

# 8 Character Traits That May Be Hiding Mental Problems

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November 4, 2018

Very often, we tend to interpret a person's behavior as an act that reflects their character, however, behaviors don't always tell us everything we need to know about a person's personality. The desire to classify people and judge them prevents us from seeing things that can explain the reason for that behavior, and according to prominent American psychotherapists, Beck, and Arthur Freeman, authors of "Cognitive Therapy of Personality Disorders," something bigger often hides in abnormal behavior that can indicate a mental illness with the same symptoms. In order for you to try and identify these disorders in their initial stages and to prevent further development and/or treat it, and especially so as not to rush to judge people because of their behavior, we've collected for you eight personality traits that many of you have encountered in a certain person and perhaps interpreted incorrectly.



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## 1. Irresponsibility

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### **The problem:**

This type of disorder includes people who want to work less and rest much more. It is true that most of us want this, but there are quite a few people who are willing to take it to an extreme. For example, a person who works at a company and takes a high number of days off, unpaid

leave at their own expense, or who is permanently late to work, may be diagnosed by psychiatrists as having an anti-social personality disorder. This disorder includes other symptoms such as:

- The desire to lie often – or other forms of deceit for pleasure or personal gain.
- A reckless disregard for their personal and economic security - can quit their job without worrying about alternatives beforehand.
- Will live at the expense of others - sit at home, spend other's money and not express remorse for it.
- Make unplanned purchases.

**The solution:**

The way to deal with people who suffer from this sort of disorder is through time-management and rewards. For example: Promise yourself a gift or a small reward if you can stick to a plan you defined in advance for a few days, and if you manage to meet it, buy what you promised yourself and move on to the next goal. Doing this will help you develop the ability to create and keep a schedule which you'll later be able to adapt to a regular and organized lifestyle.

## 2. Shyness

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**The problem:**

Shyness is a feeling of fear or discomfort that exists in a person who is in the company of other people and is often due to a lack of self-confidence. Over-shyness can lead to total isolation and even a reluctance to make contact with the outside world in extreme cases. People who suffer from shyness create a kind of "emotional wall" that prevents them from feeling an urge to connect with others, to the point of choosing to work in unsocial settings or choosing to take part in other activities which aren't social in any way. Although rare, over-introspection can lead to a schizoid personality disorder that includes the following symptoms:

- Indifference to criticism or praise.
- The absence of close friends or the presence of only one close friend.
- A tendency to sink into dreams and fantasies often.
- Emotional coldness, detachment, and little emotion.

**The solution:**

This disorder can be prevented through several treatment methods, and one of the most effective is to engage in any group activity such as painting lessons, pilates, language learning, or yoga. For example, instead of saying "I don't like people ..." you should say "I don't like this thing ..." (behavior, item, clothing, hobby, appearance, etc.). This approach can help with therapy and through it, you can start seeing the good in people, not just bad.



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### 3. Procrastination

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#### **The problem:**

This section includes rebels who do not wish to act in accordance with societal rules. This characteristic is expressed in behaviors such as postponing actions necessary for a later date or procrastination while doing various actions. Procrastination can lead, among other things, to a passive-aggressive personality disorder, which often accompanies chronic depression. In any case, this disorder needs to be distinguished from minor youthful rebellion in school or high school, and you can identify the problem through the following symptoms:

- Irritability in response to certain requests to do unpleasant things, but normal for most people, such as washing dishes, taking out the garbage and so on.
- Very slow work rate and poor work quality.
- Hostile to helpful advice from those around to optimize the speed and quality of work.

- Angry and unreasonable criticism of the people who had the authority to do something.

**The solution:**

The complexity of preventive care of this problem lies in the person themselves, as they usually think they aren't at fault and therefore don't need to change anything. One way to improve the situation is by allowing the person to choose between two or more tasks they would like to perform, another way can be through a social game, where a person who tends to procrastinate all the time is given the opportunity to feel what others do when they act in such a way. In most cases, such treatment will stop this behavior and make the person more sensitive to their environment.

## 4. Impulsivity and hot temper

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**The problem:**

Apart from dangers such as high blood pressure and other heart problems, a person who is unable to control their anger is at a high risk of developing a borderline personality disorder. One of the typical symptoms of this disease involves a sharp change in mood without any notice. Of course, simple impulsivity isn't so dangerous, just make sure it doesn't usually come with a hot temper and one or more of the following symptoms:

- Unstable romantic relationships and odd friendships that don't last long.
- Wasting money and purchasing products without any need often.
- Speeding while not paying attention to others to the point of risking accidents.
- Chronic boredom and mood swings for no apparent reason.

**The solution:**

Prevention of this disorder can be done through a variety of treatments, including taking antidepressants (prescribed by a qualified physician of course). However, before trying medication one should try anger management and self-help groups. Another great way could be rewarding oneself for controlling impulses they couldn't control before. For example, if a person used to go into an electronics store to buy a computer monitor and instead left the store with different products they didn't necessarily need, and after treatment, is able to resist the urge, after a few times the person can reward themselves with buying something they've wanted for a while.





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## 5. Self-criticism

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### **The problem:**

It's perfectly normal to be aware of our imperfections and striving for perfection is an important value, but you have to know where to set the limits because excessive self-criticism can result in an avoidable personality disorder that in most cases develops at some point into panic attacks, depression, and sleep disorders. It is necessary to understand that self-criticism is useful in small doses and even drives us to self-development, but to an excessive degree, it is dangerous to our mental health. Therefore, if a person tends to judge themselves too much, they should check whether the following symptoms also exist:

- Intense and immediate anger from criticism or condemnation.
- Not sharing their opinion to avoid social discomfort.
- Lack of readiness to talk to people, except in cases where they are sure of acceptance.
- Refusal of proposals or ideas involving personal risks, for example: refusing a promotion at work if the job requires communication with new people.

### **The solution:**

Practice of preventing false predictions can be an excellent solution for those who suffer from this disorder. All that a person with this disorder has to do is write the action they are about to perform with their fear, for example: "If I walk to an unfamiliar town at night on my own, I may get robbed." After doing the action, they'll have to write down the results home and record the result. Next time, if they have doubts or false predictions about something, they can open the notebook and read the notes they wrote to be reassured that nothing bad will happen to them.

## 6. Suspicion

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### **The problem:**

Most of us are paranoid from time to time, which is quite normal, but there are people who cross the logical borders with their suspicions, to the point where they open fake accounts on social networks, listen to other people's phone calls, and even hire private detectives to snoop around. A person whose suspicion causes them to do such things may suffer from a paranoid personality disorder, and the symptoms that accompany it cause other problems such as:

- Unreasonable distrust of their spouse.
- Search for hidden meanings in ordinary human activities, for example, the neighbor slamming the door of his house hard to annoy him.
- A tendency to think that everyone around them is guilty of something.
- The lack of a sense of humor and the inability to see funny things in everyday situations.

### **The solution:**

A good way to combat chronic suspicion is by writing up a list of acquaintances and close friends on a smartphone or on a paper, and each time one of them meets an expectation, mark a check or a + next to their name. For example, if you thought your work friends would forget you existed at a company party, but actually everyone paid attention to you all evening, mark their names so the next time you suspect someone of something, you can check the number of positive markings on the list and the mistrust will disappear.



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## 7. Devotion

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### **The problem:**

Devotion is an important and lofty trait that many people look for in those around them. It is quite normal to rely on friends and family, but you should be able to tell the difference between devotion and the excessive dependence of the devoted person, which may testify to a dependent personality disorder. The main indication of a severe state of the phenomenon is the inability of the person to make their own decision without the approval of another person, in addition to the following symptoms:

- The tendency to agree with the people around them even if they are wrong in their decision.
- Discomfort when left alone with a responsibility, and the need to avoid being alone in general.
- Perform unpleasant or degrading actions to please someone else.
- Obsessive thoughts about being betrayed by everyone around them.

**The solution:**

The best way to fight this disorder is to gather as much support as possible for your abilities, for example, if you cook meals on a regular basis, ask if the food tastes good. After you received confirmation of this, write it down. The next time you feel like you need confirmation or assurance from someone, take a look at the list of things you were told for a fact that your good at and give yourself that much-needed confidence boost.

## 8. Sensitivity

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**The problem:**

Excessive sensitivity can be a symptom of hysterical personality disorder that is also called "hysteria" colloquially. The desire to attract attention is natural in humans unless you take it to places of anger or sudden tantrums. The most significant characteristic of this disorder is emotional speech and the absence of certain details in the conversation at the same time, for example, asking "how was your mother's behavior?" The answer is likely to be "it was very good," without any further details. To know if a person is suffering from this personality disorder, there are other symptoms that can be diagnosed:

- A constant search for support, approval, and praise from a respected person.
- The inability to concentrate over time on one task.
- Rapid mood swings
- Intolerance of procrastination with a constant desire to do something.

**The solution:**

One of the best ways to fight hysteria is to work with a timer. You must set a timer for 30 minutes or one hour, and perform one task within that time. Although it seems easy, this exercise will be difficult to perform for a person who is overly emotional due to the inability to stay in one place for a long time. Moreover, it is difficult for such people to set goals because they usually fantasize about something wonderful but undefined, so setting an exact goal is

the best method for them. It can be learning how to cook a risotto by the end of the year or promoting a particular product within two months of making that decision.