The Sociopath Next Door

By Martha Stout Ph.D. (2005).

THIRTEEN RULES FOR DEALING WITH SOCIOPATHS

IN EVERYDAY LIFE

1. The rule involves accepting the bitter pill that some people literally have no conscience.
   1. They look just like us
2. In contest between your instincts and what is implied by the role of a person has taken on—educator. Doctor, leader, animal lover. Parent—GO WITH YOUR INSTINCTS!!!!!!!
   1. Whether you want to be or not, you are a constant observer of human behavior, and your impressions, may well help you if you let them.
3. When considering a new relationship of any kind, practice the rule of threes concerning this person.
   * 1. **CLAIMS**
     2. **PROMISES**
     3. **RESPONSIBILITIES**

One lie, one broken promise, or single neglected responsibility may be a misunderstanding, but three lies, cut your losses and get out. Do not give your money, your work, secrets, or affection to a three timer. Your valuable gifts will be wasted.

1. Question Authority- **trust** your own **instincts and anxieties**.
   1. Remember Stanley Milgram’s experiment (at least six out of ten people will blindly obey to the bitter end an official-looking authority)
   2. The good news is having a strong social network. Having support makes people more likely to question authority.
2. Suspect Flattery:
   1. Compliments are one thing, especially when they are sincere. In contrast flattery is extreme and appeals to our egos in unrealistic ways. This applies on an individual basis and in certain group behavior (war).
3. If necessary redefine your definition of respect
   1. Never mistake fear for respect
4. **DO NOT JOIN THE GAME** 
   1. Intrigue is a sociopath’s tool. Resist the temptation to complete with a seductive sociopath, to outsmart him, psychoanalyze, or even banter with him. You have to remember to protect yourself
5. Avoidance
   1. Psychologists do not usually like to recommend avoidance, but in this case, Dr. Stout makes a deliberate exception. The only true method for dealing with a sociopath you have identified is to disallow him or her from your life all together. Sociopaths like completely outside of the social contract, and therefore to include them in relationships or other social arrangements is perilous. Begin this exclusion of them in the context of your own social relationships and social life. You will not hurt anyone’s feelings. Strange as it seems, and though they may pretend otherwise, sociopaths do not have any such feelings to hurt.
6. Question your tendency to pity to easily

* 1. Respect should be reserved for the kind and the morally courageous. Pity is another socially valuable response, and it should be reserved for innocent people who are in genuine pain or who have fallen on misfortune. If instead you often find yourself often pitying someone who consistently hurts you or other people, and who actively campaign for your sympathy, the chances are close to 100 percent that you are dealing with a sociopath.
  2. Related to this, Dr. Stout recommends that you severely challenge your need to be polite in absolutely all situations. For normal adults in our culture, being what we think of as “civilized” is like a reflex, and often we find ourselves being automatically decorous even when someone has enraged us, repeatedly lied to us, or figuratively stabbed us in the back. Sociopaths take huge advantage of this in exploitive situations.

1. Do not try to redeem the unredeemable
   1. At some point most of us need to learn the important, if disappointing, life lesson that, no matter how good our intentions