

How to Successfully Handle Passive-Aggressive People



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Introduction

Passive aggressiveness is anger, hostility, and/or learned helplessness in disguise, expressed in a covert, underhanded way to "even the score," and with the hope of "getting away with it."

This reference guide contains important keys to successfully handle passive-aggressive people. The first section - the complete, unabridged version of "How to Spot and Deal with Passive-Aggressive People," presents detailed information on how to maintain composure, be proactive instead of reactive, use humor to disarm difficult behavior, and utilize seven different types of power to affect change. Five additional topics follow and provide further skills and strategies on how to communicate effectively in difficult situations, both at home and at work.

Author James Humes once wrote: "The art of communication is the language of leadership." To master the art of handling passive-aggressive people is to truly exercise superior communication and leadership. The information presented in this reference guide may show you how.

How to Spot and Deal with Passive-Aggressive People

"Behind the smile, a hidden knife!"

— Ancient Chinese saying describing passive-aggressive behavior

The NYU Medical Center defines a passive-aggressive individual as someone who "may appear to comply or act appropriately, but actually behaves negatively and passively resists." Passive-aggressive actions can range from the relatively mild, such as making excuses for not getting together, to the very serious, such as sabotaging someone's well-being and success.

Most chronically passive-aggressive individuals have four common characteristics: They're unreasonable to deal with, they're uncomfortable to experience, they rarely express their hostility directly, and they repeat their subterfuge behavior over time. Passive aggressiveness may be directed towards a person or a group.

Before we explore how to effectively handle passive-aggressive people, it's useful to recognize their common behaviors. Here are four categories of passive aggression:

Disguised Verbal Hostility. Negative gossip. Sarcasm. Veiled hostile joking — often followed by "just kidding." Repetitive teasing. Negative orientation. Habitual criticism of ideas, solutions, conditions, and expectations.

Disguised Relational Hostility. The silent treatment. The invisible treatment. Social exclusion. Neglect. Backstabbing. Two faced. Mixed messages. Deliberate button pushing. Negative or discomfoting surprises. Overspending. Sullen resentment. Indirectly hurting something or someone of importance to the targeted person.

Disguised Task Hostility. Procrastination. Stalling. Forgetting. Stonewalling. Withholding resources or information. Professional exclusion. Denying personal

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