

# Who are you

We all want to be liked, but which strategies do you employ?  
Dr Nicola Davies explains

**This intense desire to be liked stems from our need for acceptance and fear of rejection.** When this fear of rejection becomes chronic, we can start to continuously doubt our likability, even in the face of evidence to the contrary.

To some degree, everyone engages in some impression management. Our efforts started back in childhood as we learnt how to develop typical personality patterns geared towards influencing others to like us. The renowned psychiatrist W.W. Broadbent refers to these typical patterns of relating as 'masks' that we wear in order to make a positive impression. Each mask has its pros and cons.

## The masks

Do you employ any of these strategies in an effort to be liked, or can you identify your friends and loved ones here?

### Chameleon

**MOST LIKELY TO SAY:** "I'll be anything you want me to be."

**PROS:** Individuals who adopt the chameleon style are skilled at adapting to circumstances with unwavering confidence and certainty.

**CONS:** The desire for approval can be so intense they lose touch with their own needs.

**WHAT TO DO IF YOU ARE ONE:** Recognise that for all the people who only like it when you agree, there are an equal number of those who like it when you have an opinion. Stop to consider how you really feel before agreeing with everyone else.

**HOW TO HANDLE ONE:** Encourage them to speak their mind. By asking them to explain their reasons for different opinions, you give them the opportunity to evaluate their true feelings, and open the potential for them to be honest.

### Moraliser

**MOST LIKELY TO SAY:** "I am virtuous and righteous and I always do what I should do and so should you!"

**PROS:** Moralisers want to impress with their perfectionism and integrity, and their ceaseless quest for the truth can be inspiring.

**CONS:** They attract friends through their wisdom and insights, but their perfectionism and rather hypercritical attitude can deter many.

**WHAT TO DO IF YOU ARE ONE:** Remember that no one likes someone who is perfect all the time; it makes you appear inhumane. Why not sometimes yield to the thoughts of others to show your own vulnerability?

**HOW TO HANDLE ONE:** Arguing with them is futile. Allow them to make their opinion known, and then make yours known. Understand that it is okay to disagree and recognise that it is within our differences that we find common ground.

### Martyr

**MOST LIKELY TO SAY:** "Oh, what I have done for you and I get nothing in return."

**PROS:** Due to their strong ability for empathy, and the tendency to look for what's good in others, martyrs are likable and capable of maintaining meaningful relationships.

**CONS:** Martyrs fear a lack of support and guidance, and can become anxious and manipulative when these needs aren't met.

**WHAT TO DO IF YOU ARE ONE:** Don't expect people to treat you as you would treat them. Sometimes martyrs expect something in return for their behaviour. If you are doing something expecting a specific response, you will be disappointed and feel cheated.

**HOW TO HANDLE ONE:** Don't allow them to make you feel indebted. Always remember they chose to take the actions they did; you cannot be responsible for them.

### Red Cross Nurse

**MOST LIKELY TO SAY:** "Can't you see how giving and nurturing I am?"

**PROS:** Red Cross Nurse personalities are responsible caretakers, givers and helpers. Their generosity automatically draws many people towards them.

**CONS:** When others take advantage of them, they will hide their aggression but instead become manipulative to get their way.

**WHAT TO DO IF YOU ARE ONE:** Help others, but not to the detriment of yourself. It is good to put others first, but not at your own expense.

**HOW TO HANDLE ONE:** Be appreciative of their good deeds. Don't assume they are doing it to receive something in return. People who have these traits feel good about themselves through helping others.

### Fan

**MOST LIKELY TO SAY:** "Whatever you do, it is great!"

**PROS:** These people value peaceful and harmonious relationships. Their gentle, calm, and receptive demeanour attracts many people, making others feel comfortable to let their guard down.

**CONS:** They would rather show indifference to the wishes and actions of others than risk conflict. Instead, they simply withdraw when conflict arises.