

# Weed Out Difficult People in Your Garden of Life

## By Keely Wygonik

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My friend Michael Angelo Caruso has a theory about difficult people, and I’m beginning to believe him. It has to do with the fact that we like people who like us back. If you want to get along with someone you don’t like, find something to like about that person.

“Here’s an idea,” he says. “You can never, ever change another person, but you can influence them.” Michael is very good at influencing people – he makes his living showing others how to change their lives, and he’s helped me change mine.

I’ve watched him work – it’s amazing. He engages people, gets their attention and makes believers out of them.

“Give people what they want,” he told a group of Canton Rotarians during a luncheon recently. “Find something you like about people you don’t like.”

Simple advice, but so hard to follow.

### **You’re in control**

It helps, he says, to realize that you are 100 percent in control of your emotions. You can’t take responsibility for what other people feel. The trick is to learn how to be assertive without hurting another person’s feelings.

Take complainers for instance. We all know ‘em and avoid ‘em. But you have to have some compassion for complainers. They don’t know they’re being negative. Michael believes complainers think they’re performing a public service by pointing out flaws.

I’ll bet you have some absoluters in your life. People whose favorite words are – “always” and “never.” Grippers can get on your nerves, too.

“Yet, complaining is a form of manipulation,” proclaims Michael with ministerial conviction. “You can stop a complainer from complaining to you by walking away. In fact, you must distance yourself from negative people, even if they’re in your family.”

While you can’t change complainers, absoluters, grippers and other negative people, you can influence them with your response.

Sounds easy, but it’s so difficult.

“You can’t hurt me,” is Michael’s response. It has to do with imprinting – how you think and react to situations. Resist the negative and find the positive.

His talk is over and Canton Rotarians are smiling, ready to deal with the difficult people in their lives.

### **Common sense**

It’s not magic – just common sense. If you want to keep getting what you’re getting – keep doing what you’re doing. But if you want something different – do something different.

It will change your life.

I know because it changed mine.

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**Michael Angelo Caruso is President of the Edison House, a Detroit-based communication company. He is the author of “5 Cool Ideas for Better Working Living & Feeling,” “Hmmm . . . Little Ideas With BIG Results” and the audio book, “Dear Michael Angelo – A Father's Life Lessons To His Son.” Mr. Caruso delivers 180 presentations per year. Click [here] to request booking information. Mr. Caruso can be reached at 248/546-9140 and at [www.EdisonHouse.com](http://www.EdisonHouse.com).**  
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