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How to Deal With Aggressive People

By Jennifer Twardowski

Aggressive people. We've all dealt with someone who is being pretty aggressive at some point in our lives.

You know, that person that interrupts you when you are trying to speak — or, they simply talk *louder* whenever you try to speak. That person who doesn't seem to allow your own point of view and input. That person who you feel really crosses your boundaries and makes you feel energetically exhausted.

Dealing with people who have these tendencies can be quite draining and, without a solid balance of both assertiveness and empathy, can create a lot of tension in our relationships with them.

Here are several things to keep in mind whenever you find yourself dealing with aggressive people:

Remain calm. The absolute most important thing to do when dealing with someone who is being aggressive to you is to be calm and grounded. Whenever we are stressed, angry, and ready to really duke it out with them, then we're certainly not going to make any kind of progress.

As the old saying goes, "You can't fight fire with fire." So we have to be sure that we are calm and ready to openly discuss the issue. This will not only benefit you by being able to self-control, but it will also help the other person calm down as well.

So when you find yourself in the presence of or in an interaction with someone who is being a bit aggressive, then stop and take a brief moment to take a few really deep breaths to get yourself centered.

Empathize with the other person. When another person is being kind of aggressive, more often than not, it's because they're stressed. Maybe they have a lot of work on their plate that is making them feel overwhelmed. Maybe they are low on sleep or they haven't eaten lunch that day. Maybe they are still frustrated from dealing with the crazy traffic that they were just in and haven't had a chance to "wind down" from that yet.

Whatever the case, it's important to know and recognize that the other person is stressed. Understanding this will help us to be more compassionate in any of our communications with them about the issue.

Express your concern. Next, it's important to express your concern with the other person. As stated earlier, often times a person is acting aggressive because they are stressed. Therefore, it's also important to keep in mind that, because they are stressed, it is very likely that the person is not consciously aware of what they are doing. It is likely that they are simply just acting on autopilot and have absolutely no idea what they are doing.



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Because of this, it is important that we respond in a sensitive manner. We don't want to aggressively say, "Stop interrupting me and listen!" in response. Instead, you may want to try to make an empathetic statement like, "You seem really stressed" or, "You're talking very loudly." This will help knock them out of this place of being unaware of themselves and be more conscious over what they are doing. As a result, it can help the person be more open to hearing whatever you say.

Next, you may want to try expressing your concern by saying something like, "I'm sorry, but I'm trying to say something and it seems like you are not letting me talk" or, "Excuse me, but can I say something?"

Be honest with yourself. Do you tend to be aggressive as well from time to time? Even the most sensitive, quiet, and kind people can still have a tendency to be aggressive from time to time when under stress. So be sure to ask your loved ones about how your behavior effects them as well.

Talk about it. Depending on the kind of relationship (for instance, if this aggressive person is a romantic partner, a friend, or family member), then you may want to have a discussion about their aggressive behavior. Maybe you can both come to an agreement about what the other person does when one of you is acting kind of aggressively. It may be that you decide to give one of you a loving reminder by saying, "You're doing it again" or by giving them a simple tap on the shoulder or hand to let them know that they are doing it.

By talking about it and making an agreement with the other person, you allow the two of you to be more loving towards each other and you allow the relationship to deepen.

Take action now!

Think of a time when someone was being fairly aggressive towards you: Maybe there is someone at work at tends to interrupt you or maybe your partner does. How can you take better care of yourself in this relationship? What can you say to them or discuss with them that will help make your relationship feel more balanced?

Share your thoughts in the comments below!

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