**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-righteousness

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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)