



Connie Podesta's Life Would Be Easy Series – Part 4 The Aggressive Personality: Manipulation Through Hurt & Anger

By Connie Podesta

You know the type. When you first think of aggressive you probably picture the in-your-face, finger-pointing, power-flexing personality whose mission it seems is to make everyone's life as stressful as possible? But hey, don't give them ALL the credit – there's another type that's just as aggressive – (just a little sneakier about it) and that's the whiners, criers and martyrs. The goal of the aggressives is to manipulate and get their way—by using either HURT or ANGER to get us to give in, give up or give out. And, unfortunately, they usually get their way

So let's take an eagle's eye look inside what makes these people such chaos-creators so that you get the best possible understanding of how to handle them (or re-direct them) so that they're not throwing your life off course. These guys (and gals) are no fun to have as clients, family or friends and usually the salesperson in the office that everyone is secretly (or not so secretly) rolling their eyes at! Also, be open to looking at yourself so you can avoid using these techniques yourself when you are trying to get your way. These are overbearing, powerful, and intimidating personalities when they are playing their respective roles. Don't let them get to you!

The Aggressive Personality – Manipulation Through Hurt and Anger

Aggressive is defined as: using some form of manipulation to get one's needs met. It is a total lack of assertiveness which is based on honest, open and direct communication. A person doesn't have to be physically or verbally intimidating to be considered aggressive. They can also play the part of the meek, timid, helpless victim who blames everyone and everything else for their situation rather than accepting responsibility and taking charge of their own life. In terms of relationships-- aggression boils down to any interaction where someone fails to acknowledge another person's rights, needs, and concerns. The aggressive person's **only** concern is seeing that their needs get met – and they don't care what it takes to do that - or the consequences of their actions.

Here's the deal: The two emotions used most frequently to manipulate others are HURT and ANGER. Think about it—almost every difficult situation or person in your life involves one or both of these emotions.

NOTE: There are definitely legitimate reasons to be angry, but it should always be assertive anger—which does not include verbal abuse, intimidation or ridicule. There will also be many times where we are truly hurt—but that does not mean we use our grief or sadness to manipulate others and make them feel responsible for our situation.

LEGITIMATE HURT AND ANGER DOES NOT INVOLVE BULLYING OR MARTYRDOM.

When difficult people use hurt to manipulate, their goal is to make us feel guilty or bad about ourselves. If you're like most of us -- you're bound to know a few whiners, complainers, mopers and self-induced "victims" or martyrs out there who like nothing more than to make you feel bad enough about yourself or your decisions to make you give in and give them their way. The flipside of these guys are the bullies who instead try to frighten or intimidate us. Either way – whether they threaten, yell, scream, slam doors, give "killer" looks, use sarcasm, put-downs, and belittling statements or whether they're guilt-tripping, sobbing or "poor-me-ing" -- it's manipulating and AGGRESSIVE. Anyone in particular popping to mind yet?

So the big question is...How do you know when you're being manipulated? Well, we first need to analyze whether the person who is angry or hurt is experiencing very real, justified real, legitimate feelings and emotions that are meaningful and appropriate. One of the easiest ways to know if you're being manipulated is to check out your own feelings when confronted with another's hurt or anger. When these emotions are used appropriately, we feel empathy for the other person's anger, distress, or sorrow, but we do not internalize or accept responsibility for their feelings or situation, nor do we experience negative feelings about ourselves. However -- when we're being manipulated, the ultimate goal is for us to feel guilty, insecure, afraid, or inadequate.

Did you know that we help to train difficult people? Oh yeah. Most children are already smart and devious enough by the ages of three or four to try to pit mom and dad against each other to even the odds so that it is not two against one. Anytime parents fail to model **assertive** communication, the children learn to use manipulation to get their needs met. Aggressive people figure it out early on that most people will respond to the ensuing feelings of guilt or fear by simply giving in to them. Remember that the next time you reward negative and manipulative behavior because guess what? Without knowing it – you're encouraging that behavior to happen again.

Guilt is one of the most debilitating emotions we can feel because it causes us to doubt ourselves to the point where we feel unworthy and inadequate. To make matters worse, both fear and guilt can and much of the time do manifest themselves as physical sensations, symptoms, or even illnesses that are uncomfortable, destructive, or painful. Stress can often be traced to people or situations that cause you to constantly question yourself in a critical, negative way.

Anger can often turn into verbal abuse. Ironically (and sadly), most abuse would not exist without the help of someone who is willing to allow it, accept it, and even reward the abuse by giving in. A verbally abusive person is desperate to put the responsibility for their actions, failure, and problems on everything and everyone except themselves. The truth is? Difficult people cannot survive without our help.

WE ARE USUALLY TREATED THE WAY WE FEEL WE DESERVE TO BE TREATED.

The good news is that you can make a difference!

Aggressive anger almost always begins with the word “you” because there is a desire to attack and blame others. “YOU are the reason why I am so angry.” “YOU never do things the way I want”. Assertive communication is the only healthy style and almost always begins with the word “I” because there is no desire to attack or blame someone else! Assertive anger states the problem and the possible solution without attacking the other person’s character or dignity. Remember that difficult people are in a war for control, and they will go to any length to win. To stand your ground and communicate assertively with aggressive personalities, you must fearlessly remember that you are responsible **to** people, not **for** people. (There’s a BIG difference!)

As an adult, you always have the power to step aside and refuse to accept or reward aggressive or any other form of non-assertive behavior. It’s ALWAYS up to you.

Here’s your homework -- Take Action!

Identify three situations where someone used hurt to get what they wanted from you. Were they rewarded for their manipulative behavior? Using assertive communication, how could you have resolved the situation differently? What about anger? Do you cave in when someone gets mad, loud and threatening? Do you teach them it’s OK to treat you that way?

Next – do the tough stuff. Think back to the last 90 days. Have there been any situations where you have used hurt or anger to get what you want? Can you think of a time where you’ve manipulated a situation or a person to serve your own purpose without regard for how it would affect them? If so – take a good look at yourself and ask why. Was it worth it? Do you need to re-evaluate any relationships or behaviors so YOU are not perceived as a bully?

Want to learn more techniques and strategies for dealing with DIFFICULT people? Visit my site at www.conniepodesta.com today!