

Agreeableness personality: The bad side of this trait

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Agreeableness is one of the five major dimensions of personality in the [Big Five personality traits](#). Thompson (2008) describes *agreeableness* as a [personality trait](#) that manifests itself in individual behavioural characteristics that are perceived as kind, sympathetic, cooperative, warm, and considerate. It is a dimension of personality that *is* helpful to general life success. People who are high in *agreeableness* are described as being likable, pleasant, and harmonious in relations with others guaranteeing them life success. Highly agreeable individuals would be perceived as pleasant to be around, however, there could be disadvantages to this. This article will explore the disadvantages that come with being a highly agreeable person.

Related: [Agreeableness Personality: Everything you need to know](#)

According to research, persons who are described by others as "kind" are also described as "considerate" and "warm," implying a superordinate personality dimension that is relatively stable over time and related to a wide range of thoughts, feelings, and social behaviors (Graziano & Tobin, 2009). One way to conceptualize *agreeableness* is as a moderator of various kinds of [interpersonal behaviors](#) leading to life success. If persons differ in their motivation to maintain positive relationships with others, then we can expect persons who show higher levels of such [motivation](#) to perform more positive, constructive behaviors in various behavioral domains than their peers (Graziano & Tobin, 2009).

A central feature of *agreeableness* is its positive association with altruism and helping behavior. Across situations, highly agreeable individuals are more likely to report an interest and involvement in helping others (Graziano et. al. 2007). Experiments have shown that most people are likely to help their kin, and help when empathy has been aroused, agreeable people, however, are likely to help even when these conditions are not present (Graziano et. al. 2007).

While agreeable individuals are habitually likely to help others, disagreeable people may be more likely to cause harm. Researchers have found that a low level of *agreeableness* is associated with hostile thoughts and aggression in adolescents, as well as poor social adjustment (Gleason, Jansen-Campbell &

Richardson, 2004). When [mental illness](#) is present, low *agreeableness* may be associated with [narcissistic](#) and anti-social tendencies (Costa & McCrae, 1992).

Agreeableness is a part of the five-factor model of the approach to personality. Extraversion, [agreeableness](#), [conscientiousness](#), [neuroticism](#), and [openness to experience](#) are the five core personality factors of the five-factor model of [personality](#). The five-factor model is a personality theory or approach to personality. The big five-factor structure is an alternative description of personality.

Related: [The Big Five Personality Traits and Job Performance](#)

Sub Traits of Agreeableness: The good side of this trait.

Here's a rundown of these characteristics:

Altruistic

When people who are pleasant serve others, they feel good. Furthermore, they receive significant internal rewards for doing good things and do not consider it to be self-sacrificing. The act itself gives them a sense of accomplishment.

Those who score low on agreeableness, on the other hand, believe that assisting others is an imposition. Even if they are aware of it, they typically have little desire to change their ways.

Cooperative

When someone's agreeableness is high, they will go to considerable measures to avoid conflict with others. They like to be seen as peacemakers, yet they will frequently sacrifice their own needs and interests in order to get along with others.

People who score low on agreeableness, on the other hand, are more likely to impose their will on others. They will also employ intimidation and hostility to achieve their objectives.

Honest

If someone has a high agreeableness score, they are likely, to be honest, and sincere. They rarely feel compelled to manipulate others in order to achieve their goals. They are also seen as sincere, loving individuals who are easy to relate to.

However, if a person's agreeableness is low, they may believe there's nothing wrong with lying, especially when it's more convenient. They may also be more reclusive.

Modest

People that have a high agreeableness score are very down-to-earth and rarely boast about their superiority. They are also typically humble, to the extent that they may have low self-esteem.

In contrast, someone with a low agreeableness score may be more haughty or not above taking advantage of others. They may also try to do more to demonstrate their superiority to others.

Sympathetic

When you have a high agreeableness score, you are likely to be sensitive and quickly motivated to care for and concern others. They are also emotionally sophisticated and compassionate, often relating to other people's grief and suffering.

People who have a low agreeableness score are less likely to be merciful and may lack empathy.

The bad side of *agreeableness*

In a series of experiments known as the [Milgram experiments](#) conducted by [Professor Stanley Milgram](#) (1964), it was found that [conscientious](#) and agreeable people, when forced by ill-intent authority, are more willing to administer high-intensity electric shocks to a victim because conscientious and agreeable

people are less capable of resistance (Bègue, et. al. 2014). Highly agreeable people find it hard to say no, even in detrimental situations. This clearly shows that individual differences exist in human nature. However, the trait of agreeableness is an important personality trait, especially in [interpersonal](#) relationships, management of [social skills](#), and one's emotional stability.

Tendency to Avoid Conflicts

In the workplace, these people may be a source of inefficiencies and such individuals may not be able to succeed in fields such as Marketing, Public Relations, [Human Resources](#), etc. Agreeable people are very eager to avoid conflict and not disrupt the status quo. As a result, they will often leave the decision-making to their colleagues, even in situations where their opinion would have made a significant difference.

Related: [Conscientiousness: Everything you need to know](#)

Individuals high in *agreeableness* are often likely to be taken advantage of and are unlikely to enforce standards if people's feelings will be hurt. In the workplace, they are very likely to [avoid conflict](#). Some of the other labels or common characteristics used to describe the dimension are tendermindedness, [friendly compliance](#), behavioral compliance versus hostile noncompliance, love versus hate, likability, communion, and conformity.

Failure to Delegate

Additionally, being overly familiar with the staff, agreeable people will often undermine their professionalism and ability. Agreeable people can also overwork themselves due to an [inability to delegate properly](#). This habit will generally be formed as the more agreeable a person is, the less likely they will want to be the cause of an issue with their colleagues. They do all of this as a way to avoid negative emotionality, mood, or resistance from their colleagues i.e. avoidance of rule-breaking.

Agreeable People Tend to Earn Less Than Disagreeable People

In a 2011 study by the [University of Notre Dame](#), researchers found that agreeable employees earned significantly less than disagreeable ones. Specifically, agreeable men earned 18% less than disagreeable men while agreeable women earned 5% less than disagreeable women (Hurst, Judge & Livingstone,

2011). When one is highly agreeable, they do not usually cause any conflict and are easily manipulable, and can tend to be pushovers within the organization.

Related: [The Gender Pay Gap - fact or fiction](#)

Research Shows That People are Annoyed with Overly Agreeable Personalities

Ironically, most people are annoyed by overly nice people. In a 2010 study, researchers asked subjects to play a game that included both individual and group [rewards](#). They looked at how people reacted to selfish moves versus generous ones. An initial study investigating tolerance of group members who abuse a public good surprisingly showed that unselfish members (those who gave much toward the provision of the good but then used little of the good) were also targets for expulsion from the group (Graziano et. al. 2007).

Two follow-up studies replicated this and ruled out explanations grounded in the target being seen as confused or unpredictable (Graziano et. al. 2007). Researchers suggested that the overly agreeable players made everyone else feel bad about themselves because they weren't sticking to standard norms for civility; they were overdoing it (Graziano et. al. 2007).

Affects Physical Wellbeing

Being high in *agreeableness* can affect [physical well-being](#). Constantly putting the need to please others before one's own needs can lead to health problems such as [stress](#), [depression](#), and [resentment](#). High *agreeableness* can be heightened in individuals with [low self-esteem](#), especially when excessive feelings of guilt increase the need to please people. While highly agreeable people may seem ideal to be around, there are many downsides to this [personality trait](#), which may affect both the individual and the people around them.

Related: [The Most Profitable Traits to Have](#)

Wrapping it up

Overall, [Agreeableness](#) describes a broad, but related, set of individual differences in how a person relates to others. In linking childhood behavioral profiles to adulthood personality profiles, high-compliant, high-self-control, and low-aggressive children were most likely to become high-agreeable, high-socialized, and low-impulsive adults. Levels of agreeableness affect individuals linking to their childhood personality i.e. child agreeableness reaching a consensus in personality. The antecedents and [correlates of agreeableness](#) in adulthood from adolescence agreeableness etc.

Even though this article focuses on the bad side of the agreeableness personality, there is a positive side to it. For example, team working is the empathetic capacity to coordinate goals with others and the ability to cooperate effectively, regardless of role, to accomplish collective objectives. Other examples of agreeableness include:

- The desire to please people: People with agreeable personalities are willing to sacrifice their own wants in order to make others happy, which can lead to self-destructive behavior.
- The desire to avoid conflict and strife: High agreeableness people prefer to avoid disagreements and confrontations as much as possible, even if it means sacrificing their own interests.
- Being patient and tolerant of mistakes: In high-pressure situations, a person's agreeableness personality trait allows them to keep their cool and remain level-headed.

The agreeableness personality trait in a person allows them to keep their cool and remain level-headed in high-pressure situations. The [above-mentioned agreeableness personality trait examples](#) are only some of the many. Agreeableness is a helpful trait for general success in life. It is a dimension of the five-factor approach to personality. It also implicates to conflict management skills, school adjustment, peer-social status, and self-esteem.

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