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Top 100 Traits

OF PEOPLE WHO SUFFER FROM PERSONALITY DISORDERS

The Silent Treatment

Definition:

Silent Treatment - A passive-aggressive form of emotional abuse in which displeasure, disapproval and contempt is exhibited through nonverbal gestures while maintaining verbal silence.

Description:

The silent treatment is a common way of displaying contempt for another individual while avoiding

confrontation about that contempt or without giving the target of the contempt an opportunity to resolve the issue or dispute. The goal is typically to invoke FOG - fear, obligation or guilt - in the mind of the target individual.

Note that just being quiet or declining to have a conversation is not the same thing as the Silent Treatment. Many times, exiting a conversation is a healthy and constructive thing to do as part of a conflict resolution strategy, to exit a circular conversation, to escape verbal abuse or just to compose yourself. The Silent Treatment is different from a time-out in the following ways:

	Time-Out	Silent Treatment
Effect	Constructive	Destructive
Duration	Time Bound	Indefinite
Non-Verbal's	Neutral or Reassuring	Contemptuous
Physical Posture	Disengaged	Engaged
Re-engagement	Mutually Agreed	Unilateral
Engagement of Third Parties	To seek self-support	To seek alliances in the argument.
Disposition	Seeks self-improvement	Seeks to improve others
Problem Focus	To find solutions	To apportion blame

[Click Here](#) for more information on [Time-Out's](#).

Silent Treatment is a technique often used by people who suffer from personality disorders, but it is also sometimes used by non-personality-disordered individuals when they are feeling angry.

The silent treatment is a classic form of passive aggressive confrontation. The silent treatment can last from as little as a few hours to months or even years.

Examples of The Silent Treatment:

For more than 24 hours, a mother speaks to every member of the family except one.

A husband is willing to talk to his friends on the phone but refuses to speak to his wife.

An employee openly talks to other co-workers but refuses to talk to one.

What it Feels Like:

The Silent Treatment is often designed to produce feelings of Fear, Obligation and Guilt (FOG) in people and successful in doing so.

Coping with The Silent Treatment:

The Silent Treatment is rarely a good approach to problem solving or problem resolution.

If you are on the receiving end of the silent treatment, it may be tempting to try to prod the person out of their silence. However, this is a form of control that rarely works. It is better to accept that the person is making a poor choice in their communication, accept that they have a right to be quiet and politely remove yourself from the "conversation" and the room if possible.

If you find yourself angry at another person and tempted to use the silent treatment on them, it is better to take the approach of having a healthy, constructive "Time-Out". You can give them a verbal "I" statement and then exit the conversation until you feel more productive, e.g. "I am feeling upset and don't want to talk right now. I'll discuss this with you tomorrow."

What NOT To Do:

- Don't use the silent treatment on others. It rarely improves communication.
- Don't escalate the situation or try to force a passive aggressive person who is using the silent treatment to snap out of it - you will likely turn them from passive aggressive to hostile aggressive.
- Don't blame yourself for it. Silent Treatment is a poor choice of communication strategy and that is not your choice.
- Don't stay in the same room or company of a person who is behaving in a passive aggressive way any longer than necessary.
- Don't try to find a logical explanation for a personality-disordered person's strange behavior. IT's better to chalk it down to the mental illness and move on.

What TO Do:

- If possible, turn a silent treatment into a time-out and use the time to go work on yourself.

- Express your feelings using "I" statements - but only do this once. "I feel uncomfortable right now".
- Exit the room or the environment so you can think more clearly without all the pressure.
- Get Support from others who understand about personality disorders and can relate to what you are going through.
- Remember that what the person is feeling is temporary and they will probably feel different in a few days or a few hours.

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