



## Connie Podesta's Life Would Be Easy Series – Part 8 The Passive-Aggressive Personality: Getting EVEN

*By Connie Podesta*

Wherever revenge-seeking, game-playing and stealth-mode sales-stealing occurs there is almost always in your midst a passive-aggressive personality that has honed his or her skills like a fine-pointed sword. But what they won't know is you've got what it takes to see them coming when you put to work these swift and sure strategies to win despite their shenanigans and sabotaging ways!

And understand – that this is not a good prospect for your customer base – and not a good quality to have in your own personality – learn what you NEED to know to attract the RIGHT kind of customers and counter any negative characteristics that might be rearing their ugly heads!

So what do you think? I bet there is someone in your life right now who deserves to be taught a lesson. Someone who said something snide about you? Someone who is making your life difficult? Are you already planning what you can do to pay them back and even the score? And probably someone who is trying to get even with you and make your life a bit more miserable just to "teach you a lesson?"

### **The Passive-Aggressive Personality – Getting Even**

If the answer is "yes" to any of the above, you are almost certainly going to need a lesson from the passive-aggressive's handbook. Before you do that though, let me warn you, it is not likely to turn out the way you want it to. There is a good reason why novels cast the revenge-seeking character as the villain and never the hero.

It seems like a contradiction in terms because it is! We think of aggressive people as forceful and confrontational and passive people as laid-back and non-confrontational. A passive-aggressive person manages to do both. Passive-aggressive is about paying someone back for a real or perceived injustice.

Oh and they're good! They've got this down to a science! In fact, they can justify their revenge tactics because they believe they have been victimized and have the right to get even.

Do yourself a favor. Get good at recognizing passive-aggressives. I know it's not always easy. They can be sneaky and devious. They're famous for acting one way to your face and another behind your back and even go unnoticed as we focus our attention on the more obvious aggressive people in our lives. At some point, our intuition takes over and we begin to have a suspicious feeling that someone is not quite who they appear to be. As we become more observant, the subtle and not-so-subtle signs begin to appear. Don't get me wrong - they don't normally want a face-to-face confrontation but they usually can't resist dropping clues that let us know they're dissatisfied with us such as heaving long, heavy sighs, rolling their eyes, or shaking their head in mock frustration. They are usually small clues – in fact, so small that we often feel stupid or petty even addressing them. “It must be my imagination,” we think.

When someone is obviously upset, the natural question for us to ask them is, “What's wrong?” Passive-aggressives love this question. They wait to hear it because it means they did not drop those subtle clues in vain. The object of their revenge took the bait. Now they can give their pat answer: “Oh, nothing's wrong.” They do not want to fix the problem; they want **revenge**. Yikes!

Some of their most often used moves? The old silent treatment comes to mind. They're also exceptional at gossip and tattling-completely bent on teaching a lesson! Unfortunately for them, many times the other person is not even aware there is a problem – so the lesson is lost and nothing changes!

### **Don't let that fool you though - Never underestimate its power.**

Passive-aggressive behavior can sneak into a relationship whenever someone feels angry, betrayed, jealous, threatened, intimidated, or maybe when they are being competitive and want to be in control. It is the communication style voted “most likely to destroy” a relationship. It is hard to forgive and forget someone who intentionally tries to get their needs met at our expense and does it in such a sneaky way that we do not even know what hit us. When you're left feeling used and betrayed-it's hard to find your way back.

Unfortunately, passive-aggressives are rarely sorry for their behavior. In fact, they usually feel totally justified using revenge tactics. They believe they have been mistreated and have a **right** to get even.

The irony of it in their blind passion to get even, not only do they fail to get their needs met, they usually end up hurting themselves. Plus, the issue that made them spiteful and vindictive is never even dealt with and thus, never resolved. That is why this communication style is such a sad waste of time and energy.

Here's some examples: Children who purposely fail their classes in order to show their parents they are in control end up spending their summers going to school rather than being with their friends. The spouse who withholds love and affection to teach a lesson misses out on being held and touched. The

co-worker, who gossips, trying to create a clique of supporters, loses the trust of everyone who hears the gossip.

Resist the temptation to feel yourself wrongly treated. Instead, **ask for what you want** and then be willing to assertively work toward healthy, respectful relationships.

**Here's your homework...Take Action!**

Identify a relationship where you have used passive-aggressive behavior. What did you do in your attempt to get even or pay them back? Did it work? Was the short term goal of quick revenge worth the long-term price of compromising your self-respect?

The next time you feel like getting even with someone, try being assertive and letting the other person know how you feel in an honest, forthright manner.

Who is teaching you a lesson right now? Why did they feel a need to go undercover, rather than deal with you directly? What part may you have played in the sabotage? Change what you can to bring the relationship to a more assertive level. And don't ever underestimate their power if you refuse to call them out on their behavior. Refuse to give away your power!

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