

**My  
Mentored  
Learning**  
2023

---

# Change Management

Effective Communication: Assessing your communication style

# The Power of Assertive Communication

**Effective communication requires an appropriate balance between aggression and passivity. While being passive or aggressive can both hinder communication, assertive communication strikes a balance between the two.**

Passive communication involves a lack of self-respect, where one's own feelings, needs, and opinions are ignored or placed beneath the desires of others. In contrast, assertive communication involves respecting oneself and others by expressing one's thoughts and feelings directly and honestly without violating others' rights.

Being passive may seem like an easy way to avoid conflict or maintain relationships, but it ultimately leads to a loss of personal power as others make decisions for us. Conversely, aggressive communication can alienate people and create unnecessary conflicts. Assertive communication, on the other hand, allows for clear and respectful communication, leading to mutual understanding and a stronger sense of personal agency.

It is important to distinguish assertiveness from aggression based on the difference in terms of respect. Aggression disregards the opinions and needs of others and can manifest through behaviors such as raised voices, trampling on others' opinions, invading personal space, sarcasm, shouting, and even violence. On the other hand, assertiveness is characterized by dignity and the ability to balance personal needs, and the needs of others.

---

**Alice Meredith**

Change Management  
Professional

*“Assertive communication strikes a balance between passive and aggressive communication, allowing change leaders to express themselves clearly and confidently while respecting the opinions and feelings of others.”*

The way we view ourselves has an impact on our communication style. To assess whether you struggle with assertiveness in your interactions with others, use the self-evaluation questions below

# Identify Your Assertiveness Level

| Self<br>Introspection<br>Questions  |  |  |  | Yes | No |
|---|--|--|--|-----|----|
| <i>When conversing with others do you typically look them in the eye?</i>                 |  |  |  |     |    |
| <i>When speaking do you adequately project your voice to be heard?</i>                    |  |  |  |     |    |
| <i>Are you confident when speaking? (Rarely use 'ums' or filler words)?</i>               |  |  |  |     |    |
| <i>Are you comfortable saying no to assignments or requests when needed?</i>              |  |  |  |     |    |
| <i>Are you comfortable engaging in conversations with others?</i>                         |  |  |  |     |    |
| <i>Can you appropriately show and explain feelings of frustration or annoyance?</i>       |  |  |  |     |    |
| <i>Can you disagree with others when you have differing opinions?</i>                     |  |  |  |     |    |
| <i>When being unfairly accused or judged can you confidently defend yourself?</i>         |  |  |  |     |    |
| <i>When unsure of direction being given can you confidently ask insightful questions?</i> |  |  |  |     |    |
| <i>When conversing with others do you maintain an upright posture?</i>                    |  |  |  |     |    |

If you answered with 2 or 3 "no's", it's likely that you have confidence in yourself and find it easy to express your needs and desires.

If you answered with 4 to 6 "no's", there is a strong possibility that you have a negative self-image and struggle to communicate with assertiveness.

If you answered with 7 or more "no's", it's probable that you find it challenging to be assertive when communicating.

Prepare for challenging conversations by visualizing, taking notes, or discussing with someone you trust how you will approach the situation in an assertive manner.

Set clear expectations: Communicate your expectations clearly and make sure everyone on the team understands what is expected of them. Be specific and provide clear guidelines to avoid misunderstandings.

Know your boundaries. What are your limits when it comes to how many hours you and your team should work? While you may accept some late work from your team, identify at what point does this become unacceptable?



# Speak Up

## 5 Essential Tips for Mastering Assertive Communication

Learn to recognize your value as a leader and an employee by understanding your strengths and the value you bring to the organization.

Be clear and concise when communicating. Make sure your message is clear and to the point. Avoid being vague or using language that could be interpreted in different ways. Use direct and assertive language to express your thoughts and ideas.

# Assertive Communication

Assertiveness is not about forcing others to accept your opinions or actions, but rather about ensuring that your voice is heard. It requires a confident, yet respectful, approach that values both yourself and others. Even if you have no desire to climb the corporate ladder, you still want to be acknowledged and heard when you have something to say.

Ultimately, everyone wants to feel valued. To become more assertive, you should consider your mindset, communication style, message content, and behavior. Adopting a more assertive style will have a positive impact on how you feel about yourself and how others perceive you.

Here are three examples of how being more assertive as a leader can elevate your professional relevancy in your career:

1. **Build stronger relationships with your team:** When you are confident in your leadership approach, your team is more likely to respect and trust you. This can lead to stronger relationships and a more productive and cohesive team.
2. **Demonstrate your value to your organization:** Assertive leaders are often seen as strong and confident. They are willing to take risks, make decisions, and stand up for their ideas. By being more assertive, you can demonstrate your value to your organization and show that you are a proactive leader who is willing to take charge and make things happen.
3. **Advance your career:** Assertive leaders are often seen as more decisive and effective. By taking a more assertive approach, you may be able to showcase your leadership skills and demonstrate that you are ready for more responsibility. This can lead to new opportunities and career advancement within your organization or in other companies.

