

Four Ways of Communicating for Getting Your Needs Met and/or Standing Up for Your Rights

Assertive – You clearly express what you want and/or how you feel in a way that respects both your feelings and the other person’s feelings. As a result, you optimize your chances of getting what you want.

Aggressive - You express what you want and/or how you feel in a way that respects your feelings but doesn’t respect the other person’s feelings. You communicate in a way that is threatening or insulting and tends to make the other person feel defensive and resentful. As a result, you may get what you want, but there are likely to be some negative consequences.

Passive – You don’t clearly express what you want and/or how you feel. In doing so, you are respecting the other person’s feelings but not your own feelings. As a result, it is likely that you will not get what you want and may be taken advantage of.

Passive/Aggressive – You feel angry towards someone but don’t express your anger clearly and directly. You express your anger in indirect and/or sneaky ways in order to take revenge. As a result, you may feel some satisfaction from punishing the other person, but the other person will probably feel defensive and resentful, and you are unlikely to get what you really want.

5-Step Assertiveness Strategy

(Note that all 5 steps are not necessary in every situation)

1. Stop and think about the problem, how you feel, what you want, and what you are going to say
2. Describe the problem to the other person as clearly as possible
3. Tell what you want as clearly as possible
4. Tell how you feel (such as “I feel ---- when you ----“)
5. Tell the negative consequences of not giving you what you want, or the positive consequences of giving you what you want.

Additional Assertiveness Tips

Don’t lose your temper

Use “I” statements instead of “you” statements

Avoid blaming, being sarcastic, or trying to put the other person down

Be as specific as possible with your complaints and with your requests

Listen patiently to what the other person has to say

If you feel strongly about something, then be persistent and stand your ground

Choose your battles (it’s okay to let things slide sometimes without being assertive)