



Step #4: Speak in specifics and not generalities. State specifically what it is you want from the listener. The message must be one that the listener does not need to deduce what is being said or not said.

Step #5: Ask questions to foster understanding. Ask questions to determine if the listener understands the message. If the listener does not understand what you said, revise the wording and then repeat the message, as

many times as it takes for the listener to understand it.

Step #6: Seek feedback. Acquire feedback from the listener to have the opportunity to fine-tune your message. Encourage a person to share information to enhance communication and understanding.

Step #7: Listen and acknowledge what the other person is saying. You expect the listener to pay attention and understand what you say. The listener has the right to expect the same.

Step #8: Pay attention to your tone of voice and body language. Studies indicate that 40% of communication is non-verbal. Speak in a clear and concise manner. Sit or stand straight-lean slightly forward-to demonstrate that you are listening and understand what the speaker is saying.

Step #9: Reach your goal. The goal of being assertive is to express yourself without violating the rights of others. Do not give up. Attain this goal.

Assertive Fine Points

The following key points should also be considered for a more assertive behavior.

Effective listening: A key element of assertiveness—increases your assertiveness because it shares your feelings and ideas, reduces friction, increases respect and trust, develops insight, increases knowledge, aids in problem resolution, and increases understanding.

Body Language: It is not just what you say to someone, but also how you communicate non-verbally with voice, tone, gestures, eye contact, facial expression, and posture that will influence your impact on others.

Word Choice: Use “I-statements” rather than “you-statements.”

Example: “I would like you to do this task and complete it by tomorrow”. Use factual descriptions instead of judgments and exaggerations.

How to Say “No”

Saying “no” can be one of the most difficult things to say. It is extremely important to learn how to set limits with others. If you allow yourself to do things against your will or judgment, you may end up feeling resentful and used. Some ways to say “no” are:

- ❖ I cannot do that right now.
- ❖ I have promised myself to finish this (paper) right now, so no.
- ❖ Not this time.
- ❖ I am afraid I have to decline.
- ❖ Sorry, but no.
- ❖ Thanks for asking, but no.

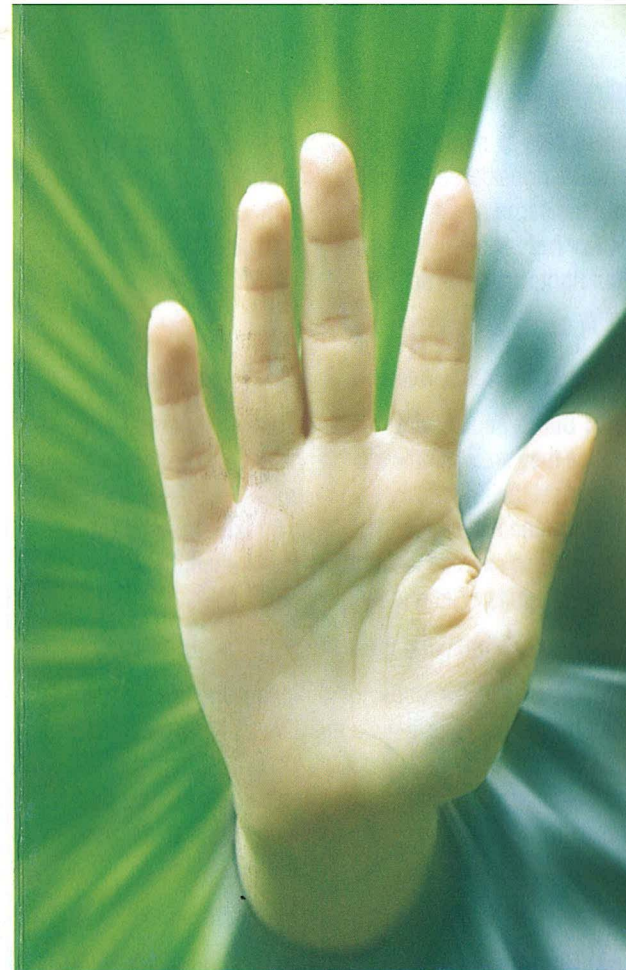
How to Ask for Something

Use an “I” statement that contains the word “need” or “want” or its equivalent. For example:

- ❖ I need to be alone for a while.
- ❖ I need help with these math problems. Would you be able to help me sometime?
- ❖ Please be quiet when the professor is speaking because I cannot hear her when you are talking.
- ❖ I want to go home now.
- ❖ I need to talk to you.

How Long Will It Take Me to Become More Assertive?

Becoming assertive is a lifetime project. As you begin to practice some basic assertiveness skills, you will develop confidence in yourself. Some situations are more difficult than others, so begin practicing assertiveness skills in the easier situations. It may be easier to assert yourself with strangers than with your supervisor at work or with your family. For example, while waiting in line and someone cuts in front of you, you can calmly say, “I believe I was next”. Keep practicing these skills and you will become a more confident, happier person.



Assertiveness


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What Is Assertiveness?

Assertiveness is being able to stand up for yourself, making sure your opinions and feelings are considered and not letting other people always get their way. It is not the same as aggressiveness. You can be assertive without being forceful or rude. Instead, it is stating clearly what you expect and insisting that your rights are considered.

Myths about Assertiveness

Myth 1: “Assertiveness is basically the same as being aggressive”.

Debunking the myth: Some people who are aggressive think they are being assertive because they are stating what their needs are. Aggressive people force others to meet their needs by using unpleasant means such as shouting, physical roughness, manipulation, or threats. In contrast, assertiveness is being able to express feelings, ask for something, or set limits without demanding results or intimidating people.

Myth 2: “If I am assertive I will get what I want”.

Debunking the myth: Being assertive does not mean that you always get what you want. In fact being assertive is not a guarantee of any outcome at all. Being assertive is about expressing yourself in a way that respects both your needs and the needs of others. Sometimes this means you get what you want, sometimes you won't get what you want at all and sometimes you will come to a mutually satisfactory compromise.

Myth 3: “If I am assertive I have to be assertive in every situation”

Debunking the myth: Understanding how to be assertive provides you with the choice of when to be assertive. It does not mean you have to be assertive in every situation. You may come to the realization in certain situations that being assertive is not the most helpful way to behave.

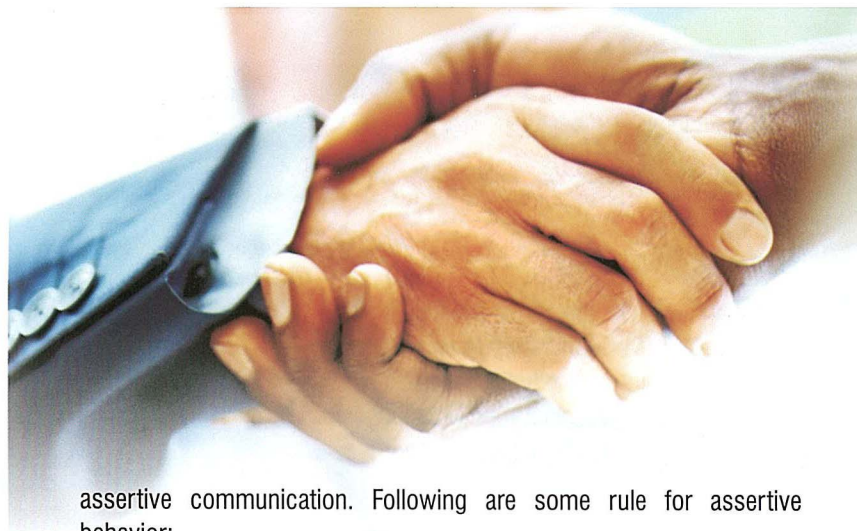
What Will Assertiveness Do for You?

- ❖ Develop your communication skills.
- ❖ Allow you to feel self-confident.
- ❖ Increase your self-esteem.
- ❖ Help you to gain the respect of others.
- ❖ Improve your decision-making ability.



The Rules of Assertion.

All people have basic human rights that give them dignity as individuals. By not allowing our rights to be violated we are not being selfish but are maintaining our self-respect. If together with being aware of your own rights, you respect other people's rights you have the foundation for



assertive communication. Following are some rule for assertive behavior:

I have the right to.....

1. **Respect myself** – who I am and what I do.
2. **Recognize my own needs as an individual** – that is separate from what is expected of me in particular roles, such as son, daughter, friend, brother, sister, student.
3. **Make clear “I” statements** about how I feel and what I think. For example, “I feel very uncomfortable with your decision”.
4. **Allow myself to make mistakes.** Recognizing that it is normal to make mistakes.
5. **Change my mind**, if I choose.
6. **Ask for “thinking it over time”.** For example, when people ask you to do something, you have the right to say “I would like to think it over and I will let you know my decision by the end of the week”.
7. **Allow myself to enjoy my success that is** by being pleased with what I have done and sharing it with others.
8. **Ask for what I want**, rather than hoping someone will notice what I want.
9. **Recognize that I am not responsible** for the behavior of other adults.
10. **Respect other people** and their right to be assertive and expect the same in return.

Develop Assertiveness

To become assertive, practice developing several key elements to engrain them into your character and communication with others.

Speak honestly. Always speak honestly and directly to foster understanding and mutual agreement. Do not have any hidden purposes or agendas. You need to convey what you think, feel, and want from the other person.

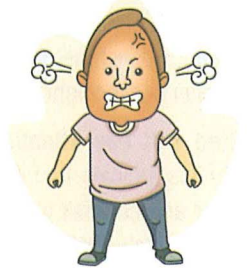
Develop a strong self-image. Develop a strong self-image by admitting that both you and the other person are not perfect. Be honest and genuinely confident in performing to the best of your abilities.

Admit mistakes. Everyone is entitled to make mistakes. Admit mistakes without hesitation. Avoid embarrassment or not accepting responsibilities by trying to hide mistakes. The best and quickest way to end a continuing discussion is to admit your mistakes, learn from them, and go on.

Take a stand. Know when to compromise and when not to. Have strong ideas but listen to others. Determine when to compromise and when to take a stand: do not change a position once taken!

Control your emotions. Develop a controlled style of communication. Do not let emotions-anger, resentment, or sadness - go to an extreme. Do not take criticism personally. Learn from criticism and go on with actions and words to communicate successfully.

Solve problems. Do not let problems build up and believe they will go away. They will not! Solve problems. Toss out pride and ask for help from others.



Assertive Steps

Developing assertiveness is a continuing process. Practice what you have developed and implement the nine steps to achieve an assertive behavior pattern.

Step #1: Choose the right time and place. Timing and location are crucial to being assertive. Meet in a quiet location to hold interruptions to a minimum. Turn off phones, cell phones and other communication devices.

Step #2: Get the listener's attention. Face the other person and make direct eye contact. Speak up and assure yourself that the listener is ready to hear what you are about to say.

Step #3: State what you want honestly and openly. Be forthright to be clear and understandable to the listener. He/she will know when you are being candid and truthful.