

Name _____

Date _____

What is Most and Least Like Me?



Introduction: People around you are like you in some ways and different in some ways. Diversity includes gender, age, ethnic group, race, language, religion, disability and culture. But people also differ functionally--they think differently, use time differently, work at a different pace, communicate differently, handle emotions and stress differently, and manage situations differently. For some people, being "on time" is very important; for others it is not. Some people are very organized; some people are not. Younger workers often bring enthusiasm and energy into a job while older workers bring patience, experience and maturity.

Realistically, of course, diversity has sometimes brought conflict. How can you better prepare for working with people different from yourself? Respect and communication are key to working with those who are different from you. Think before you speak; listen attentively when others speak. Take your cue from the other person. If you are working with someone who is in a wheelchair, for instance, ask that person how you can help. One person may appreciate assistance negotiating a curb, another person may want to "do it him/herself."

Talk about and respect the individual differences. Treat each person as a unique individual. Be open and sensitive to his/her needs. Show warmth and genuine interest; be nonjudgmental. Learn about others and their cultures--read books, watch videos, get to know others personally. Celebrating our differences can also help us have richer, more fulfilling lives.

The worker who can developing working relationships with diverse people will enhance his or her employability. It is important for you to realize that differences are good. On a team, the strengths of one person can overcome the weaknesses of another person. This balance can make for a stronger team.

Directions:

1. Look at the following list of characteristics; check whether you feel each characteristic is like you or not like you.
2. Spend a few minutes thinking about each of the characteristics.
3. How can you learn more about differences between people? How can you accommodate the differences? Could you ask some questions, such as: What does it mean to you when...? What it is like for you when...? What is important to you?

Characteristics	Like Me	Not Like Me
Speak very little		
Talk a lot		
Speak very softly		
Speak in a very loud voice		
Speak unclearly		
Am very direct and straightforward		
Beat around the bush		
Talk very slowly		
Exaggerate		
Stand very close to others		
Stand far away from others		
Look away rather than make eye contact		
Make very direct or intense eye contact		
Have poor grammar		
Speak with a heavy accent		
Don't speak English (or don't speak English well)		
Only speak when spoken to		
Interrupt		
Criticize and critique		
Agree with everything		
Get excited and animated when speaking		
Remain calm and even-toned when speaking		
Use a lot of large gestures		
Use little or no gestures		
Show no emotion in facial expressions		
Use formal words and behavior		
Use slang or informal speech and behavior		