WHAT IS RUDENESS? Rude behavior shows up in a variety of ways. Perhaps someone shows off or dominates. Maybe they intimidate, coerce or control. Maybe they humiliate or dismiss you. Behavior like this has an impact...sometimes for minutes or hours and sometimes for days or even years.

HOW DOES RUDENESS AFFECT US? Rudeness can cause us stress, erode our self-confidence, destroy our relationships and impact our workplaces.

- Rudeness causes physical stress that can impact health. Rudeness can cause anger, increase stress, raise blood pressure, wear down our bodies and weaken our immune systems.
- Rudeness erodes self-confidence. As someone treats us rudely, we may begin to doubt ourselves. Over time, persistent rudeness may lead to anxiety or depression.
- Rudeness destroys relationships. People want to connect and have a sense of belonging. When our relationships are troubled, we may experience loss or a sense of failure or not fitting in.
- Rudeness impacts the workplace. Incivility lowers morale and productivity, may result in absenteeism and illness and impacts employment choices.

GET A CLEAR HEAD. Since rude behavior can have a significant impact, it pays to get a clear head before deciding how to respond.


2. Don’t take it personally. Things can happen for reasons having nothing to do with you. Maybe you were just in the line of fire. It may be freeing to remember that the situation is not about you.

3. Decide what to do. Take time to consider whether you need to take action. You may decide to let it go if it is a fleeting thing or someone you will never see again. If the situation could happen again or involves someone in your daily life, you may decide to respond.

HOW TO RESPOND TO RUDENESS. If you decide to respond to rude behavior, take the following steps.

1. State the facts. Tell the offender the facts—what happened. For instance, if you were accused of being dishonest, you could say: “You said I was dishonest.”

2. Inform of the impact. Then let the person know how it impacted you—your feelings. “I felt hurt and offended.” When you inform someone of how you felt, you honor yourself and give the other person an opportunity to own up to their part. Allow the person to respond—you may learn about what prompted the behavior.

3. Request a change. Ask the person to stop doing the offending behavior and make clear what you prefer. “Please don’t accuse me of being dishonest, again. If you are unsure about something involving me, please ask me.”
HOW TO AVOID BEING RUDE. You may not be aware that your behavior is offending others. If you notice that your relationships aren’t so pleasant, you may want to take a closer look at your own behavior.

Are you dominating? Intimidating? Coercing or controlling? Do you humiliate or dismiss people?

TO AVOID BEING RUDE, DO THE FOLLOWING:

1. **Slow down and be present in your life.** We live fast paced lives these days. Multitasking is a way of life. If you feel the need for better balance and connection with others and yourself, slow down. As you slow down, your stress goes down, your connections go up and chances are you will be more considerate of others.

2. **Listen with interest and concern.** Being aware of others—understanding what they are going through—is where civility begins. Our best responses come from “knowing the feeling” that someone else is having. Empathy breeds goodwill, which is powerfully contagious.

3. **Keep a positive attitude.** Whether positive or negative, our attitudes impact our destinies. A positive attitude can make a person cheerful, attentive and even more likable. As you remain optimistic, you can increase your resilience to deal with nuisances or challenges.

4. **Respect others.** Show people that you value spending time with them. Don’t breeze by if you don’t have to. Use body language that signals your interest and attention.

5. **Disagree graciously.** Interrupting, contradicting bluntly, intimidating or raising your voice are rude ways to disagree. Instead, try focusing on what the other is saying—ask questions if you don’t fully understand. Consider that there may be more than one way of looking at things.

6. **Get to know the people around you.** Generally speaking, you are more likely to be patient and understanding when you know someone than when you don’t. If a stranger behaves rudely, you may be quick to judge them and react rudely yourself.

7. **Pay attention to the little things.** Simple things like saying “good morning,” “please,” “thank you,” and “excuse me” go a long way in showing respect and making connection.

8. **Ask first, then tell.** When things get tense, if you can, ask the other person to share their views first. If you ask first, you signal an interest in the person and set yourself up for a respectful dialogue. When you tell first, you may come across controlling, intimidating or dismissive and may shut down the conversation.