

Manifestations of the Flesh (Long Version)

The following list outlines common ways people react with self-sufficiency to protect themselves from pain and vulnerability or to promote themselves. These responses also attempt to meet their need for love, acceptance, worth, and security. **There is no condemnation for those in Christ, but there is also no freedom when we rely on fleshly strategies instead of Christ.**

Take an inventory of your flesh patterns by circling all the different ways you behave, especially when you are under pressure or having a bad day.

To cope when things aren't going right or going my way, I tend to:

Become Self-Absorbed:

- overly introspective
- feel sorry for myself
- engage in self-pity
- get depressed
- stuff my anger and frustrations
- beat up on myself
- focus on my suffering/trials to get attention and sympathy
- play the role of a victim/martyr

Withdraw:

- isolate
- aloof (pull away)
- go into a shell
- run and hide (escape)
- distance myself from others
- avoid others (be a loner)
- unapproachable
- overly introverted
- retreating to the silent treatment
- not communicating

Become Obsessed With:

- my accomplishments
- recognition/status
- how I look/physical health
- what others think of me
- the past (especially past hurts and past failures)
- devotion to a cause
- structure, order, rules

Escape Pain/Pressure Through:

- carousing
- drugs, alcohol, food, exercise
- staying busy
- television, computer, phone
- hobbies/games
- entertainment, sports
- sex, fantasy, pornography
- religious activity and service
- workaholic
- venting
- education, reading
- sleep

Become Self-Reliant:

- perfectionistic
- overcompensating
- legalistic
- live "by the book"
- live by rules (have to's, should's, must's, ought's)
- very hard and strict on myself and others
- set unrealistic standards for myself and others
- base acceptance (of self and others) on performance
- fear making mistakes

Become Self-Indulgent:

- impulsive (hasty)
- buy things to feel better
- do what feels good
- compulsive
- lust alcohol, caffeine, sugar, cigarettes, drugs, sex, food

Become Anxious:

- worry or fret
- be fearful (apprehensive)
- lack peace and rest
- be paralyzed (go numb)
- be paranoid/suspicious
- seek astrology, tarot cards, horoscopes, fortune-telling, palm reading, ouija boards, occult for guidance/strength

Become Controlling:

- blackmail (making threats)
- manipulate, coerce, guilt
- swear
- use the silent treatment
- passive (play helpless)
- not eat (anorexia/bulimia)
- use favoritism
- overprotective

Become Insensitive:

- uncaring, indifferent
- unconcerned, unsympathetic

Dominate:

- dictatorial (bossy)
- demanding (pushy)
- overbearing (controlling)
- manipulative
- intimidate others
- demand my rights

Challenge Others:

- resist authority
- uncooperative or unteachable
- cause dissension (strife)
- argumentative, rigid, inflexible, close-minded, stubborn, obstinate, unreasonable, or unyielding

Become Pessimistic:

- lack confidence, optimism
- skeptical (suspicious)
- distrusting others, myself, God, church, or government
- expect/assume the worse
- never be satisfied, content, pleased
- jealous of others

Become Tense:

- nervous or agitated
- find it hard to relax
- restless (high strung)
- impatient
- uncomfortable in own skin

Live According to Feelings:

- too subjective (believing that truth is what I feel)
- believe I'm okay only when I feel okay
- hypersensitive
- taking things too personally
- read in rejection when it isn't there
- touchy (irritable)
- controlled by anger, doubts, emotions, fear, etc.

To cope when things aren't going right or going my way, I tend to:

Become Hostile:

- vent anger (quick temper)
- unfriendly (cynical)
- hateful (malicious)
- harsh (cruel and brutal)
- sarcastic (caustic)

Display a Critical Attitude:

- find fault with others/myself, and everything around me
- nit-picking things to death
- judgmental (opinionated)
- be prejudiced (intolerant)
- complain a lot (be negative)

Appear Self-Assured:

- self-confident
- self-reliant
- proud (haughty)
- egocentric (pompous)
- brag (be boastful)
- arrogant (cocky)
- have a superior attitude, always right, must win, be the best, on top
- pretend like I know it all
- conceited (smug)
- have difficulty asking for help

Emotionally Insulate:

- keep people at a distance
- inhibited (bottling up emotions)
- avoid intimacy
- deny feelings
- have difficulty expressing feelings and opinions
- unexpressive

Become Self-Righteous:

- self-justify
- rationalize (make excuses)
- minimize (down play)
- defensive
- cover up and hide mistakes
- assume I'm never the problem
- point to someone or something else as the problem
- avoid taking responsibility for failure or problems
- critical/blaming others
- have difficulty admitting wrong, apologizing, saying thank you

Become Complacent:

- nonchalant
- say "Oh well." "It doesn't matter." "It's okay."

Deny Reality:

- ignoring problems, hope they go away
- deny anything is bad or wrong
- lie, exaggerate, mislead
- deceive others and myself
- exaggerate (overstate matters)
- play games to hide motives
- con people

Hold a Grudge:

- resentful
- moody (sulk)
- harbor bitterness
- unforgiving
- keep a scorecard of wrongs done to me
- trying to get even, seek revenge
- want others to fail or get hurt
- punish myself or others

Fight Unfairly (Cheap Shots):

- slanderous
- exaggerate or misrepresent the situation
- gossip
- engage in passive-aggressive behavior (use humor to hide real feelings, be sarcastic, refusing to communicate, be passive, forgetting things, procrastinating, be late, etc.)

Become a Caretaker:

- a rescuer
- overprotective
- take responsibility for other's feelings, success
- make decisions for others
- give unsolicited advice
- try to prevent other's failure
- possessive (selfish)
- a busybody (be too involved in other's affairs)
- preachy (lecturing others)
- need someone to need me
- nag or badger
- talk too much and listen poorly

Become Self-Deprecating:

- self-condemning
- self-critical
- assume I am always the problem
- overly apologetic
- too hard on myself
- have difficulty receiving love, compliments, forgiveness
- clingy
- uncomfortable with success

Lack Compassion:

- unkind, not, gentle or understanding

Be a Pleaser (Yes-Man):

- try to be all things to all people
- try to do the "proper/correct" things
- try to keep everyone happy
- try to keep peace at all cost
- avoid conflict at all cost
- a doormat (letting others take advantage of me)
- express to others what I think they want to hear
- give in to others too easily
- controlled by others
- have difficulty saying "no," setting boundaries, standing up for myself
- be overly compliant
- too submissive

Become Passive:

- lack initiative
- quit too easily or give up
- not take chances
- play it safe, indecisive
- wait for someone to tell me what to do or think
- co-dependent (depend on others)
- vacillate (be too changeable)
- want others make decisions for me
- avoid failure at all cost
- procrastinating (put things off)
- irresponsible (be unreliable)
- apathetic

Put Up a Front:

- fake it (thoughts/feelings)
- put on a show (performing) to get attention/impress others
- pretentious (phony, unreal)
- superficial (plastic)
- gushy (too sentimental)

Become Too Intense:

- overly serious
- stoical (unemotional)
- overly analytical
- stern, formal, lack joy
- lack joy or relax to have fun