

Don't try to change me

a song by Grumpy Old Man (Alan Smith Robertson)

<https://youtu.be/CyaHnGf3TNM> / <https://sptfy.es/dttcm>

Pre-listening activities

- Look at the adjectives below. What can they be used to describe?
- Which are positive? Which are negative?
- Do you know the opposite of any of them?
- Which of these adjectives would **you** use to describe **yourself**? And someone you know?

sensitive *reliable* *happy*
sad *moody*
perfect *hardworking*
insecure *bad-tempered*
selfish *generous* *lazy*
unique *unfriendly* *unsympathetic* *stubborn*
strong *outgoing*
jealous *unsociable*

Listen to the song once, and tick the adjectives that you hear

Listen to the song again, and fill the gaps with the adjectives we saw in the last exercise:

VERSE 1 She said that she wanted a _____ man
_____, _____ with family plans
_____ and _____ and _____
I told her that man didn't exist

CHORUS So don't try to change the way I am
I know that I'm not _____ and I don't give a damn
Don't try to change me, I'm _____
Don't you try to change me, you won't succeed

VERSE 2 She said I was _____, that's how she began
_____, that I don't understand
She told me I'm _____, and that I live like a pig
She said I'm _____, an _____ freak

BRIDGE Why should I care what others think? What's the big deal?
Why do you care what they think of me? Why do you worry?

VERSE 3 I told her she wasn't that much of a catch
_____ and _____, first she's _____ then _____
I said she was _____ and so _____
She insisted she wasn't, 'cause she's _____ too

Post-listening activities

The girl in the song wanted a man who is generous, hardworking, outgoing, strong, reliable **and** sensitive. Does that man exist? Or do you think that the girl in the song was a bit too ambitious?

What qualities do you look for in a partner? What qualities do you hate in other people?

The third verse begins with the phrase *"I told her she wasn't that much of a catch"*. What do you think the expression *"to be a catch"* or *"to be a good catch"* means?

A lot of the adjectives which describe the man and the woman in this song are clichés; they reflect the stereotype that men are selfish, unsympathetic and lazy, or that women are moody, jealous and stubborn. Do you agree with these stereotypes? What other stereotypes are there?

The bridge of this song begins with the phrase: *"Why should I care what others think?"*

Do you care about what other people think of you?

How does this affect your behaviour?

Don't try to change me

a song by Grumpy Old Man (Alan Smith Robertson)
to practice adjectives of personality

<https://youtu.be/CyaHnGf3TNM> / <https://sptfy.es/dttcm>

Teacher's answer sheet. Length: approximately 35 - 45 minutes

Notice: Both the song and this worksheet are designed for lower-intermediate level students. You can and should adapt the exercises according to your students' level.

Pre-listening activities

- Look at the adjectives below. What can they be used to describe?
They are all adjectives that describe people's personality
- Which are positive? Which are negative?
Positive: sensitive, reliable, happy, perfect, hardworking, generous, unique, strong, outgoing
Negative: moody, sad, insecure, bad-tempered, selfish, lazy, unsympathetic, stubborn, unfriendly, jealous, unsociable
- Do you know the opposite of any of them?
sensitive (insensitive), reliable (unreliable), happy (sad), perfect (imperfect), hardworking (lazy), insecure (confident), generous (selfish/mean), unique (common/ordinary), strong (weak), outgoing (unsociable/reserved), moody (equable?), bad-tempered (good-humoured), unsympathetic (sympathetic), stubborn (compliant), unfriendly (friendly), jealous (proud)
- Which of these adjectives would **you** use to describe **yourself**? And someone you know?

sensitive reliable happy
sad moody
perfect hardworking
insecure bad-tempered
selfish generous lazy
unique
unfriendly strong outgoing
jealous unsociable
stubborn unsympathetic

Listen to the song once, and tick the adjectives that you hear

The song contains all the adjectives in the word cloud

Your students may only hear a few of the adjectives. Don't worry about this.

Listen to the song again, and fill the gaps with the adjectives we saw in the last exercise:

*Let students try to write the adjectives from memory before you listen again
If necessary, listen a third time*

VERSE 1 She said that she wanted a generous man
Hardworking, outgoing with family plans
Strong and reliable and sensitive
I told her that man didn't exist

CHORUS So don't try to change the way I am
I know that I'm not perfect and I don't give a damn
Don't try to change me, I'm unique
Don't you try to change me, you won't succeed

VERSE 2 She said I was selfish, that's how she began
Unsympathetic, that I don't understand
She told me I'm lazy, and that I live like a pig
She said I'm unfriendly, an unsociable freak

BRIDGE Why should I care what others think? What's the big deal?
Why do you care what they think of me? Why do you worry?

VERSE 3 I told her she wasn't that much of a catch
Bad-tempered and moody, first she's happy then sad
I said she was jealous and so insecure
She insisted she wasn't, 'cause she's stubborn too

Post-listening activities

The girl in the song wanted a man who is generous, hardworking, outgoing, strong, reliable and sensitive. Does that man exist? Or do you think that the girl in the song was a bit too ambitious?

What qualities do you look for in a partner? What qualities do you hate in other people?

The third verse begins with the phrase “*I told her she wasn't that much of a catch*”. What do you think the expression “to be a catch” or “to be a good catch” means?

“A good catch” is someone who is a good person to have a relationship with or to marry because they are rich or attractive.

A lot of the adjectives which describe the man and the woman in this song are cliches; they reflect the stereotype that men are selfish, unsympathetic and lazy, or that women are moody, jealous and stubborn. Do you agree with these stereotypes? What other stereotypes are there?

Here you can explore not just gender-related stereotypes, but also nationalities, young people vs old people, city people vs country people... etc.

The bridge of this song begins with the phrase: “*Why should I care what others think?*”

Do you care about what other people think of you?

How does this affect your behaviour?