

RESOLVE CONFLICT:

EVERYONE CAN WIN

Skill 4: Appropriate assertiveness

Extra study materials



APPROPRIATE ASSERTIVENESS

When we want someone to change, we don't want them defensive. So before it pops out all wrong, think of a better way to say it.

- Instead of **blaming**, just say your side: 'I need the information on time'.
- Don't **generalise**. Weed out 'always', 'never' or 'you keep on doing...'
- Don't assume you know their attitudes or motives,
e.g. *You don't know they ignored you*. You do know you want to feel heard.
- Find neutral descriptions. No one likes being judged.
- Don't blame people for what they can't change. Focus on what they can.

Your assertive statement should invite them to respond. You want a positive conversation. Include their objections rather than opposing them as you search together for a better solution.

Remember: 'And' not 'but'

To move forward, include rather than dismiss objections.



APPROPRIATE ASSERTIVENESS

'I' statements

There's a usual format to consider while you're planning your assertive statements.

There are five ingredients:

1. **The action...** that is ... What happened?
2. **My response...** How is it affecting me?
3. **My preferred outcome** is ... How would I like it to be for me?
4. **A constructive consequence...** What is the benefit?
5. **An invitation to respond, followed by active listening.**

You might not always want to deliver all these ingredients at once. You might sprinkle them through your conversation. You may not use the exact format, but hang onto its intent:

- to say how it is from your side without blaming the other person.
- to say how you want it to be for *you*
- without demanding exactly what you want them to do
- and without intimidating the other person or making them defensive.

Your 'I' statements should be:

Clean, clear and concise

Know when to stop and really listen, get clear on the specifics or on their needs here too, add missing information, and apologise where necessary. Stick with win-win, and include their objections. Keep your focus on the future and positive change.



APPROPRIATE ASSERTIVENESS - 'I' Statements

Think of a situation that could have done with a clear, clean, concise statement about your needs. Whether or not you would deliver it now will depend on the circumstances. This is just for practise.

			<i>Example</i>	<i>Complete your own example</i>
The Action	Objective Description	When... you	<i>'When... changes to our plans have been finalised before I have a chance to contribute'</i>	
My Response	No Blame	I feel...or I feel like...	<i>'I feel powerless' or 'I feel like making my own separate plans'</i>	
My Preferred Outcome	No Demand	And what I'd like is that I...	<i>'And what I'd like is that I have more involvement in the decision-making process.'</i>	

Depending on the response of the other person, you would choose an appropriate next action. It may be to make another "I" statement, to listen carefully, to start discussing the problem in more detail or...



APPROPRIATE ASSERTIVENESS

Recommended

Books

Crucial Conversations: Tools for talking when the stakes are high by Kerry Patterson, Joseph Grenny, Rod MacMillan, Al Switzler

Dare to Lead: Brave Work. Tough Conversations. Whole hearts by Brené Brown

Everyone Can Win: Responding to conflict constructively by Helena Cornelius and Shoshana Faire with Estella Cornelius. (Available on this website: [Purchase eBook or paperback](#))

Failure to Communicate: How conversations go wrong and what you can do to right them by Holly Weeks.

Hostage at the Table: How leaders can overcome conflict, influence others, and raise performance by George Kohlrieser

Radical Candor: How to get what you want by saying what you mean by Kim Scott

Websites

[Conflict Resolution Network](#)

(skills in resolving conflict)

[Conflict Resolution Trainers' Manual](#)

- assertiveness

(download for trainers teaching assertiveness)

[Brené Brown](#)

(See her Dare to lead hub)

