

The Communication Continuum

SAME MESSAGE • DIFFERENT DELIVERY • DIFFERENT IMPACT

How you communicate matters. It can build connection or create distance.

The goal is not to be perfect, but to be aware and choose the most effective, respectful, and honest way to express yourself.

PASSIVE

Holds back needs



"It's fine..."
"Whatever you want..."
"I don't care..."

PASSIVE COMMUNICATION

- Keeps your needs to yourself
- Avoids conflict
- Says "yes" when you mean "no"
- Minimizes your feelings
- Hopes others will figure it out
- May seem calm, but often leads to resentment

IMPACT ON RELATIONSHIPS

- Your needs may be overlooked
- Can create confusion or frustration
- May build resentment over time
- Can lead to feeling unseen or unimportant

"Your needs matter less than theirs."

ASSERTIVE

Expresses needs with respect



"I feel...
I need...
I would like...
I can..."

ASSERTIVE COMMUNICATION

- Expresses thoughts and feelings clearly and respectfully
- Honors your needs and the other person's needs
- Uses "I" statements
- Sets healthy boundaries
- Stays calm, honest, and direct
- Is open to different perspectives

IMPACT ON RELATIONSHIPS

- Builds trust and respect
- Creates clearer expectations
- Supports healthy conflict and problem-solving
- Leads to greater intimacy and authenticity

"My needs matter, and your needs matter too."

AGGRESSIVE

Pushes needs at others' expense



"You never listen!
Just do what I said!
This is your fault!"

AGGRESSIVE COMMUNICATION

- Pushes your needs through blame, criticism, or control
- Often involves yelling, interrupting, or dismissing
- May include sarcasm or guilt-tripping
- Focuses on being right, not being understood
- Can be direct but often disrespectful

IMPACT ON RELATIONSHIPS

- Can create defensiveness and fear
- Leads to power struggles
- Damages trust and safety
- Often results in emotional distance
- May get a short-term response but harms the relationship long-term

"Your needs matter less than mine."

How to Be More Assertive



1. Observe

1. Describe what happened without judgment.



2. Share Feelings

2. Use feeling words (e.g., I feel frustrated).



3. State Your Needs

3. Be clear and specific (e.g., I need more notice).



4. Make a Request

4. Ask for what you need (e.g., Would you text me next time?).



5. Stay Open

5. Be willing to listen and find a solution together.

EXAMPLE: "When plans change without us talking about it, I feel frustrated. I need more notice. Would you text me before changing the plans?"



Remember:

- You can be assertive and kind.
- You can be assertive even if someone is upset.
- Assertiveness is not about always getting your way — it's about communicating clearly and respectfully.
- Healthy relationships allow room for two people to exist at the same time.

Better
Conversations
Brighter
Relationships