid being the “thorn” in our relationships. Take valuable self-assessments often with respect to how people respond to you. Look in the mirror and ask: Do people appear intimidated by me? Do they avoid talking to me? Do people stop talking when I’m around? Do I get a regular stream of defensive reactions? If yes, these could be telltale signs signaling that others experience discomfort and choose avoiding your presence.

