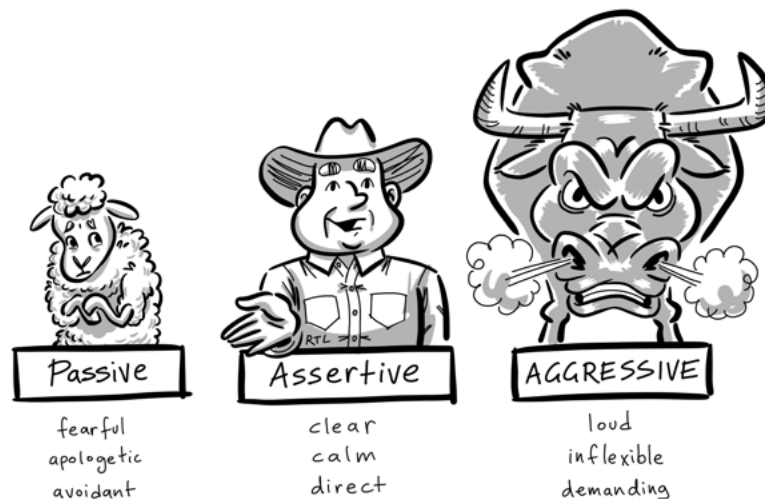


# How to get your point across without upsetting others

(being assertive)

Being assertive can help you communicate more effectively with others and thereby improve the quality of your relationships and ensure your needs are being met.

Being assertive means expressing your opinion in a clear and direct way. **It does not mean being aggressive.** Being aggressive often damages relationships and involves only considering your own needs, refusing to compromise, losing control and forcing your opinions on to others. On the other hand, assertiveness means respectfully expressing your needs in a controlled manner, being reasonable and rational, equally considering the needs of others, using clear language to express your points and often involves compromise.



When being assertive, you need to **pay attention to the vocal tone, body language, content and actions** you use. Here are some suggestions that might help you to be more assertive:

- Don't shout or whisper. Speak **calmly** and **directly** at a normal conversation volume and sound firm but not aggressive or angry
- Honestly tell the person how you feel and **listen carefully** to what they say in response
- **Stand tall** and look the person in the eye while you are speaking - your body language needs to reflect confidence in what you are saying
- **Don't exaggerate** by using words such as "never" or "always", make threats or be sarcastic
- Avoid making judgments - instead, **state the facts**
- Try to avoid accusing the other person of things - instead of making "you statements" re-word them so they are "**I statements.**" These might be "I feel" statements (e.g. "I feel upset when you don't acknowledge how hard I have been working") or "I want" statements (e.g. "I want to go for a drive together one night")
- Start off by stating that you recognize the other person's wants/situation/feelings/beliefs, then secondly, assert your own. This means that you are being sensitive to others without totally disregarding your own needs
- Make an effort to **listen** to the other person's response. You can demonstrate that you have listened through body language (such as nodding, looking them in the eye) or by paraphrasing what they've said when they've finished. If you listen to them attentively, they are more likely to listen to you
- It is important to remember that although being assertive is likely to help, it doesn't mean that other people will necessarily respond exactly the way you would like them to

# How to get your point across without upsetting others

(being assertive)

**When have you been assertive in the past?**

**How did that go?**

**When have you not been assertive in the past and regretted it?**

**In what situations would you like to be able to communicate more assertively and effectively?**

**What could you say in these situations?**

(remembering the difference between assertiveness and aggressiveness)

# How to get your point across without upsetting others

(being assertive)

**This structure may help:**

"I feel .....

when you.....

because .....

I want / need....."

**When will you say it?**

**What do you need to do to arrange this conversation?**

**How do you think you will feel after saying it?**

**Learning techniques in the ifarmwell modules will also help.**