

Career Headlines

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How Defensiveness Damages Your Career

Defensiveness is a personality trait. How do you react when you're angry, frustrated, disappointed, or confused? Do you come across as defensive?

Defensiveness is a negative reaction that can't be covered up. People know when you are defensive. These words describe someone who is defensive:

suspicious
distrustful

cautious
guarded

skeptical
cynical

If you know in advance that an event or a conversation is likely to trigger your defensiveness, you can take steps to reduce or eliminate your inappropriate behavior.

- Learn to recognize when your defensive traits are kicking in.
- Stop and think before reacting.
- Don't assume that every comment is a direct attack on you.
- Think of what's good about the situation.

Admit that people may not be wrong just because they don't think like you.



Action: Evaluate yourself on the following statements to determine whether you may be overly defensive.

- | | | |
|--------------------------------------------------|-----------|----------|
| People don't give me enough credit for my ideas. | _____ Yes | _____ No |
| I feel I have to convince people that I'm right. | _____ Yes | _____ No |
| I need to feel I'm in charge of what I'm doing. | _____ Yes | _____ No |
| People seem to ignore me. | _____ Yes | _____ No |
| Some people think I'm difficult. | _____ Yes | _____ No |
| Most people don't understand me. | _____ Yes | _____ No |

If you answered "Yes" to one question, you may be overly defensive. If you answered "Yes" to more than one question, you need to eliminate your defensive attitude. What can you do to correct the problem?

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