

# Do You Intimidate Others?

## Objective

To assess if you intimidate others and learn steps to reduce this controlling behavior.

## What to Know

Although you may not consider yourself an intimidating person, you might notice some people seem afraid of you. Or perhaps you intentionally intimidate others to get your own way. You might believe it is advantageous for you to be intimidating (especially in certain situations), but perhaps your relationships are suffering if people close to you fear you.

Someone who is intimidating:

- uses power or control to get others to do what they want them to do.
- uses coercion or force to get what they want.
- makes others believe they are more powerful than what they really are.
- exhibits verbally, physically, sexually, or emotionally abusive behaviors.
- uses physical size, stature, and strength to get others to respect and obey them.
- bullies or gets into physical fights to get people to do what they want.
- rejects or disapproves to get others to comply with requests.
- uses anger or rage to control others.
- holds knowledge, level of education, or number of degrees over the heads of others.
- convinces others they are the only one with enough experience, wisdom, intellect, and insight to offer direction or have the correct answers.
- uses money, wealth, or status to put others into their place.
- threatens to withdraw support, love, caring, interest, or approval.
- uses dictatorial or autocratic behaviors.

There are many negative consequences to using intimidation to control others. If you continue, you may:

- find people have emotional barriers so they no longer feel vulnerable.
- be accused of emotional, verbal, physical, or sexual abuse.
- find the costs of getting your way are greater than you expected.
- become consumed with acquiring power, control, position, and status.
- become lonely and isolated with few close relationships.
- experience reduced self-esteem due to the lack of acceptance by others.

This worksheet will help you follow the steps to reduce intimidating behavior.

## What to Do

To identify if intimidation is a problem, rate the following factors. Write down the correct number for each one. How true is each factor for you?

1 = never intimidating

2 = rarely intimidating

3 = frequently intimidating

4 = almost always intimidating

5 = always intimidating

\_\_\_\_\_ loud gruff voice

\_\_\_\_\_ body size

\_\_\_\_\_ height

\_\_\_\_\_ physical strength

\_\_\_\_\_ highest educational achievement

\_\_\_\_\_ profession, career, or job title

\_\_\_\_\_ salary or financial worth

\_\_\_\_\_ where you live / size of your home / vehicle you drive

\_\_\_\_\_ IQ, knowledge, skills, or abilities

\_\_\_\_\_ age / life experience

\_\_\_\_\_ the people you know

\_\_\_\_\_ groups or clubs you belong to

\_\_\_\_\_ religious beliefs or convictions

\_\_\_\_\_ clothes you wear

\_\_\_\_\_ political beliefs / persuasions

\_\_\_\_\_ when you are angry

\_\_\_\_\_ when you are assertive

\_\_\_\_\_ when you are aggressive

\_\_\_\_\_ when you threaten or warn others

\_\_\_\_\_ when you yell, rant, and rave

\_\_\_\_\_ when you lecture others

\_\_\_\_\_ when you threaten to cut off financial support



Which people do you unintentionally intimidate? \_\_\_\_\_

What factors cause others to be intimidated by you when you do *not* intend to do it?

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Why do you intentionally intimidate people? Be honest!

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How does this impact your relationships?

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Are the problems caused by your intimidating behaviors different if your behavior is intentional or not? Explain.

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**Step 2.** Identify what about you is intimidating. Make an inventory of your behaviors, attitudes, nonverbal cues, appearance, educational level, wealth, position of leadership, or sexual attitudes, and so on – anything that may be intimidating to others.

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**Step 3.** Do you think you are *intentionally* or *non-intentionally* intimidating? Be honest and realistic. You might be intimidating to others – even if you do not intend to be.

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**Step 4.** Honestly assess the negative impact and consequences of your intimidation on others. How are your relationships impacted? How do people respond to you?

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**Step 5.** Are there irrational, unhealthy, or unrealistic thoughts or beliefs that contribute to your intimidating behaviors? If you have a difficult time answering this question, seek help from your counselor or therapist.

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**Step 6.** Identify healthy, rational, and reality-based thoughts, beliefs, and behaviors that will help you reduce your need to intimidate others.

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**Step 7.** Identify what you can do to reduce non-intentional intimidation, such as educational level, intellect, wealth, career status, physical size or attractiveness, religious beliefs, gender, or status in the community.

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**Step 8.** Now you can inform each person that you want the control, power, dominance, and coercion to stop. Ask them to continue giving you feedback. What happened?

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**Reflections on This Exercise**

Did you experience any challenges while completing this activity? What was hard? Easy?

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How helpful was this exercise? \_\_\_\_\_  
(1 = not very helpful, 5 = moderately helpful, 10 = extremely helpful)

What did you learn during this exercise?

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