

COMMUNICATIONS

EIGHT HIDDEN AGENDAS

Hidden Agendas serve two basic functions: (1) to build and preserve an existential position, i.e., a basic stance about the world (it serves to protect you from feelings of low self-esteem, hurt feelings, your vulnerability - an individual strategy for coping with core feelings of inadequacy) (2) to promote ulterior motives and desires. If you want friends but are scared of directness, you might "hook" them in with a hidden agenda. If expression of anger or sadness is not OK, a hidden agenda may allow this expression in an acceptable manner. Hidden agendas are adaptive, serve a definite psychological survival purpose but only work in the short run and the current situation. They do not serve well in the long run to build the closeness and comfort that we all want.

1. **I'M GOOD** The Hero of all our own stories. You are the "est", the best, the biggest, the most sensitive, the toughest. A mask of only the best parts of our-selves that makes it hard for others to see the rest of our "selves" - & boring!
2. **I'M GOOD (BUT YOU'RE NOT)** Everybody is selfish, insensitive, boorish, stupid, scared, but NOT ME! It usually amounts to a short boost in self-esteem by standing on the broken backs of others. The criticism can be direct or implied.
3. **YOU'RE GOOD BUT I'M NOT** "You are so good at that, and I never could", "Gee, I wish I was as smart, brave, sensitive, tough as you". A real invitation to feel guilty for all the hard work you have put into your accomplishment! False flattery from the falsely modest can help them feel better for only the moment.
4. **I'M HELPLESS, I SUFFER** I'm stuck, I try hard, I don't get any breaks, I have had a tough life, "I-don't-get-no-respect", I don't know, I can't, It's too hard. In the end the victim "wins" by showing that nothing or nobody can help.
5. **I'M BLAMELESS** The basic posture is "I didn't have anything to do with it, I didn't do it, I am not at fault or responsible". These people will ask for advice so that if all goes well, they take credit, if not, you get the blame for your "bad" advice. They take no personal responsibility for their own actions.
6. **I'M FRAGILE** "Don't hurt me." This position is advertised by stories of past betrayals, old wounds and hurts that they have never given up and reinforced with their invitation to treat them "gently" by their generally "wounded" posture.
7. **I'M TOUGH** "When the going gets tough, the tough get going". These folks often do "two peoples" work, and pay the price. Psychologically these people advertise "Don't ask, I'm too busy", "Don't make ordinary or emotional demands on me, I have other important things to do." They armor themselves with work.
8. **I KNOW IT ALL** "I'm glad you asked!". They can talk about anything regardless of their familiarity with the subject. They often surround themselves with the younger, less informed, or the blindly admiring. They get to avoid feeling inadequate about themselves by acting like they are "in the know".

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**OPINIONS AND FEELINGS ARE FREQUENTLY A PERSONAL TRIUMPH OVER GOOD THINKING
YOU DEFINE REALITY BY WHAT YOU KNOW, WHAT YOU BELIEVE, AND WHAT YOU DO ABOUT IT.**