

# The Eight Kinds of Naysayers and Their Motivations

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Naysayers. Critics. Judges. Pessimists. Realists. Devil's Advocate. Supportive Friend? Coach? Throughout our lives most of us have encountered the people who give us advice, often in the form of criticism or judgment or just "try to help us see the obstacles" in our path. . But often this "help" puts us down, takes the wind out of our sails, and depletes our energy.

They are just trying to help, right? Not necessarily. Understanding the kinds of Naysayers and their motivations is important to help us diagnose the intent behind their criticism, and especially important in to know how to respond to them. (See "Dealing with Naysayers" article.)

To be successful, we need to know whose advice to take and whose to discard. Many – if not most – successful entrepreneurs have had significant setbacks and failures in their past. The difference between them and the people who quit after challenges is often whether they have learned to evaluate and conquer Naysayers.

## Devil's Advocates

Devil's Advocates believe that by pointing out potential hazards and pitfalls, they will help you succeed. The difference between Devil's Advocates and other Naysayers is that Devil's Advocates genuinely believe in you and want the best for you. Their advice can be helpful, especially if they are able to provide suggestions for overcoming the possible roadblocks.

## Pain Preventers

Pain Preventers also want the best for you, but instead of wanting to help you succeed, their main goal is to help prevent you from pain. They are often similar to the Fearful Fretters, below, but the main difference is they have genuine concern for your well-being. Some questions to ask yourself when faced with a Pain Preventer is, "Do they believe in you and/or your idea?" and "Are they always negative or pessimistic?" If the answer is "no" to these questions, they probably fall into one of the other groups.

Although most if not all Naysayers say their intent is to wish you well, to help you, the harsh truth is many have (conscious or subconscious) motivations which are not in your best interest.

## Negative Ninnies

Negative Ninnies are naturally negative people. They always see the "don'ts" first. They are similar to Devil's Advocates in that they see the problems, but Negative Ninnies are usually negative toward everything and rarely see the opportunities or solutions.

## Perpetual Pessimists

Perpetual Pessimists are naturally pessimistic. They see failure everywhere. They will often cite statistics to tell you the failure rate in a venture.

## Fearful Fretters

Fearful Fretters are people who are coming from one of two kinds of fear: they are either afraid you'll fail or that you'll succeed. In both cases, the fear comes from inside them and is often not

related to you. If they are afraid you'll fail, it could be because they are worried you'll need their help, support or money. Or they are afraid your failure will make you unhappy and change. Or they could be afraid you'll succeed, and either not need them anymore and possibly leave, or you'll change (a function of the members of Flat Earth Society, below). Just as in relationships in the animal kingdom, human relationships often have a hierarchy, and the sudden success of one member can upset the balance of the other members.

#### Energy Grabbers

With Energy Grabbers, it gives them energy – pumps them up – to disseminate advice. They get to feel like the “expert.” When Energy Grabbers are feeling weak, their advice tends to more negative. For some people, it makes them feel strong to put others down.

#### Green Meanies

Green Meanies are just jealous. Your success makes them feel weak, so their response is to put you down or try to discourage you from succeeding.

#### The Flat Earth Society

Members of the Flat Earth Society don't like change. They are often trapped themselves and want to maintain the status quo. After all, if you see the Earth as round, you'll disrupt their view of the world. A good book on the perils of looking at the Earth as flat is “Who Moved My Cheese?” by Spencer Johnson and Kenneth Blanchard.

Knowing the kinds of Naysayers can now help you deal with them. See the “Dealing with Naysayers” article.