

Assertiveness: Effectively asking for what you want and need

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INTERPERSONAL STYLE

For each statement below, decide which of the following answers best applies to you. Place the number of the answer to the left of the statement.

Write: **4** if most like you, **3** if almost like you, **2** if somewhat like you, or **1** if seldom like you.

- | | |
|---|---|
| ___ 1. I respond with more modesty than I really feel when my work is complimented. | ___ 10. People take advantage of me. |
| ___ 2. If people are rude, I will be rude right back. | ___ 11. I tell people what they want to hear if it helps me get what I want. |
| ___ 3. Other people find me interesting. | ___ 12. I find it easy to ask for help. |
| ___ 4. I find it difficult to speak up in a group of strangers. | ___ 13. I lend things to others even when I don't really want to. |
| ___ 5. I don't mind using sarcasm if it helps me make a point. | ___ 14. I win arguments by dominating the discussion. |
| ___ 6. I ask for credit when I feel I really deserve it. | ___ 15. I can express my true feelings to someone I really care for. |
| ___ 7. If others interrupt me when I am talking, I suffer in silence. | ___ 16. When I feel angry with other people, I bottle it up rather than express it. |
| ___ 8. If people criticize my work, I find a way to make them back down. | ___ 17. When I criticize someone else's work they get mad. |
| ___ 9. I can express pride in my accomplishments without being boastful. | ___ 18. I feel confident in my ability to stand up for my rights. |

Scoring: To calculate your interpersonal style scores, refer to the responses you gave.

Your **passive** score is the total of answers to items 1, 4, 7, 10, 13 and 16.

Your **aggressive** score is the total of your answers to items 2, 5, 8, 11, 14 and 17.

Your **assertive** score is the total of your answers to items 3, 6, 9, 12, 15 and 18.

Put these scores in the appropriate box below. Your score for each will range between 6 and 24.

Passive _____ Aggressive _____ Assertive _____

This score evaluates your basic interpersonal style in terms of the emphasis you place on passive, aggressive and assertive behaviors. Passive behavior is inhibited and submissive. Individuals who score high in passive behavior seek to avoid conflicts and tend to sublimate their own needs and feelings in order to satisfy other people. Aggressive behavior is the opposite of passiveness; it is domineering, pushy, self-centered and without regard for the feelings or rights of others. People who score high in assertiveness express their ideas and feelings openly, stand up for their rights and so in a way that makes it easier for others to do the same. The assertive person is therefore straight forward yet sensitive to the needs of others. Assertiveness improves interpersonal communication because the more assertive you are, the more assertive you encourage others to be. So assertiveness facilitates more effective interactions because it lessens defensiveness, domination and putting down other people.

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Top Ten Ways to Be Assertive

Assertiveness is the ability to express yourself and your rights without violating the rights of others. It is appropriately direct, open, and honest communication which is self-enhancing and expressive. Acting assertively will allow you to feel self-confident and will generally gain you the respect of your peers and friends. It can increase your chances for honest relationships, and help you to feel better about yourself and your self-control in everyday situations. This, in turn, will improve your decision-making ability and possibly your chances of getting what you really want from life.

1. **Know the distinction between being assertive versus being aggressive or arrogant.**
Assertive people promote their rights rather than stepping on those of others.
2. **Have clear boundaries when dealing with others.**
If you're clear where the limits are, others will be as well.
3. **Politely but directly let people know your position.**
Don't allow your position, point of view and feelings to be ignored. Your needs are important.
4. **Affirm yourself and your good qualities.**
Develop self-confidence and positive self-esteem.
5. **Know what you want.**
There is a time and a place to go along with others but there is also a time to reach for your own dreams.
6. **Avoid being timid.**
While aggressiveness steps on the rights of others, being overly timid sacrifices your own rights. Don't let others steamroller you.
7. **Be willing to clearly say either yes or no and to stand by your answer.**
Allow yourself to develop opinions and maintain them.
8. **Avoid arrogance.**
Dominance and controlling tendencies impinge on others being themselves.
9. **When opinions are in question, give yourself permission to self-disclose.**
Let others know your viewpoint and recognize that it is significant.
10. **Take responsibility for yourself.**
Don't make many excuses. Require that friends and associates take responsibility for themselves and their actions. Avoid being codependent; be careful not to dominate quieter spirits.

- By Robert G. Jerus