

How Not To Offend People:

(A Survey response from friends of this ministry)

Acts 24:16 I myself always strive to have a conscience without offense toward God and men.

Philippians 1:10 that you may approve the things that are excellent, that you may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ.

1. Don't address or correct the person, address/correct the act or the event
2. Respond only after fully listening and understanding the position of the other person; never interrupt them or cut them off in your response
3. Always speak in normal, respectful, loving tones
Proverbs 15:1 A soft answer turns away wrath, But a harsh word stirs up anger.
4. Avoid devaluing a person's statement or thinking
5. Learn to disagree without being disagreeable
6. Freely use the phrases: "Please", "Thank You", "I'm sorry", "I was wrong", "I Love You"
7. Treat people the way you want to be treated
Luke 6:3 And just as you want men to do to you, you also do to them likewise.
8. Don't jump to conclusions. Repeat what they said to verify.
9. Be courteous and have manners
10. When possible have eye contact when conversing
11. Avoid being too blunt and dogmatic. It doesn't help to put others down for their views.
12. Don't try to pressure people to change – You will attract more bees by honey than you will by vinegar
13. Don't expect people to be perfect – Give grace
14. Avoid being rash with your words
Ecclesiastes 5:2 Do not be rash with your mouth... Therefore let your words be few.
15. Be more interested in winning people than winning arguments
Proverbs 18:2 A fool has no delight in understanding, But in expressing his own heart.
16. Speak words that build people up
Ephesians 4:29 Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers.
Proverbs 12:18 There is one who speaks like the piercings of a sword, But the tongue of the wise promotes health.
17. Listen first to understand, then 'seek to be understood'.
18. Think before you speak and react
Proverbs 10:32 The lips of the righteous know what is acceptable, But the mouth of the wicked what is perverse.
19. Use the common sense God gives and be sensitive to others.
20. Just being considerate and kind and keep a servant's heart...I don't personally think it is hard not to offend people.
21. Listen to people
James 1:19-20 So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; 20 for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God.
22. Don't put people down
Colossians 4:6 Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one.
23. Avoid being judgmental or critical
Matthew 7:1-2 "Judge not, that you be not judged. 2 "For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you.
24. Overlook personality quirks
25. Assume the best about people. (Put a top ranking of 10 on everyone's forehead)
26. Avoid being irritable
27. Love people unconditionally (I Corinthians 13:4-7). Don't hold past failures over their head.
28. Be humble and gentle when correcting people
Galatians 6:1 Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted.
29. Don't share everything you think and feel – Some things are better left unsaid
Proverbs 29:11 A fool vents all his feelings, But a wise man holds them back.
30. Don't talk to them. ha! ha!
31. I like what Joyce Meyers says in her book Battle Field of the Mind --- Everyone does not care about your opinions, sometimes your opinions are better left unsaid, you don't have to say everything that comes to your mind, in fact it is probably better to not say anything at all.
32. Lets face it, people get offended because of unmet expectations (one expects another to act, talk, behave in a certain manner, and agree with them). When we don't do this others get offended.
33. The answer to not getting offended by others is to turn the cheek --- if we all did that no one would get offended.

34. I think the message does not need to be How not to offend people, I think we need more of Jesus and less of ourselves and then we would not have time to be offended. We can't go around trying to be all things to all people (obviously I am not suggesting we act rude or disrespectful).
35. Most of us know our shortcomings, if we would just hold our tongue and again turn the other cheek we would offend less.
36. Proverbs is good - weigh your words before you speak.
37. Avoid talking too much

Ecclesiastes 5:3.. A fool's voice is known by his many words.

38. Judge not - many times we become like the people we judge or harshly criticize. When we label people, criticize them, judge them to be.... Whatever, we open the door for that judgment to come back on us.
Romans 2:1-3 Therefore you are inexcusable, O man, whoever you are who judge, for in whatever you judge another you condemn yourself; for you who judge practice the same things. 2 But we know that the judgment of God is according to truth against those who practice such things. 3 And do you think this, O man, you who judge those practicing such things, and doing the same, that you will escape the judgment of God?
39. Do or say things that are best for others
Romans 14:19-21 Therefore let us pursue the things which make for peace and the things by which one may edify another. 20 Do not destroy the work of God for the sake of food. All things indeed are pure, but it is evil for the man who eats with offense. 21 It is good neither to eat meat nor drink wine nor do anything by which your brother stumbles or is offended or is made weak.

What do you do if you know you have offended someone:

Proverbs 18:19 A brother offended is harder to win than a strong city, And contentions are like the bars of a castle.

1. Go to them as soon as possible and apologize to them privately. State the reason why you said the statement, even if the reason doesn't live up to the statement. This shows you are human and unfortunately make errors.
2. Sometimes the person won't say they were offended, but usually you can tell by the way they look that they were offended. In this case, don't apologize but instead explain the reason for the statement (hopefully it's a good one) just after you have made the offensive remark.
3. Offense is the biggest problem people have Mt. 5:23 go make it right then offer the gift of worship or tithe....
Matthew 5:21 You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not murder, and whoever murders will be in danger of the judgment.' 22 "But I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment. And whoever says to his brother, 'Raca!' shall be in danger of the council. But whoever says, 'You fool!' shall be in danger of hell fire. 23 "Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, 24 "leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.
4. Mark 11: 25 - Forgive or you won't be forgiven. Wow!
5. If I have offended someone, I try to make it right. Ask forgiveness from them. Life is too short and people too precious to hold a grudge and lose people to hell, if they should get too hurt to survive.
6. Forgiveness is to release another person from the debt they owe, or what we think they owe us. We release them from even the debt of an apology. We release them from paying us back. But at the same time, we are not saying they are right in all their actions, nor are we perfect. Forgiveness does not mean reinstatement to the previous position, but to release that person from us, so God can work on them, without our help. We pray for those that treat us evil, asking God to truly help and save them.
7. Admit you were wrong "A wise man receives reproof and grows wiser still"
Proverbs 15:32 He who disdains instruction despises his own soul, But he who heeds rebuke gets understanding.
8. If you offend someone and realize it, just apologize and ask for forgiveness.
9. I address it with them as soon as possible in live communication, not by letter or email; I avoid talking with anyone else about it.
10. I avoid trying to explain or defend my position until after the offense has been dealt with, and even then only if asked.
11. I apologize to them for how the perceived offense made them feel, regardless of whether I was right or wrong in the matter.
12. I try to remind myself to value the relationship more than I value being right, making a point or winning the argument
13. I bind the spirit of offense in prayer from over that person and from over myself, and I bless them and speak life over our relationship

Concluding thoughts:

Tom Terry: I never think about or try not to offend. I've tried to figure all this out in the past and have come to this conclusion: If after walking in love and doing the best we can to be kind and sweet, people still get hurt and offended, I honestly don't think you can do much or anything about it. Of course I am referring to the person who is living right doing right to the best of their ability. Every time in the past I have started to think and act on what offended folks have criticized me for I started compromising and slowly drifting out of Gods perfect will and His grace for my life.

Pastor Don – While it is impossible not to offend people (Jesus offended and He was perfect) God is stretching us to be true Christians who walk in love. We can grow and learn from any situation or person, positive or negative. Some offenses are unintentional and some are very intentional and will be subject to the judgment seat of Christ. While the emphasis and weight of scripture focuses on not allowing yourself to be offended it is important also to not offend others in an ungodly manner.

James 3:2 (KJS) For in many things we offend all. If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body.