



Asserting Your Point of View

A person using **PASSIVE BEHAVIOUR (child and/or parent state):**

- Fails to express honest and true feelings, thoughts and beliefs
- Allows others to ignore, trample on, disregard their own views and feelings
- Seeks to avoid, appease or “run out” of a situation
- Often goes to great lengths to prevent others from getting hurt or upset, despite what they themselves feel.

A person using **AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOUR (child and/or parent state):**

- Stands up for themselves at all costs
- Takes no account of what other people think or feel
- Is prepared to deride, dismiss, humiliate, belittle or overpower other people and their views
- Goes all out for a “win” in any meeting, discussion or confrontation.

A person using **PASSIVE AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOR (child and/or parent state):**

- Says yes when they want to say no
- May be sarcastic or complain about others behind their back
- Are not direct about their needs and feelings.

A person using **ASSERTIVE BEHAVIOUR (adult state):**

- Is calm, direct, honest and confronting – expressing true feelings and honestly held views
- Stands up for themselves by putting their point of view clearly and if necessary repeatedly before others
- Respects the right of others to have a view and express it
- Will usually be prepared to investigate alternatives (acceptable compromises) to resolve differences of opinion

Examples of Non-Assertive Behavior

Do you recognize yourself in any of the following descriptions of non-assertive behavior?

The Hidden Performer

These are people who do a very good job but who don't tend to communicate their achievements to others, especially to those with power in the organization. They may find that their colleagues and immediate superiors use them as a source of ideas, but then go on to take the credit themselves.

If this sounds like you, what can you do to share your achievements?

The Troublesome Performer

These people are good at their jobs but have an unfortunate habit of being overly aggressive in their manner. Instead of acting assertively in their dealings with others, they have adopted an aggressive, less affable stance and as a result, tend to be avoided or not listened to by others around them.



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If this sounds like you, how can you assert yourself more calmly and directly?

The Disorganized Performer

Such people seem unable to be assertive with themselves. In other words, they fail to establish and maintain sufficient self-control and discipline to enable them to fulfill their potential. They may tend continually to put things off and often miss deadlines. Although they are often competent performers in short spells, they fail to achieve their career goals and aspirations due to their non-assertive style of working.

If this sounds like you, how can you give yourself more structure to get things done and achieve what you are capable of?

The Moaner

Such people spend more of their time at work moaning about their job, their working conditions, other people etc. They, however, do not believe that they can personally do anything about such problems. Their line is that 'others', usually those further up the hierarchy, should act to relieve them of their burdens. Unfortunately, because the 'moaner' rarely takes his or her grievance any further than possibly other 'moaners', nobody hears about it and, as a result, nothing gets done.

If this sounds like you, who do you need to tell, and how will you say it constructively?

The Put-Upon

Such people suffer from an inability or unwillingness to say "no". As a result, they are often overloaded and may tend to suffer from symptoms of stress. Submissive behavior such as this may well almost invite others to load their work on the 'willing donkey' too, thus increasing the problem.

If this sounds like you, how can you manage other people's expectations of you?

As you can see, there a variety of different types of non-assertive people to be found in organizations. Such people generally find work less than satisfying, and probably do not make the contribution to the organization of which they are capable.

The benefits of being assertive

Behaving assertively can help you to:

- Increase your self-confidence and self-esteem
- Understand and recognize your feelings
- Earn respect from others for stating your point of view
- Improve two-way communication
- Create win-win situations
- Build trusting relationships
- Gain more job satisfaction, as you ask for what you need

Learning to be more assertive

Here are some tips to help you become more assertive:

- **Assess your style.** Read the descriptions above, about passive, aggressive and assertive behaviour. How well do you think you assert yourself calmly and directly? How often do you assert your point of view? How much do you allow others to express their views?
- **Know what your needs are.** What do you want? What do you need? What is important to you? Only when you know the answers to these questions can you let others know, which then means that they can help you to achieve that – or manage your expectations accordingly.
- **Listen to your intuition.** Sometimes, you might hear a little voice inside your head that wants to be heard. Don't push it aside, but listen to it, and decide how to say it out loud.
- **Rehearse what you want to say.** If it's challenging to say what you want or think, practice typical scenarios you encounter. For instance, if you want to ask for more feedback from your manager, practice what you want to say. Say it out loud. It may help to write it out first. Consider role playing with a friend or colleague and ask for blunt feedback.
- **Use "I" statements.** Using "I" statements lets others know what you're thinking or feeling without blaming. For instance, say, "I disagree," rather than, "You're wrong."
- **Say how you feel.** No-one can argue with how you feel about something, as they are *your* feelings. For example, you may say, "When you do x, I feel y, and it would help me if you would do z instead". Notice that you are not blaming the person at all, but saying what you have observed, and how you feel about that. It is important not to say, "you make me feel x", because only you are responsible for how you react to others.
- **Practice saying no:**
 - Say no, then clarify your reasons succinctly. This does not include long-winded statements filled with excuses, justifications and rationalizations. It's enough that you do not want to say yes. Your clarification is given to provide the receiver with more information so that he or she can better understand your position.
 - Say no, and then give a choice or alternative, such as: "Not now; however, I will when I get this done, which could be in an hour", or "I don't have time today, but I could help out first thing tomorrow morning".
 - Make an empathetic listening statement, then say no. You may paraphrase the content and feeling of the request, then state your no. Example: "I can see that it is important to you that one of my team gets your report done. I'd like to have someone do it, but my staff are already over-burdened with high priority tasks to be completed by the end of the day".



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- Say yes, then give your reasons for not doing it or your alternative solution. This approach is very interesting. You may want to use it in situations when you are willing to meet the request, but not at the time or in the way the other person wants it. Examples: “Yes, I would be willing to help you out, but I won’t have time until tomorrow afternoon”; “Yes, I could have part of your report typed, but not all forty pages”; “Yes, I’d be willing to go along with your second alternative, but not the third one you suggested”.
- **Use body language.** Act confidently even if you aren't feeling it. It’s surprising how you can trick your brain into thinking you are confident. Sit/stand upright and lean forward a little (even if you are on the phone). Make regular eye contact if you are face-to-face. Maintain a neutral or positive facial expression. Breathe!
- **Start small.** At first, practice your new skills in situations that are low risk.