

# INTERPERSONAL EFFECTIVENESS HANDOUT 15

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([Interpersonal Effectiveness Worksheets 11](#), [11a](#), [11b](#))

## Dialectics

### DIALECTICS REMINDS US THAT

**1. The universe is filled with opposing sides/opposing forces.**

There is always more than one way to see a situation, and more than one way to solve a problem.

Two things that seem like opposites can both be true.

**2. Everything and every person is connected in some way.**

The waves and the ocean are one.

The slightest move of the butterfly affects the furthest star.

**3. Change is the only constant.**

Meaning and truth evolve over time.

Each moment is new; reality itself changes with each moment.

**4. Change is transactional.**

What we do influences our environment and other people in it.

The environment and other people influence us.

# INTERPERSONAL EFFECTIVENESS HANDOUT 16

([Interpersonal Effectiveness Worksheets 11](#), [11a](#), [11b](#))

## How to Think and Act Dialectically

### ☐ 1. There is always more than one side to anything that exists. Look for both sides.

☐ **Ask Wise Mind: What am I missing?** Where is the kernel of truth in the other side?

☐ **Let go of extremes:** Change “either-or” to “both-and,” “always” or “never” to “sometimes.”

☐ **Balance opposites:** Validate both sides when you disagree, accept reality, and work to change.

☐ **Make lemonade out of lemons.**

☐ **Embrace confusion:** Enter the paradox of yes and no, or true and not true.

☐ **Play devil’s advocate:** Argue each side of your own position with equal passion.

☐ **Use metaphors and storytelling** to unstick and free the mind.

☐ Other ways to see all sides of a situation: \_\_\_\_\_

### ☐ 2. Be aware that you are connected.

☐ **Treat others as you want them to treat you.**

☐ **Look for similarities among people instead of differences.**

☐ **Notice the physical connections** among all things.

☐ Other ways to stay aware of connections: \_\_\_\_\_

### ☐ 3. Embrace change.

☐ **Throw yourself into change:** Allow it. Embrace it.

☐ **Practice radical acceptance of change** when rules, circumstances, people, and relationships change in ways you don’t like.

☐ **Practice getting used to change:** Make small changes to practice this (e.g., purposely change where you sit, who you talk with, what route you take when going to a familiar place).

☐ Other ways to embrace change: \_\_\_\_\_

### ☐ 4. Change is transactional: Remember that you affect your environment and your environment affects you.

☐ **Pay attention to your effect on others** and how they affect you.

☐ **Practice letting go of blame** by looking for how your own and others’ behaviors are caused by many interactions over time.

☐ **Remind yourself that all things, including all behaviors, are caused.**

☐ Other ways to see transactions: \_\_\_\_\_

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### Examples of Opposite Sides That Can Both Be True

- ☐ 1. You can want to change and be doing the best you can, AND still need to do better, try harder, and be more motivated to change.
- ☐ 2. You are tough AND you are gentle.
- ☐ 3. You can be independent AND also want help. (You can allow somebody else to be independent AND also give them help.)
- ☐ 4. You can want to be alone AND also want to be connected to others.
- ☐ 5. You can share some things with others AND also keep some things private.
- ☐ 6. You can be by yourself AND still be connected to others.
- ☐ 7. You can be with others AND be lonely.
- ☐ 8. You can be a misfit in one group AND fit in perfectly in another group. (A tulip in a rose garden can also be a tulip in a tulip garden.)
- ☐ 9. You can accept yourself the way you are AND still want to change. (You can accept others as they are AND still want them to change.)
- ☐ 10. At times you need to both control AND tolerate your emotions.
- ☐ 11. You may have a valid reason for believing what you believe, AND you may still be wrong or incorrect.
- ☐ 12. Someone may have valid reasons for wanting something from you, AND you may have valid reasons for saying no.
- ☐ 13. The day can be sunny, AND it can rain.
- ☐ 14. You can be mad at somebody AND also love and respect the person.
- ☐ 15. (You can be mad at yourself AND also love and respect yourself.)
- ☐ 16. You can have a disagreement with somebody AND also be friends.
- ☐ 17. You can disagree with the rules AND also follow the rules.
- ☐ 18. You can understand why somebody is feeling or behaving in a certain way, AND also disagree with his or her behavior and ask that it be changed.
- ☐ 19. Others: \_\_\_\_\_

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### Important Opposites to Balance

- ☐ 1. Accepting reality AND working to change it.
- ☐ 2. Validating yourself and others AND acknowledging errors.
- ☐ 3. Working AND resting.
- ☐ 4. Doing things you need to do AND doing things you want to do.
- ☐ 5. Working on improving yourself AND accepting yourself exactly as you are.
- ☐ 6. Problem solving AND problem acceptance.
- ☐ 7. Emotion regulation AND emotion acceptance.
- ☐ 8. Mastering something on your own AND asking for help.
- ☐ 9. Independence AND dependence.
- ☐ 10. Openness AND privacy.
- ☐ 11. Trust AND suspicion.
- ☐ 12. Watching and observing AND participating.
- ☐ 13. Taking from others AND giving to others.
- ☐ 14. Focusing on yourself AND focusing on others.
- ☐ 15. Others: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ 16. Others: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ 17. Others: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

# INTERPERSONAL EFFECTIVENESS WORKSHEET 11

([Interpersonal Effectiveness Handouts 15, 16](#))

## Practicing Dialectics

Due Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Week Starting: \_\_\_\_\_

Describe two situations that prompted you to practice dialectics.

### SITUATION 1

**Situation (who, what, when, where):**

- ☐ Looked at both sides
- ☐ Stayed aware of my connection
- ☐ Embraced change
- ☐ Remembered that I affect others and others affect me

At left, check the skills you used, and describe here.

Describe experience of using the skill:

Check if practicing this dialectical skill has influenced any of the following, *even a little bit*:

\_\_\_\_ Reduced suffering      \_\_\_\_ Increased happiness      \_\_\_\_ Reduced friction with others  
\_\_\_\_ Decreased reactivity      \_\_\_\_ Increased wisdom      \_\_\_\_ Improved relationship  
\_\_\_\_ Increased connection      \_\_\_\_ Increased sense of personal validity  
\_\_\_\_ Other outcome: \_\_\_\_\_

### SITUATION 2

**Situation (who, what, when, where):**

- ☐ Looked at both sides
- ☐ Stayed aware of my connection
- ☐ Embraced change
- ☐ Remembered that I affect others and others affect me

At left, check the skills you used, and describe here.

Describe experience of using the skill:

Check if practicing this dialectical skill has influenced any of the following, *even a little bit*:

\_\_\_\_ Reduced suffering      \_\_\_\_ Increased happiness      \_\_\_\_ Reduced friction with others  
\_\_\_\_ Decreased reactivity      \_\_\_\_ Increased wisdom      \_\_\_\_ Improved relationship  
\_\_\_\_ Increased connection      \_\_\_\_ Increased sense of personal validity  
\_\_\_\_ Other outcome: \_\_\_\_\_

# INTERPERSONAL EFFECTIVENESS WORKSHEET 11B

([Interpersonal Effectiveness Handouts 15, 16](#))

## Noticing When You're Not Dialectical

Due Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Week Starting: \_\_\_\_\_

Identify a time this week when you *did not use* your dialectical skills. Briefly describe the situation (who, what, when).

### SITUATION 1

**Situation (who, what, when, where):**

- ☐ Looked at both sides
- ☐ Stayed aware of my connection
- ☐ Embraced change
- ☐ Remembered that I affect others and others affect me

At left, check the skills you needed but did not use, and describe here the experience of not using the skill.

What would you do differently next time?

Check if *not* practicing dialectical skills has influenced any of the following, *even a little bit*:

\_\_\_\_ Increased suffering      \_\_\_\_ Decreased happiness      \_\_\_\_ Increased friction with others  
\_\_\_\_ Increased reactivity      \_\_\_\_ Decreased wisdom      \_\_\_\_ Harmed relationship  
\_\_\_\_ Decreased connection      \_\_\_\_ Other outcome: \_\_\_\_\_

### SITUATION 2

**Situation (who, what, when, where):**

- ☐ Looked at both sides
- ☐ Stayed aware of my connection
- ☐ Embraced change
- ☐ Remembered that I affect others and others affect me

At left, check the skills you needed but did not use, and describe here the experience of not using the skill.

What would you do differently next time?

Check if *not* practicing dialectical skills has influenced any of the following, *even a little bit*:

\_\_\_\_ Increased suffering      \_\_\_\_ Decreased happiness      \_\_\_\_ Increased friction with others  
\_\_\_\_ Increased reactivity      \_\_\_\_ Decreased wisdom      \_\_\_\_ Harmed relationship  
\_\_\_\_ Decreased connection      \_\_\_\_ Other outcome: \_\_\_\_\_