

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?