

GAMES PEOPLE PLAY TO AVOID TAKING RESPONSIBILITY

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People, because they fear they will lose love or arouse anger if they honestly and directly ask for what they want, often learn to get their needs met by indirect means. Games are dishonest maneuvers designed to get someone to do something by making them feel guilty, fearful, or sorry. Games only work if someone consciously or unconsciously agrees to be the victim and someone the rescuer.

Game players have adopted helplessness and refuse responsibility for their feelings and behaviors. They believe they are victims and blame others for their bad/sad feelings. They punish others who might put them down or take advantage of them. If others do something of which they do not approve, they may sulking, crying, provoking guilt or sympathy. At the same time, they encourage others to take advantage of them by indirectness. They use phrases like "I can't", "I have to", "I need", and "I'm afraid to."

The Poor Me Game: This game is commonly played by those who have been taught they should always be compassionate, do endlessly for others or never say no. They believe their rewards will come only through selfless devotion. When they find others are only too happy to accept their services, they come to the realization that the rewards they get are seldom worth all the dirty work. They then feel resentful and hurt. They hope someone will notice their suffering and feel obligated to rescue them. A common phrase felt and used in this case is, "after all I've done for you...", because their beliefs do not allow them to be direct. Sometimes there are unconscious physical symptoms which make it possible for the "poor me" to say no or get the attention they want but won't ask for directly. An example is the woman who would like help with the housework, but doesn't believe she has the right to ask her husband. She just sighs heavily, gets tired, and develops physical problems. She believes all these things make it clear that she needs help. Because she feels angry at her husband for not being aware of her needs, may think when he reaches for her in bed, "All men ever want is sex."

The Uninvolved or Don't Blame Me Game: Here are people who believe it would be rude to state their opinion directly. They wish to avoid taking responsibility for having an opinion in case it turns out to be wrong. When asked where they want to go, he or she says, "anywhere," "I don't care." Of course, they do care and in the long run end up losing a sense of who they really are.

The Saboteur: These people pretend to be agreeable and go along with you but find secret ways to block you. Angry with a co-worker she cannot say so directly but may spread gossip. Angry at his doctor he simply does not cooperate in the treatment then says, "I told you so," when the treatment doesn't work.

The Seductress: This particular game gives a “poor little me” message of false helplessness and humility. “You are so smart...and I’m just dumb, little ole me,” “I couldn’t possibly take care of myself. See how I need to be rescued by big, strong YOU!” Because this game is demeaning and a put down to the self, the seductress usually turns in resentment on her rescuer and attacks him or her for making her feel so inadequate.

The Wet Blanket Game: The player wants to avoid fighting but also wants to get his or her own way. He or she does not openly state their position. They just withdraw their support and refuses to discuss it. The game avoids open conflict but results in frustration for both parties. An example is the wife who doesn’t like fishing but won’t say so. She won’t enjoy herself and makes sure he doesn’t either.

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