

# 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: \_\_\_\_\_  
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- ☐ 16. Others: \_\_\_\_\_  
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- ☐ 17. Others: \_\_\_\_\_  
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