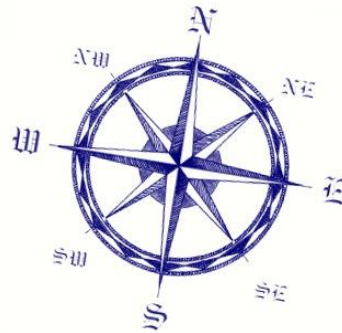


# **Pocket Wisdom for Organizations: Creating an Organizational Culture Responsive to Change**

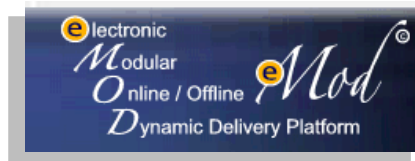
**Excerpt**

## **CHAPTER 2**



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## ***Chapter 2***

### ***Faces of Control***

We don't like to think of ourselves as controlling or capable of participating in another person's controlling behavior. **Control is insidious.** Control wears two different masks: passive and aggressive. Passive-Aggressive is usually described as a behavior pattern of an individual. In this course, we are looking at passive-aggressive in the context of the interaction of two or more people at home or at work. It is important to remember that the objective for both the passive and the aggressive person is to control the other.

The aggressive person controls by rendering the passive person helpless. The passive person controls by rendering the aggressive person hostile. The ingredients for an interesting game of control are now present. The aggressive person is busy managing, being in charge of everything, and being overly responsible. The passive person may react by building walls of silence and not telling the aggressive person what they are really thinking. The passive person may react to direction by refusing to proceed until all the details are explained and understood. The passive person may wait until some other problem is solved, insisting that something else has to be done first. The passive person will almost always remain silent about what they will or will not do.

What is really going on is a subtle game of passive-aggressive control. **The aggressive person is trying to control the outcome by taking charge. The passive person is trying to control by refusing to take responsibility or be supportive.** The passive person never offers creative alternatives to substitute for the absence of their participation. The aggressive person becomes frustrated trying to achieve what they think is the goal of the relationship. The aggressive person initially tries to control feelings of aggression by doing more, and if necessary, by doing the other person's part.

This initially results in feelings of being used, but not really knowing why. The aggressive person begins to exhibit anger, and then feels guilty about their expressed anger. The passive person adds fuel to the fire by using blame, criticism, or hurt-silence. **The passive person refuses to participate, and the aggressive person assumes all the responsibility.** The aggressive person is usually found guilty of creating and maintaining any problems in the relationship because of their **seemingly** inappropriate behavior. Since the aggressive person is exhibiting the noticeable behavior, they are the one who is judged. The passive person, however, escapes judgment by staying in silence and exhibiting no behavior.

The underlying hidden agenda of the passive player is to escape judgment. The passive person does not want the goal of the relationship to be accomplished because then their secret would be out. Their “resistance for the sake of resistance” would be judged. Their secret must be maintained or covered up at all costs. The passive person usually ends up full of guilt and fear. **The passive person is** controlling the outcome by saying “No” without saying “No”. The aggressive person has no way of dealing with the unsaid ‘No’. This creates more guilt and fear. The aggressive person tries to push through the task and ends up full of anger and resentment. **The passive-aggressive cycle is self-perpetuating. The aggressive person creates the passive person. The passive person creates the aggressive person.** This passive-aggressive cycle becomes a game, and control is the object of this game. **No one ever leaves the game because neither person can get control of the other. No one wins the game, so the game goes on and on.** The passive-aggressive game creates chaos and confusion in organizations.