

Communication Styles

Aggressive, Passive, Passive-Aggressive or Assertive Communication

Do you know how your communication style is perceived? To progress in your career it is vital that you communicate in an assertive way.

It is important to understand how your communication style is interpreted by others to avoid miscommunication and misunderstandings. The goal is communicate with assertion and avoid an aggressive, passive-aggressive or passive style of communication.

Use the following checklist to see how you communicate over all or to evaluate a particular exchange you've had to see how you can improve on your communication style.

Aggressive Communication

- You choose and make decisions for others.
- You are brutally honest.
- You are direct and forceful.
- You are self enhancing and derogatory.
- You'll participate in a win-lose situation only if you'll win.
- You demand your own way.
- You feel righteous, superior, controlling – later possibly feeling guilt.
- Others feel humiliated, defensive, resentful and hurt around you.
- Others view you in the exchange as angry, vengeful, distrustful and fearful.
- The outcome is usually that your goal is achieved at the expense of others. Your rights are upheld but others are violated.
- Your underlying belief system is that you have to put others down to protect yourself.

Passive Communication

- You allow others to choose and make decisions for you.
- You are emotionally dishonest.
- You are indirect and self denying.
- You are inhibited.
- If you get your own way, it is by chance.
- You feel anxious, ignored, helpless, manipulated, angry at yourself and/or others.
- Others feel guilty or superior and frustrated with you.
- Others view you in the exchange as a pushover and that you don't know what you want or how you stand on an issue.
- The outcome is that others achieve their goals at your expense. Your rights are violated.
- Your underlying belief is that you should never make someone uncomfortable or displeased except yourself.

Passive-Aggressive Communication

- You manipulate others to choose your way.
- You appear honest but underlying comments confuse.
- You tend towards indirectness with the air of being direct.
- You are self-enhancing but not straight forward about it.
- In win-lose situations you will make the opponent look bad or manipulate it so you win.
- If you don't get your way you'll make snide comments or pout and be the victim.
- You feel confused, unclear on how to feel, you're angry but not sure why. Later you possibly feel guilty.

- ___ Others feel confused, frustrated, not sure who you are or what you stand for or what to expect next.
- ___ Others view you in the exchange as someone they need to protect themselves from and fear being manipulated and controlled.
- ___ The outcome is that the goal is avoided or ignored as it cause such confusion or the outcome is the same as with an aggressive or passive style.
- ___ Your underlying belief is that you need to fight to be heard and respected. If that means you need to manipulate, be passive or aggressive, so be it.

Assertive Communication

- ___ You choose and make decisions for you.
- ___ You are sensitive and caring with your honesty.
- ___ You are direct.
- ___ You are self-respecting, self expressive and straight forward.
- ___ You convert win-lose situations to win-win ones.
- ___ You are willing to compromise and negotiate.
- ___ You feel confident, self-respecting, goal-oriented, valued. Later you may feel a sense of accomplishment.
- ___ Others feel valued and respected.
- ___ Others view you with respect, trust and understand where you stand.
- ___ The outcome is determined by above-board negotiation. Your rights and others are respected.
- ___ Your underlying belief is that you have a responsibility to protect your own rights. You respect others but not necessarily their behaviour.