

Assertiveness

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Assertiveness

“You have to be confident in your ability, and then be tough enough to follow through.”

-Rosalynn Smith Carter

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Assertiveness- the ability to express yourself and your rights without violating the rights of others. It is appropriately direct, open, and honest communication which is self-enhancing and expressive. Assertiveness tends to include, clarify, and respect others.

Characteristics of Positive Assertiveness

- Speak naturally.
- Gauge your volume; keep your voice firm but pleasant.
- Establish eye contact.
- Be aware of nervous habits.
- Use suitable facial expressions.
- Pay careful attention to your posture and gestures.
- Listen...and let people know you have heard what they said.
- Ask questions for clarification.
- Look for a win-win approach to problem solving.

Techniques for Assertiveness

1. Be as specific and clear as possible about what you want, think, and feel.
2. Be direct.
3. Convey your message and acknowledge that your message comes from your frame of reference, your conception of good vs. bad or right vs. wrong, your perceptions.
4. Ask for feedback.



Choose Assertive Words Carefully

- Use factual descriptions instead of judgements.
- Avoid Exaggerations.
- Use “I” not “You”.
- Express thoughts, feelings, and options reflecting ownership.



Use an “I” Message

An “I” message includes:

- *Behavior*- what it is, exactly, that the other person has done or is doing
- *Effect*- what is happening because of their behavior
- *Feelings*- what effect does their behavior have on your feelings?

An Example “I” Message.

- “When you come late to the meeting (behavior) I feel angry (feelings) because we have to repeat information the rest of us heard (effect).”

Making an Effective Presentation

- Consider your audience.
- Set the tone and purpose in your opening remarks.
- Establish your objectives.
- Consider time limits.
- Organization is key.
- Visual aids add interest to presentations.
- Rehearse to build confidence.

Assess Your Assertiveness

1. When you differ with someone you respect, are you able to speak up and share your own viewpoint?
2. Are you able to refuse unreasonable requests made by friends or co-workers?
3. Do you readily accept positive criticism and suggestion?
4. Do you ask for assistance when you need it?
5. Do you usually have confidence in your own judgment?
6. If someone else has a better solution, do you accept it easily?
7. Do you express your thoughts, feelings, and beliefs in a direct and honest way?
8. Do you try to work for a solution that, to the degree possible, benefits all parties?

A “yes” response to any of these questions indicates an assertive approach.