

Miz Liz on iz

THE 15 WARNING SIGNS OF A PASSIVE AGGRESSIVE

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Do you know a human bottleneck? You know; someone who manages to snag all the attention and hold up the works time and time again?

If so, you may be dealing with a Passive Aggressive. Here's how to recognize this person and keep the situation from getting out of control:

1. THE PASSIVE AGGRESSIVE HAS A DRAMATIC VOICE:

Whether it's a baby voice, foghorn, roller coaster, high-pitched screech or the voice of doom, these people do not have a calm, confident presentation. That voice may serve to distract you from what is really going on: You're about to get messed over!

2. THE PASSIVE AGGRESSIVE PUSHES IN; THEY USUALLY WANT TO BE YOUR BEST FRIEND VERY QUICKLY:

They might follow you around, call you numerous times a day and often at inappropriate times (when you said you'd be unavailable; very early in the morning or late at night); or they call, dump on you, and then call back again right away.

3. THE PASSIVE AGGRESSIVE IS "NICEY-NICE", ACTS SWEET AND INNOCENT, OR PLAYS THE VICTIM:

She has a sweet smile, and is very endearing and likable with a flattering, buttering-up style of behavior. He would do anything for you . . . at first. It's this lovely behavior that allows them to get close to you. The problem is, even while they're sticking it to you, you still like them, so it's hard to believe what's really going on. Believe it: They are the parasite and you are the host. The proof is that you feel your energy drain away after you've spent time with them.

4. YOU END UP DOING THEIR WORK OR OTHERWISE HOLDING THE BAG:

The Passive Aggressive is very adept at being irresponsible, then acting helpless or busy or too important to do his work so someone else will do it. But if they were truly helpless, passive, or unavailable, their presence would never be this overbearing!

5. THE PASSIVE AGGRESSIVE'S FAMOUS CRY IS: "I WAS ONLY TRYING TO HELP!"

Their favorite word is, "only", as in, "I only need a minute of your time" or, "I'm only doing what I was told."

6. THE PASSIVE AGGRESSIVE DOES NOT RESPOND TO LOGIC, DOESN'T LISTEN, OR IS WAY OFF TRACK:

They answer questions you didn't ask, and they don't answer the question you did ask. They often adopt a defensive manner; then the response degenerates to rage. You could be asking, "Where did the file go?" and you will get successive answers of defense. First: "I didn't take it." Then, if you keep asking (after all, you need the file), the response may be "I did all the filing you told me to!" and then "I really don't know what you want—you're so good and I'm so bad, but I'm trying so hard!" And all you wanted was a file.

7. THE PASSIVE AGGRESSIVE IS (OR ACTS LIKE THEY ARE) UNAWARE:

They'll deny what they have done, sometimes even while they are still doing it. I don't know whether they know what they're doing or not, but the bottom line is, it doesn't matter. If they're punching holes in your ship, you're going to drown wasting time trying to "understand" them, unless you get off the boat right now.

8. THE PASSIVE AGGRESSIVE MANIPULATES THROUGH GUILT AND BLAME:

They use lots of excuses. They are always sliding away from responsibility, acting like they are so *very* wounded and victimized, but they NEVER offer a straightforward "I'm sorry," or, "I made a mistake," or, "You're right; I'll fix it." When confronted with their irresponsibility, they either cry pitifully or turn on you in rage. Either way, you feel worse for having confronted them, and you are no better off than before.

9. THE PASSIVE AGGRESSIVE IS A JEKYLL & HYDE: FIRST VERY SWEET AND THEN VERY ENRAGED. THEY ARE SNEAKY, CLEVER, TRICKY PEOPLE:

Most of us are shocked when we discover what's been done to us. And by someone we liked and trusted! But remember: If they weren't sweet in the beginning, how would they ever get close enough to suck our blood?

10. THE PASSIVE AGGRESSIVE PUNISHES YOU THROUGH ABANDONMENT, WITHDRAWAL OR RAGE:

They behave parentally (dominating, talking over you, ordering you around) or childishly ("I'm just a poor little thing doing the best I can.") Or both, alternating methods faster and faster until you think you're going crazy.

11. YOU FEEL DAMNED IF YOU DO AND DAMNED IF YOU DON'T:

Because you really like(d) them, you keep asking yourself where you went wrong. Getting you to do that is their greatest talent.

12. THE PASSIVE AGGRESSIVE LEAVES YOU WONDERING IF SOMEBODY GOT THE LICENSE PLATE OF THE TRUCK THAT JUST HIT YOU:

They create sudden, hard, dramatic changes. You find yourself manipulated into a corner without knowing how you got there. If you defend yourself, they interpret it as you attacking them. It's always your fault, even as you lie bleeding in the street. It's never theirs, even if they just backed the bulldozer over you.

13. THE PASSIVE AGGRESSIVE NEVER REMEMBERS ANYTHING BAD THEY DID; INSTEAD, THEY MAKE YOU LOOK BAD:

They will spread damaging gossip behind your back, then be very sweet to your face. If you get angry, they're mystified as to why.

14. THE CYCLE REPEATS:

Occasionally, when confronted, they will cop to having been irresponsible, but then will start the long, careful cycle of trapping you over again. Just when you think you've made peace, and they are so nicey-nice again, WATCH OUT!

15. THE PASSIVE AGGRESSIVE SHOWS THEIR AGGRESSION BEHIND CLOSED DOORS:

The smarter ones make sure there are no witnesses to their aggressive acts. They are sweet and passive when they know others are watching. What they don't realize is that everybody knows there is something wrong, and that people talk to each other.

SOLUTIONS: Reasoning with these people simply does not work. So what can you do? I've found only two things:

(a) Walk away. Don't even try to talk. Anything you say can and will be used against you, including the truth twisted way beyond recognition. You cannot win with these people—but don't take it personally; it's nothing to do with you. If you're not there they will look for someone else to mess with. Think of a vampire who needs blood—any blood.

(b) Speak to them as though they were an intelligent two year old:

- "Now, you know that's not right."
- "You made a promise, and now you must keep it."
- "Shouting at me is not acceptable."
- "You told me it would be ready when I got here. Well, here I am, and I want it now."
- "It's important to keep your agreements."
- "You have two choices: We can do it this way or that way."

Here are a few more phrases that *might* work with your friendly neighborhood Passive Aggressive:

- "Okay, I'll get back to you."
- "I'm going to take some time to think about it."
- "This is the way we're going to do it." (Tell them, don't ask them.)
- "Let's return to our objective."
- "In order to achieve our result we must do _____."
- "Let's take a moment to review."
- "The direction we're going to take is _____."
- "In order for this project to be successful you must _____."
- "If you do that you will be embarrassed in public."
- "I need for you to stop working on ___ and start working on ___ right now."
- "That is contrary to our goal. Please bow out and let me take it from here."

Remember that the Passive Aggressive wants structure. Their game is to challenge the boundaries over and over like a child, hoping that you will be the one to hold consistent boundaries. Your job is to stay firm while they act out repeatedly. Eventually they will check you off their list as not easy to manipulate, and they will go bother someone else.

Caveat: The above are all based strictly on my personal opinions and experiences. I am not, nor do I profess to be, a licensed psychologist. However, my many years of experience in working with people have shown me this pattern very clearly. I present the above in hopes that it may help you in dealing with situations where you thought you were going crazy, or were the cause of the problem. If you're responsible enough to even explore that thought, it's probably not you. A Passive Aggressive never thinks it's them.

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