

## **AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOR REASONS and PAYOFFS**

### **REASONS:**

1. Prior Nonassertion. Rights violated one too many times and built-up hurt, anger and tension explodes inappropriately after indirectly taken out on another person
2. Need for Control and Dominance. Due to feeling of powerlessness and vulnerability, sense of being “on guard,” fear of losing position -- “attack before you are attacked”
3. Over-Reaction Due to Past Emotional Experience. Unresolved emotions inappropriately played out in present situations
4. Mistaken View of Aggression as Most Desirable. Belief that aggression is the only way to be effective, get needs met, and be respected
5. Skills Deficit. Individual does not know how to act otherwise, inability to handle frustration

### **PAYOFFS:**

- ❖ Let off steam
- ❖ Gain sense of power and control
- ❖ Can feel superior, mighty
- ❖ Get immediate needs met
- ❖ Sense of effectiveness
- ❖ Seems “strong,” hides weakness and vulnerability
- ❖ Can blame others for misfortune while feeling self- righteous

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## **NON-ASSERTIVE BEHAVIOR REASONS and PAYOFFS**

### **REASONS:**

1. Mistaking Assertion for Aggression. Assertive behavior mislabeled, often in women, as “masculine” or “aggressive,” consequent confusion over limits for assertive behavior.
2. Irrational Thought Blocks. Overcatastrophized, distorted situations lead to anxiety about negative consequences, e.g., interpreting this as being a stupid person (generalizing from a specific).
3. Mistaking Non-Assertiveness for Politeness. “Shoulds” we have been taught, e.g., “Be agreeable,” “Don’t make waves,” “You mustn’t get angry,” “Accommodate.”
4. Fear of Change or Disapproval: Fear of the unknown, including fear of disapproval, makes one feel “stuck” in old patterns. Self doubt replaces action.
5. Mistaking Non-Assertiveness for Being Helpful. Unhealthy need to rescue another, take responsibility for others in not wanting to hurt their feelings or make them upset.
6. Lack of Assertive Skills. One is used to old behavior pattern and does not know how to act otherwise.

### **PAYOFFS:**

- ❖ Appeases others
- ❖ Avoids conflict – don’t “make waves” or “cause a scene”
- ❖ No risks involved – you’re “safe,” “secure”
- ❖ Avoid chance of failure – quiet discomfort preferable to defeat
- ❖ Complaining substitutes for doing – easier to blame and moan than change
- ❖ Avoids new and anxiety-provoking situations
- ❖ Easier in the short run (although harder in the long run)



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