

## PAYOFFS RELATED TO BECOMING PUNISHING, EXPLOSIVE, AND ABUSIVE

ALL HUMAN BEHAVIOR, INCLUDING PUNISHING WITHDRAWALS, AGGRESSION, AND ABUSE, IS PURPOSEFUL AND OCCURS FOR A REASON. THERE IS ALWAYS SOME MEANING TO WHAT WE SAY AND DO (EVEN IF WE DO NOT REALIZE IT AT THE TIME). LOOK THROUGH THIS LIST AND START TO THINK ABOUT WHY YOU HAVE ACTED IN HURTFUL, DISRESPECTFUL, AND EXPLOSIVE WAYS WITH OTHER PEOPLE IN YOUR LIFE.

The most important reason that people use disrespectful and abusive behavior is to attempt to **CONTROL** what is happening around them (this only works on a short-term basis, however)

- You can control the other person or the situation
  - ...but this is always only temporary
- You can get your way at the time
- You can gain compliance from others
  - ...you get others to do what you want them to do
  - ...you get others to be quiet, stop talking, or quit “nagging” you
  - ...you get others to “listen” to you
  - ...you get others to “back off” and “calm down”
  - ...you get others to change their behavior and things about them you don’t like
  - ...you get others to “understand” (i.e. “agree with”) your beliefs and values
  - ...you end arguments/discussions/conflicts that you don’t want to have
- It allows you to “get the last word”
  - ...your perspective gets “heard”
  - ...you “get your point across” to the other person
- It serves as a “shortcut” to getting what you want and think you deserve

It allows you to gain revenge/get “payback”/get even/get “satisfaction”/hurt others for the “wrongs” that you believe they have done to you

It brings others down to (or below) your emotional level of pain and misery  
...e.g. then they may feel even worse than you do

Your intensity and “over-reaction” demonstrate how “important” the issue (or the person) really is to you  
*...“I only yell about this issue because I really care about you and what you do (or because I love you so much)”*

You can avoid and never actually get to address important relationship issues  
...i.e. you can divert attention from them by getting angry and explosive if you don’t want to talk about them

You can avoid intimacy and create emotional distance between you and others  
...i.e. you can “protect” yourself and stay “safe” if being truly close to other people is actually scary or uncomfortable for you

It proves to you and others that you are not dependent on anyone else in your life

It provides you with a “rush” or a “high”

You can feel powerful/strong/tough/”in charge”/”important”

You prove that you’re “superior” to and better than other people

You prove that you’re “right” about whatever is going on in the situation  
...i.e. “might makes right”

You avoid feelings that may be uncomfortable and difficult for you  
...depression, anxiety, sadness, fear, disappointment, hurt, self-doubt, and other emotions that “make you more vulnerable to others”

It feels “comfortable” for you, i.e. it’s “who you are and what you know”  
...your punishing and disrespectful anger becomes a “bad habit” and an important part of your identity as a person

You can hide your inadequacies and insecurities temporarily from yourself and those around you  
...you “cover up” the feelings underneath your anger

You can get attention/acceptance/approval/”respect” from others, especially when you are young

It serves as a short-term stress reliever  
...it can be a temporary emotional and physical release  
...you can “dump” your stress, frustration, and emotional pain on others

It creates intensity and excitement that can replace the boredom or “numbness” that you may generally be experiencing in your day-to-day life

It may help you be successful and make a lot of money in the world of work

You might be able to get sympathy or even sex from a partner  
...”make-up sex” that you may experience during the “deception” or “honeymoon” phase of the cycle of abuse to try to feel closer after a significant “blow-up”

You can stay self-absorbed, self-centered, and focused only on yourself and what you think, feel, and want rather than thinking about others’ wants and needs

You can “get out of” plans that you have for couple or family activities that you don’t really want to attend  
...hostile arguments beforehand create the opportunity for you, or your partner, to cancel plans at the last minute (i.e. the conflict gives you an “excuse” to do this)

It makes it easier to become explosive and disrespectful the next time because you have already “crossed the line” previously

It forces a partner to “caretake” and try to “change” you rather than focusing on and developing themselves to be the person they want to be

It allows you to “make a connection” with the other person

...”connecting” with a partner in a disrespectful way, for some people, is better than having absolutely no connection at all

It is one way to “protect” yourself and others

It can actually serve as a way to get some real help for you, which can then promote self-knowledge, healing, change, and personal growth (for some people)

**...this is the only truly “positive” payoff in this entire list**