

## **Passive Aggressive Communication**

Passive-Aggressive communication is a style in which individuals appear passive on the surface but are really acting out anger in a subtle, indirect, or behind-the-scenes way. Such people often act in passive-aggressive ways to deal with a perceived overwhelming lack of power. They may try to secretly sabotage the situations, make fun of others or quietly disrupt the situations while smiling and appearing cooperative.

People who develop a pattern of passive-aggressive communication usually feel powerless, stuck, and resentful – in other words, they feel incapable of dealing directly with the object of their resentments. Instead, they express their anger by subtly undermining the object (real or imagined) of their resentments. They smile at you while setting booby traps all around you.

### **Passive-Aggressive communicators will often:**

- Mutter to themselves rather than confront the person or issue
- Have difficulty acknowledging their anger
- Use facial expressions that don't match how they feel (i.e. smiling when angry)
- Use sarcasm
- Deny there is a problem
- Appear cooperative while purposely doing things to annoy or disrupt
- Use subtle sabotage to get even.

### **The impact of a pattern of passive-aggressive communication is that these individuals:**

- Become alienated from those around them.
- Remain stuck in a position of powerlessness
- Discharge resentment while real issues are never addressed so they can't mature.

### **The passive-aggressive communicator will say, believe, or behave like:**

- "I'm weak and resentful so I sabotage, frustrate, and disrupt."
- "I'm powerless to deal with you head on so I must use guerilla warfare."
- "I will appear cooperative but I'm not."