

Getting Along

Tags: [#conflict](#) [#human-relations](#)

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Dialogue

What causes someone to engage in passive aggressive behavior?

It's fine. If that's what you want to do.

I notice myself slipping into this reaction when I feel swamped by requests from other people. Rather than acknowledging that I feel put out and unable to help, I will insinuate that they were wrong to even ask.

What causes someone to engage in passive aggressive behavior?

Avoid labeling passive aggressive-behavior

You point out, the chances of labeling behavior are so small.

Focus on content, not delivery

Remember that not everyone feels comfortable discussing their thoughts and opinions openly. If you can focus on your coworker's underlying concern or question, rather than the way they're expressing themselves, you can address the actual problem.

What does this sound like?

Open up a conversation

Do some "hypothesis" testing

"What I heard you say was . . ."

"I interpreted what you just said as meaning Did I get that right?"

"I noticed that you pushed away from the table [or rolled your eyes].

What's your reaction to this discussion?"

"I heard you say [quick summary] but I wasn't sure if you meant something else. Is there something I'm not understanding?"

Don't take the bait in email or text

How do you avoid the bait?

Make direct requests

Stick to the facts

They will probably deflect responsibility

If you're a manager, you have a responsibility to act.

The danger is artificial harmony.

Where have you changed your mind?