

How to be Assertive

In most situations we have the choice to be passive, assertive, or aggressive. Being assertive is often the best choice.

Here's How:

1. Preface remarks with either a request for a hearing or an invitation to talk.
Ex. "Do you have a minute for us to discuss something?" "You look like something is on your mind. Would you like to talk?"
2. Express your thoughts, feelings, wants, or needs directly. The goal is to communicate.
3. Express your self in the first person, using the word "I" rather than "you."
Examples: "I feel hurt right now." "I feel angry." "I wish we could talk more about this problem." "I hear what you say, but I have a different idea."
4. Be tactful; express your emotion verbally, not just with your facial expression or body language.
5. Respect the other person, but clearly state your case.
6. Accept responsibility for your emotions rather than blaming others.
7. Give the other person a chance to respond.
8. Leave the door open for future communication.

How to Confront

When confronting, use the X,Y,Z Plan. Say "When you do X in situation Y, I feel Z." Then make a request for a change in behavior. Making a request does not insure you will get what you ask for. If your partner is not willing to do what you ask, seek out a self-care option.

Tips:

1. Being passive allows frustration to build as your needs don't get met. Conflict is avoided in the short term, but the problems build.
2. Deal with situations as they arise unless you need to cool down before discussing things.
3. Take a Time Out. Rules for a good time out:
 - A. Separate physically from each other
 - B. Use the time to calm yourself
 - C. Do not rehash the conflict
 - D. Walk, exercise, read something calming or find some other way to diffuse your anger
 - E. Set a definite time to return and discuss the issue.