

## The Most Damaging Behavior Workers Face

The most detrimental behavior pattern between workers in the workplace is passive-aggressive behavior. It is most often seen in employees who:

- lack in independence (they are not in an overall position of authority); and,
- tend to react to events rather than initiate them.

The behavior of passive-aggressive workers is often aggressive or obstructionist in nature, but in a passive rather than active manner.

*In others words, their behaviors are rarely severe enough to get them fired, but they can be a real pain in the neck.*

The actions of these individuals are most often directed towards authority in reaction to a perceived legalistic style of management. However, this may not be readily evident. Many times their acting-out involves using others as a means to get authority's attention, such as follows.

1. Overly reactionary behavior, that is, behavior that appears to be out of control.
  - a. Workers who misinterpret intentions easily and on purpose. These people like to pretend that they did not understand the intent of the message or command given to them.
  - b. Workers who display frequent flares of anger. These workers know how far they may go (without getting fired) in displaying their anger to others, particularly to those in authority. They seem to enjoy letting you know that they are angry at something or somebody.
  - c. Workers who display quiet, withdrawn periods of moodiness. These workers seem to dramatically display their moods in order to let others know how miserable they feel, or how angry they are at others.
2. Behavior that appears to obstruct or slowdown work. The "big three M's" are evidence of this type of behavior.
  - a. Murmuring. This involves consistent talking behind others' backs, rumors and threats about conspiracy towards authority figures, or against the company itself.
  - b. Meddling. This involves getting into other's affairs through actions such as the creation of rumors about another person.
  - c. Meandering. This involves continuous postponement of duties due to suspect reasons, or what may be called lame excuses. This worker seems to specialize in just wandering from one thing to another, not doing much.

Problem employees who display passive-aggressive behavior are trying to bring authority (and its organization) down to their own level of perceived misery. The old saying that "misery loves company" is very true in the case of passive-aggressive behavior.

Passive-Aggressive Behavior = Misery Loves Company

If not eliminated from the workplace, passive-aggressive behavior can kill anyone's purpose and passion for working. Contact me if I may be of assistance in helping you deal with this type of behavior.

Ron Newton, President

**iWORK-Integrity at Work**

Author, *No Jerks On The Job*