

BASED ON 20 YEARS OF PROFESSIONAL COACHING EXPERIENCE

# How to Successfully Handle Manipulative People



**PRESTON NI**  
COMMUNICATION COACHING

Also by Preston C. Ni

*How to Communicate Effectively and Handle Difficult People, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition*

*How to Successfully Handle Passive-Aggressive People*

*How to Successfully Handle Narcissists*

*Seven Keys to Long-Term Relationship Success*

*How to Let Go of Negative Thoughts and Emotions*

*Are You Too Nice? How to Gain Appreciation and Respect*

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# *Table of Contents*

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>How to Spot and Deal with Manipulative People</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>How to Handle Sixteen Types of Psychological and Emotional Manipulation</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>Appendix A:</b>	
<b>Seven Ways to Say “No” and Keep Good Relations</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>Appendix B:</b>	
<b>Five Keys to Enhancing Your Emotional Intelligence</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>Appendix C:</b>	
<b>Seven Keys to Long-Term Relationship Success</b>	<b>47</b>

## *Introduction*

This reference guide contains important keys to successfully handle psychologically manipulative people. The first section - the complete, unabridged version of “How to Spot and Deal with Manipulative People,” presents detailed information on how to maintain composure, protect your rights, be proactive instead of reactive, use assertive communication to set boundaries, and utilize seven different types of power to affect change. Four additional topics follow and provide further skills and strategies on how to communicate effectively in difficult situations, both at home and at work.

To know how to handle manipulative people is to truly master the art of communication. As you utilize these skills, you may experience less grief, greater confidence, better relationships, and higher communication prowess. You're on your way to leadership success!

## How to Spot and Deal with Manipulative People

*“There are those whose primary ability is to spin wheels of manipulation. It is their second skin and without these spinning wheels, they simply do not know how to function.”*

— C. JoyBell C.

Psychological manipulation can be defined as the exercise of undue influence through mental distortion and emotional exploitation, with the intention to seize power, control, benefits and privileges at the victim's expense.

It is important to distinguish healthy social influence from psychological manipulation. Healthy social influence occurs between most people, and is part of the give and take of constructive relationships. In psychological manipulation, one person is used for the benefit of another. The manipulator deliberately creates an imbalance of power, and exploits the victim to serve his or her agenda.

Most manipulative individuals have four common characteristics:

1. They know how to detect your weaknesses.
2. Once found, they use your weaknesses against you.

3. Through their shrewd machinations, they convince you to give up something of yourself, in order to serve their self-centered interests.
4. In work, social and family situations, once a manipulator succeeds in taking advantage of you, he or she will likely repeat the violation, until you put a stop to the exploitation.

Before we explore how to effectively handle manipulative people, it's useful to recognize their common behaviors. Below are five categories of psychological manipulation. Keep in mind that most of these ploys are designed to exercise control, so that the manipulator gets what she or he wants. Most manipulators have a combination of these characteristics, which can change quickly to suit their agenda.

### **Five Categories of Psychological Manipulation**

**Negative Manipulation** - Designed to gain superiority by causing the victim to feel inferior, inadequate, insecure, and/or self-doubt.

Examples: Persistent negative judgment and criticism. Public berating. Shaming or humiliating. Hostile humor. Sarcasm. Negative surprises. Peer pressure. Social exclusion. Silent treatment. Threats to safety and security. Withholding intimacy.

**Positive Manipulation** - Designed to bribe the victim emotionally to win favors, concessions, sacrifices, and/or commitments.

Examples: Insincere flattery. Appeal to vanity and ego. Promising professional, social, or romantic acceptance (but with a catch). Fake professional or social closeness. Offering help, support or rewards - with the expectation to “cash in” on disproportionate reciprocation. Promising safety and security after taking them away. Promising positive emotions and rewards after dishing out inappropriate negative treatment.

**Deception and Intrigue** - Designed to distort the perception of the victim for easier control.

Examples: Lying. Excuse making. Blaming the victim for causing their own victimization. Deformation of the truth. Mixed messages to keep victim off balance. Strategic disclosure or withholding key information. Exaggeration. Understatement. One-sided bias of issue.

**Strategic Helplessness** - Designed to exploit the victim’s good will, guilty conscience, sense of duty and obligation, or protective and nurturing instinct.

Examples: Playing weak, powerless, underdog, or martyr. Using sad stories and challenges to gain sympathy, support , or allowances from responsibility. Dramatizing hardships to elicit guilt-based preferential treatment.

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