



@fariha.salahuddin

# Negativity and the Bad Apple Effect

In the study by Felps et al. (2006), they demonstrated how **a single negative individual (the "bad apple") can have a profound impact on the performance, cohesion, and morale of an entire team.** This influence often leads to a breakdown in group dynamics, significantly harming productivity and collaboration.

According to Webster, negativity is described as:

*"a tendency to be downbeat, disagreeable, and skeptical. It's a pessimistic attitude that always expects the worst."*

## What Causes Negativity?

- Exposure to negativity or criticism in childhood can shape behavior.
- Negativity becomes a habit.
- Fear of risk-taking may stem from an overprotective childhood.
- They may have learned to hide failures due to shame or exposure to frequent negative judgments.
- A negative worldview sees life as unfair or unlucky.
- Some use negativity to boost self-esteem by putting others down, feeling validated by others' misfortunes (Schadenfreude).

## **Characteristics of a "Bad Apple"/Negative Person:**

**Pessimism:** The tendency to expect or predict the worst outcomes, even when the situation is neutral or positive.

**Cynicism:** Persistent distrust and skepticism about the intentions of others, assuming that people are motivated by selfishness or deception.

**Complaining and Criticism:** Constantly finding fault with plans, ideas, or the contributions of others, without offering constructive feedback.

**Lack of Cooperation:** Withholding effort or refusing to collaborate fully with others, either by disengaging or deliberately working at a lower capacity.

## Can you change a negative person?

Changing a negative person is very difficult, as people rarely alter their ingrained habits.

However, change can happen under three main conditions:

1. **Exposure and Learning:** New ideas, experiences, or perspectives can shift someone's mindset.
2. **Personal Circumstances:** Life events, such as crises or transitions, can push individuals to change.
3. **Inspiration:** Witnessing others' success or positivity can inspire new behaviors.

While change is possible, it's often rare and difficult to achieve.

## If Change Doesn't Happen:

It's important to recognize when your efforts aren't making an impact and, in these cases, it's often better to **maintain distance**.

Prolonged exposure to negative individuals can have several negative consequences:

- **Emotional Drain:** Constant negativity can sap your emotional energy, leaving you feeling exhausted or overwhelmed.
- **Decreased Performance:** Being around negative people can affect your own focus and productivity, dragging you down.

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- **Contagious Negativity:** Negativity can spread like a virus. Over time, it may cloud your judgment and affect your own outlook.
- **Physiological Stress:** Regular exposure to negativity can lead to prolonged stress, which may result in health issues like anxiety, insomnia, or even physical illness.
- **Increased Conflict:** Negative individuals often breed conflict, which can lead to tension and divisions in social groups, workplaces, or families.

Coaching can effectively shift a person's behavior, helping them develop a more positive outlook and navigate difficult relationships.

If you're looking for support in this area, reach out to [www.farihas.com](http://www.farihas.com) for transformation coaching.