

# 10 WAYS TO MANIPULATE

## *At Work or At Home*

**Most of us try to get people to do what we want.** After all, we are usually right, aren't we? But sometimes they don't want to do what we want them to. We can respond to that in a variety of ways. We can appeal to logic. We can appeal to force—if we're the boss. Or we can raid people's emotions and insecurities.

The third approach often works pretty well. This is particularly true because the person who considers this appeal needs no sense of compassion or apparent scruples. So if you want to manipulate people, and anything goes, here are some ideas to help you out. Counselors call this "emotional abuse." But that's a bit harsh, isn't it? Women and children who have been emotionally abused may find these techniques reprehensible, but for those of us free from the scourge of ethical constraint, well, who cares what those weaklings think? Perhaps instead we should name these the "10 TTs," Trump Tactics, after the master, Donald Trump. Here they are. Go forth and manipulate!

**1. Lie.** A good TT man (as they usually are men) will lie without pause, or even without prior reflection. It goes without thinking. Obviously without thinking at all. Just say it with a strong, authoritative voice, and repeat it until people believe.

**2. Deny.** Sometimes the slightly less meek, or slightly more informed among your colleagues will cavil at a lie. Do not be deterred. Just continue to deny the concern, ignore the truth, and move on to a new lie. If you bombard them with lies, your detractors won't be able to keep up with you.

**3. Shift the blame.** It's never your fault. No, really. It's always somebody else's fault that you veered into a moment of apparent weakness. This is a great tactic when you want to hit your kid at home, or demean a colleague at work: "He made me do it because he offended me." Out of money to pay your cleaning man? No problem. Just blame him: "He didn't do a good job, so I'm not paying him." You can always find somebody else to blame.

**4. Shift the topic to an attack** (aka "moving the goalposts"). So a manager brings up the lagging sales of your department. Don't respond to that. Instead attack and humiliate the co-worker. You can always find something to belittle, especially if you keep score to prepare for just this opportunity. Call out her staff's weaknesses, her limited education, her poorly worded email from last year, her divorce, her hair—possibilities are endless, as everyone has something worthy of your scorn. Keep it up, you'll wear out your opponent and the rest of the staff. Super-effective at home as well.

**5. Switch topics** (aka "bait and switch"). Pretend you will talk about the topic you find uncomfortable while switching it to an unrelated topic. Works well at work, and really well at home. Your wife is concerned with your drinking. You respond, "At least I'm not wasting money shopping like you do all the time!" Tah-dah! Now you don't have to talk about your own waste—you can talk about hers because she's not being nice to you.

**6. Project to your opponent.** Build an entire winning strategy around your own potential weaknesses. All you have to do is project them onto your opponent. "She's the most crooked manager in our company," you can claim over and over, even though, actually, you yourself are the candidate for that honor. If you keep repeating it, probably with a slogan like "Crooked Cathy," people will believe you.

**7. Try hyperbole and generalizing.** Details confuse you, and it takes work to provide them. So don't. Instead, find grandiose words to describe your thinking. "It's the greatest project ever," or "I'm going to turn this company into a profit robot!" Generalizing enhances the glittering effect. "Everyone knows how important this is," or "People everywhere know those Mexicans are destroying our company."

**8. Shout.** Your alpha male voice is your power. Use it, particularly against women or those with soft voices. Interrupt, bellow, refuse to allow them to respond. This proves your superiority over others, and those who love a "strong leader" will admire your control over your weaker colleagues. At home, of course, if you shout and bluster on you'll easily cow your family into silence.

**9. Appeal to fear.** Everyone has his or her fears. Exploit that! Warn people that the Muslims working in your company are sabotaging your products, but "those politically correct managers are too afraid to do anything about it." You can nurse fear into hate and so suggest that you alone will be able to control the situation.

**10. Ridicule people's looks.** Most of us are a little insecure about the way we look. If you're a good manipulator, you can build on that. Ridicule weight, hair, bodily functions, even disability. "Our company is being ruined by fat, 300-pound programmers who sit around all day eating donuts." At home it's even more effective: "If you weren't so ugly, maybe my friends would like you more."

**So now** that you know the clever tactics, it's your turn: Go out and conquer your world. You might even get to run for president! Or at the least, you'll be able to recognize manipulation from those around you.