

## Why Some Folks Don't Like You Regardless of What You Do

If you're anything like me, you probably consider yourself likable, and not just that, you consider yourself to be lovable. You know the value of your heart and how great of a friend, acquaintance or connection you are. Everyone connected to you wins because you are their biggest cheerleader! Nevertheless, you've walked into some spaces and places where you weren't necessarily received well. This is especially true in the workplace. You've said a thousand "hellos," gave away countless compliments and even helped people in one way or another, and one would think that after all this, you'd be received or celebrated by the people around you. Instead, you are barely tolerated and this can be extremely confusing, especially considering Proverbs 18:24, which reads, "A man that hath friends must shew himself friendly: and there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother." You've shown yourself to be a friendly person, so why is it that some of the folks you've been the friendliest to are now regarding you as an enemy, a threat or a nuisance? This question plagues the hearts and minds of many people because, quite frankly, it just doesn't make sense! I have literally found myself reevaluating my encounters with people, trying to see if I've said something or done something that, unbeknownst to me, was offensive. "Maybe I laughed too hard at her joke or maybe she cracked a joke and it went completely over my head." I've thought about every possible scenario, and like you, I've ruled out the obvious issue because I wanted to believe that people who tend to be good to other people would be good to me. And I'm patient! I've waited it out, considering the fact that I'm an introvert and some people are just plain socially awkward, so maybe, the issue could have been that they don't know how to engage with a stranger. A year or two later, the stranger-danger tag was no longer looming over my head and I've watched these same people completely embrace some of the fresher faces and even pursue them, all the while, giving me a faint hello and rushing past me. I'm an eye contact person, so maybe (just maybe), I needed to look away so that they'd feel more comfortable whenever we are forced to engage in any type of dialogue. Or maybe, I should try lowering my head like a submissive mutt and let them have an alpha role if the problem is that they are battling it out for the top tier in whatever organization we are all a part of. Maybe, I'm like my dog (or he's like me), whereas, I don't understand the concept of submitting to another creature just because that creature flashes its teeth at me and growls. Now, don't get me wrong—I submit to my leaders in every organization or structure; this isn't the problem. I'm not talking about leaders, but peers or even some people who serve in leadership roles. What is it about me that makes them uncomfortable? I've asked myself this question, while the answer loomed over my head screaming to be acknowledged. "Ma'am, what you're dealing with is a green-eyed monster that the Bible says is as cruel as the grave! Ma'am, you're dealing with a competitive person who has deemed you to be a threat to his or her position, role or plans! Ma'am?! Ma'am!"

The same is true for you. In the majority of cases where you find yourself trying to at least build a civil relationship with another human being, and that person not only rejects your invitation, but goes out of his or her way to be relatively rude to you, you're dealing with competition. And of course, it rarely ever makes sense because, chances are, you don't pose a threat to their position. Nevertheless, some people's perceptions are more real to them than reality itself, so whenever they mentally label you as a threat, they (by default and instinct) begin to build up walls to protect themselves from what they believe to be your attempt to steal the rug from underneath their feet. And if they have any power within the company or organization that you are a part of, they will show others how they want you to be treated by, for example, never acknowledging you, never celebrating you and somehow forgetting to tag or invite you to events that you are either required to attend or social events. The goal here is to appeal to those who want to ascend the ranks within that institution; this signals to them that if they want to have longevity and power within that company or structure, they too have to ignore you and conveniently forget you whenever they are planning something that involves the people in that space. This is a simple case of them using their power and influence for evil, but for what? Because they forgot to cast down imaginations and every high thing (or thought) that exalted itself against the knowledge of God; they forgot to bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ. And so now, you're being punished for having whatever quality they deem to be a threat to their positions.

And of course, there are other reasons that they may not like you, but the most obvious and common culprit is competition. Here are a few more reasons to look out for:

1. You may be the problem. It is possible that you are rude, you don't respect order and hierarchy or you may have violated some unwritten rule. Either way, always do a heart check to ensure that you are not the problem causing the problem.
2. They may be trying to impress someone else who doesn't like you. Some people specialize in false loyalty; they will do and say whatever it takes to impress whomever it is that they are trying to impress. And if the person they appealing to doesn't like you, they will also follow suit.
3. You look like or remind them of someone who's hurt them in the past. As asinine as this sounds, a large percentage of Americans have trouble embracing folks who remind them of their enemies.
4. Gossip and slander may be behind this mess. In many cases, the issue is, they've listened to another individual who may have been jealous of or threatened by you, and that individual slandered your name and your character.
5. They had a bad dream about you. This is especially true for Christians! It sounds silly, but if a person has a bad dream about you, that individual may take that dream as some sort of omen, not considering that dreams are oftentimes symbolic and the people that we see in our dreams are just types and shadows of other people!

6. They truly are socially awkward. Socially awkward people can and do embrace some people, while avoiding others. This is because they tend to be socially conscious, and there is something about your personality that makes them nervous or, at minimum, uncomfortable.
7. You stole a moment from them. It is possible that you spoke when they wanted to speak or you gave the best answer in a meeting. People can and do hold grudges over the silliest of matters!
8. You were awarded a role that they wanted to assume. It is possible that they wanted the promotion or the accolades that you received.
9. You posted something to social media that offended them. Hey, we're living in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and it happens! Sometimes, a Facebook post is taken out of context, and you'll pay the price for virtually offending them or, in some cases, daring to have a thought process that does not mirror their own.
10. You look and sound like a butt-kisser. This is especially true if you are an over-achiever. If you like order, you're respectful, you're punctual and you always make yourself available to your bosses or leaders, some people can and will get offended. Consequently, they'll label you as a butt-kisser because they feel that you are trying too hard, and ultimately making them look bad.

So, what can you do to ensure that you are better received?

1. Remain kind.
2. Forgive people for being just that—people!
3. Be helpful.
4. Stop trying to be accepted or received!

Understand this—there are some people who simply will not embrace you no matter what you do! They've already decided that you are problematic, and because of this, they will always mistreat, mishandle and misunderstand you. Forgive them and keep moving! Don't lower your standards, dumb yourself down or kiss up behind them in an attempt to win their favor. I always say this... stop trying to fit in before you mess around and succeed! What this means is—if you manage to fit into the small spaces they've carved out for you, you will lose your identity just to win them over. It's not worth it. Be who God designed you to be and don't apologize for it!