Personality Problems- Giving Advice

Imagine you have a problem with the personality of someone, e.g. someone you know through your work. Make a sentence explaining the problem, choosing one of the personality words below, and ask your partner’s advice. Listen to their suggestions and respond, continuing until you agree on a good solution. Then switch roles and do the same again.

Useful language for explaining the problems

Personality problems to talk about
… am/is (too)…
… ‘m not/isn’t… (enough)

adaptable/ flexible – unadaptable/ inflexible
ambitious – unambitious
amusing/ humorous/ funny – serious
careful – careless
confident – nervous
conservative/ traditional – adventurous/ radical
creative – uncreative
direct – indirect/ diplomatic
dynamic/ a self-starter – passive
efficient – inefficient
energetic – unenergetic
friendly – unfriendly
hard working – lazy
helpful – unhelpful
intelligent/ smart – unintelligent
knowledgeable – ignorant
moody/ unpredictable
motivated/ driven – unmotivated
optimistic – pessimistic
polite – impolite/ rude
positive – negative
practical – impractical
punctual – unpunctual
quiet – loud/ noisy
relaxed – stressed
reliable – unreliable
shy – outgoing
sociable – unsociable
strict – easy-going
superstitious – unsuperstitious
Possible people to complain about
I…
My colleague/ One of my colleagues…
The person at the next desk…
The head of my team/ section/ department/ division/ company…
A member of my team/ section/ department/ division/ company…
My direct boss (= My line manager)…
New employees…
Young employees…
(Middle) managers…
Executives/ Directors…
The person in charge of…
The new…
A customer/ client…
A supplier/ service provider…
One of my business contacts…
My husband/ wife…
One of my children…
My father/ mother…
My local…
My (next door) neighbour…
My (English) teacher…

Asking for advice
What do you think I should do?
Do you have any advice (for me)?
What would you recommend that I do?
What’s the best solution?
How can I solve this problem, do you think?

Useful language for giving advice
You (really) should…
I recommend…
My recommendation is to…

Useful language for reacting to advice
Thanks. That’s a good idea.
I’ll try that.
I’ll do that.
Are you sure that’s a good idea? Wouldn’t it make more sense to…?
I’m not so sure that will work. Do you have any other ideas?

Choose one of the people above, e.g. “line manager”, and select a top ten most important characteristics and ten worst characteristics for that person to have.
Personality word synonyms and opposites

Without looking above for now, write at least one word in each gap below.

adaptable/ flexible – _____________/________________________ 
ambitious – ____________________
amusing/ humorous/ funny – _______________
careful – ________________________
confident – ______________________
conservative/ traditional – _________________/radical
creative – ________________________
direct – _______________________/diplomatic
_________________/a self-starter – passive
efficient – ______________________
energetic – _________________________
friendly – ________________________
hard working – _________________
helpful – _________________________
intelligent/_____________________ - unintelligent
______________________- ignorant
moody/________________________
motivated/ driven – ______________________
optimistic – ______________________
polite – impolite/_________________
positive – _______________________
practical – ______________________
punctual – ______________________
quiet – loud/____________________
relaxed – ________________________
reliable – ______________________
____________– outgoing
sociable – ______________________
________________ – easy-going
superstitious – ______________________

Compare your answers with the last page. Other answers are possible.