Assertiveness

Being ASSERTIVE is...

- A two-way communication process
- Acknowledging your weaknesses but relying on your strengths
- Being able to label your feelings
- Being your real self
- Both verbal and non-verbal
- Breaking down your own and others' defenses
- Dealing with conflict
- Describing specific behaviors
- Following through on a decision to deal with a person or situation
- Not aggressive or threatening
- Not backing down
- Not name calling
- Security through honesty
- Showing sensitivity to others
- Standing up for yourself in a creative way
- Using open and honest statements

Non-Assertive Behavior is ...
Failing to stand up for one's rights either by failing to express feelings or preferences or by allowing another person to infringe upon one's rights.

Assertive Behavior is...
Standing up for one's rights by expressing one's thoughts and feelings directly, honestly, and appropriately without denying the rights of others.

Aggressive Behavior is...
Standing up for one's rights in such a way that violates the rights of others or demeans the other person.

Levels of Assertion

- Simple- uncomplicated statement of what you want: "I'd rather go out to eat than cook tonight."
- Empathic- includes a statement about the other's situation: "I know you're busy, but I need to talk with you."
- Confrontive- points out discrepancies in the others' behavior: "We agreed to study, but you went to play basketball."
- Soft- express positive sentiment without embarrassment: "I really appreciate what you're doing."
- Anger- constructive expression of anger against a person's actions: "I get angry when you borrow my clothes without asking because then I can't wear them when I want to. I would rather you ask before you borrow them."

Tips on How to be Assertive

- Assertiveness is a skill that is developed with practice.
• Demonstrate assertive body language which includes: Direct eye contact, erect body posture, clear and audible speech, use gestures and facial expressions for emphasis.
• Use descriptive words to point out the behavior of others. Avoid labeling him or her. "You have been borrowing my clothes without my permission," rather than "You clothes-stealer!"
• Express your feelings and experiences caused by the behavior. "I feel angry when you wear my clothes without asking me because I can't wear them when I want to."
• Give an alternative behavior. "I would like for you to ask me before you borrow my clothes."

Each situation is unique. Ask yourself:

• What would I like to happen? How possible is this goal?
• What rights does the other person have in this situation?
• What obstacles are there to the person making the behavior change?
• Am I comfortable with my rights to deal with this situation assertively?

A Bill Of Assertive Rights

• You have the right to judge your own behavior, thoughts, and emotions, and to take the responsibility for their initiation and consequences upon yourself
• You have the right to offer no reasons or excuses for justifying your behavior.
• You have the right to judge if you are responsible for finding solutions to other people's problems.
• You have the right to change your mind.
• You have the right to make mistakes -- and be responsible for them.
• You have the right to say, "I don't know."
• You have the right to be illogical in making decisions.
• You have the right to say, "I don't care."