

A Look at Being Assertive

Aggressive *I win/you lose* Creates resentment, fear, avoidance, returned aggression

“I’m superior and right; you’re inferior and wrong.”
“I’m loud, bossy and pushy.”
“I can dominate and intimidate you.”
“I can violate your rights.”
“I’ll get my way no matter what.”
“You’re not worth anything.”
“It’s all your fault.”
“I react instantly.”
“I’m entitled.”
“You owe me.”
“I own you.”

Compliant *I lose/you win* Creates victimization, confusion, avoidance, disrespect

“I’m unable to stand up for my rights.”
“I don’t know what my rights are.”
“I get stepped on by everyone.”
“I’m weak and unable to take care of myself.”
“People never consider my feelings.”

Compliant/Aggressive *I lose/you lose* Creates confusion, resentment, avoidance, distrust

“I’m weak and resentful, so I sabotage, frustrate, and disrupt.”
“I’m powerless to deal with you head on so I must use guerilla warfare.”
“I will appear cooperative but I’m not.”
“I will hold it in and then unexpectedly explode.”

Assertive *I win/you win* Creates trust, cooperation, honest relationships, openness

“We are equally entitled to respectfully express differing viewpoints to one another.”
“I am confident about who I am. I recognize you have a right to be who you are.”
“I realize I have choices in my life and I consider my options.”
“I speak clearly, honestly, and to the point.”
“I can’t control others but I can control myself.”
“I place a high priority on having my rights respected.”
“I am responsible for getting my needs met in a respectful manner.”
“I respect the rights of others.”
“Nobody owes me anything unless they’ve agreed to give it to me.”
“I’m 100% responsible for my own happiness.”

“Assertiveness is not what you do; it is who you are.”

- Shakti Gawain

Assertiveness Bill of Rights*

1. I have the right to be treated with courtesy and respect.
2. I have the right to have and express my own feelings and opinions.
3. I have the right to be listened to and to be taken seriously.
4. I have the right to set my own priorities.
5. I have the right to say NO without feeling guilty.
6. I have the right to respectfully ask for what I want.
7. I have the right to get what I pay for.
8. I have the right to make mistakes.
9. I have the right to respectfully assert myself even though I may inconvenience or hurt others.
10. I have the right to choose *not* to assert myself.
12. I have the right to disagree with others about an issue and still work positively with them.
13. I have the right to be myself and to be happy at all times under all circumstances.
14. I don't need other's approval for who I am.
15. I have the right to remain neutral, to accept things the way they are, and I don't have to choose sides. I don't have to have an opinion or position on everything.
16. I have the right to have some personal and private time and space for myself without having the approval of others.

** Assertiveness Bill of Rights (above) is adapted from Day-Timer's "How to Assert Yourself for Results"*

Thoughts on Aggressiveness

"Do not remove a fly from your friend's forehead with a hatchet." - Chinese proverb
"Keep cool. Anger is not an effective argument." Daniel Webster

Thoughts on Passivity

"If you cannot make up your mind, then someone else will step in to make it up for you, and you may not like the consequences." - Voices from Life

Thoughts on Assertiveness

"Make up your mind to act decidedly and take the consequences. No good is ever done in this world by hesitation." - Aldous Huxley

The Other Person's Bill of Rights

What is true for you is also true for every other person. Read the Bill of Rights from the other person's point of view. For maximum benefits, read it through several times. Each time, consider the point of view of your customers, co-workers, boss, friends, partner, or family members.

1. They have the right to be treated with courtesy and respect.
2. They have the right to have and respectfully express their own feelings and opinions even though they may differ from mine.
3. They have the right to be listened to and to be taken seriously.
4. They have the right to set their own priorities, and at times these may be different from mine.
5. They have the right to say NO without being labeled "wrong" or "bad".
6. They have the right to ask me for what they want. (I have the right to say NO.)
7. They have the right to get what they pay for. My customer, my company and others have the right to get what they have paid me for.
8. They have the right to make mistakes. Making mistakes is human.
9. They have a right to assert themselves, even though it may inconvenience me. (I have the right to say NO.)
10. They have the right to choose not to assert themselves. They can choose to compromise or let it go.
11. They have the right to disagree with me. This does not make them "bad" or "wrong".
12. They have the right to be moody, emotional, inconsistent, unreasonable, demanding, and impatient. I may not like that, but it is a fact of life. (I have the right to not hold unrealistic expectations of them, or to not get emotionally involved.)

"Fair isn't a fact of life. It's an expectation that is seldom met, and frequently disappointing."
- Voices from Life