

Passive Aggressive Behavior

Passive aggressive behaviour can be difficult to recognise at first. It is recognisable by the disconnect between what the person says and what they do. Passive aggressive people tend to express their negative feelings in an indirect manner, rather than state their disapproval directly to the person concerned. There tends to be a great deal of hostility associated with passive aggressive behaviour and a great deal of this tends to be derived from miscommunication, failure to communicate or the assumption that the other person knows what they are thinking or feeling. From a relationship perspective, passive aggressive behaviour can be the most difficult communication style to deal with as you are not quite sure what you are dealing with.

Procrastination

Putting off doing a task is procrastination. For passive-aggressive individuals, it is typically an intentional ploy to irritate or aggravate the person who is expecting it to be done. For example, a passive-aggressive way to get out of driving someone to school or work is to constantly show up late. Although the lateness is intentional, passive-aggressive individuals will not admit it. They may flippantly apologize and say that they are always late. Explanations and excuses are never in short supply among passive-aggressive individuals.

Forgetfulness

Feigning forgetfulness is characteristic of passive-aggressive. Since everyone is prone to forgetting, it is a valid and acceptable excuse. Also, it is easy to deflect blame because it is viewed as an unintentional action. Purposefully forgetting to do something allows the passive-aggressive person to upset or aggravate someone else without taking responsibility for it. Passive-aggressive individuals may "forget" to send an invitation to someone or insist that it must have been lost in the mail. By doing so, they avoid having someone they dislike show up at a function and hide behind their lie when accused of intentionally excluding someone.

Inefficiency

When unwanted demands are unavoidable, passive-aggressive individuals will invest the minimal amount of time and energy to do it. They will expend little thought or effort engaging in an undesirable activity and therefore do a shoddy job. For instance, when covering for a sick co-worker, passive-aggressive workers may provide inaccurate data or incomplete reports hoping their boss will ask someone else to do it. By making an attempt, the worker cannot be accused of insubordination and the worker can deflect fault for the poor quality due to a lack of knowledge and experience to do a task that is normally assigned to someone else.

Intentional mistakes

Again, rather than [say 'No'](#), passive aggressive people sometimes find it easier to deliberately perform poorly at a task. The hope is that they will not be asked again due to the substandard work.

Disguising criticism with compliments

At first, passive aggressive people may seem pleasant and warm. They often appear to be complimentary. It is only after they have left that you realise that the compliment was actually disguising a cheap jibe.

The last punch

Passive aggressive people love to throw the last punch. So much so, that even when an argument has been reconciled, they slip one last insulting remark into the conversation. This remark is often more subtle than the ones which went before but it is still an insulting remark which allows them to feel victorious.

The silent treatment

As stated at the start, passive aggressive behaviour is recognisable by the disconnect between what is being said and what is being done. Nothing highlights this more than the famous silent treatment. Silence generally signifies agreement but not in this case. When you are on the receiving end of the silent treatment, you realise that the other person is far from agreeable. They have a big problem with you and just to allow themselves the Pyrrhic victory, they have no intention of telling you what that is.

There are 2 other common versions of the silent treatment. One is to answer the question 'What's wrong?' with 'nothing', when there certainly is something wrong. The other, which sadly I used to use myself, is to answer any question with just one word. This is intended to signal that there is a problem, without you having to say it. I used to pride myself on the complexity of the questions which I could answer with just one word.