

The Weekly Skillet

Serving Up New Choices For Your Life!

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The Main Course



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Trying to make Control work...

For many of us, childhood was the school in which we learned about control. We grew up believing that having "control over" others would solve our problems.

We learned to work the control cycle even harder, more desperately, and more destructively.

While we are working harder to "control others", people tell us we have "lost control." They tell us to get a hold of ourselves!

So we learn to disguise our method of control. We get real passive! This usually "works" when dealing with authority figures.

Passive-aggressive control also works when we are afraid to be open and honest; when we feel unworthy; when we want to escape notice; when we want to use guilt; and especially when we want to play the "poor victim."

Let's look at some interesting aspects of control when we disguise control within the passive-aggressive control game...

In this context, we are looking at passive-aggressive as the interaction of two or more people at home, school, work, or at play.

It is important to remember that the objective for both the passive and the aggressive person is to control each 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 of the outcome 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 aggressive person is usually found guilty of creating and maintaining any problems in the relationship because of their seemingly inappropriate behavior.

The underlying "hidden agenda" of the passive player is to escape judgment.

(From Passage to Adulthood)

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