

What's Your Style?

Think about each of the following situations, one at a time. How would you typically handle it? Would your approach be nonassertive (in other words, you wouldn't do anything about it), aggressive, passive-aggressive, manipulative—or would you respond assertively? Note the style you'd use after each situation. If you have fewer than 25 out of 30 "assertive" responses, it would be useful for you to work on your assertiveness.*

1. You're being kept on the phone by a salesperson who is trying to sell you something you don't want.
2. You would like to break off a relationship that is no longer working for you.
3. You're sitting in a movie and the people behind you are talking.
4. Your doctor keeps you waiting more than 20 minutes.
5. Your teenager has the stereo on too loud.
6. Your neighbor next door has the stereo on too loud.
7. You would like to return something to the store and get a refund.
8. You're standing in line, and someone moves in front of you.
9. Your friend has owed you money for a long time—money you could use.
10. You receive a bill that seems unusually high for the service you received.
11. Your home repair person is demanding payment but has done unsatisfactory work.
12. You receive food at a restaurant that is over- or undercooked.
13. You would like to ask a major favor of your partner or spouse.
14. You would like to ask a major favor of your friend.
15. Your friend asks you a favor that you don't feel like doing.
16. Your son/daughter/spouse/roommate is not doing their fair share of the work around the house.
17. You would like to ask a question, but are concerned that someone else might think it's silly.
18. You're in a group and would like to speak up, but you don't know how your opinion will be received.
19. You would like to strike up a conversation at a gathering, but you don't know anyone.
20. You're sitting/standing next to someone smoking, and the smoke is beginning to bother you.
21. You find your partner/spouse's behavior unacceptable.
22. You find your friend's behavior unacceptable.
23. Your friend drops by unexpectedly, just before you were about to leave to run some errands.

* The idea for this questionnaire was adapted from Shirley J. Mangini, *Secrets of Self-Esteem*. Canoga Park, California: N.O.V.A. Corp., 1986.

24. You're talking to someone about something important, but he or she doesn't seem to be listening.
25. Your friend stands you up for a lunch meeting.
26. You return an item you don't want to the department store and request a refund. The clerk diverts your request and offers to exchange the item for another.
27. You're speaking and someone interrupts you.
28. Your phone rings, but you don't feel like getting it.
29. Your partner or spouse "talks down" to you as if you were a child.
30. You receive an unjust criticism from someone.

The Assertiveness Questionnaire

To further clarify those situations in which you could be more assertive, complete the following questionnaire, developed by Sharon and Gordon Bower in their book *Asserting Yourself*. Check those items that apply in column A, and then rate the comfort level of those situations for you in column B:

- 1 = comfortable
- 2 = mildly uncomfortable
- 3 = moderately uncomfortable
- 4 = very uncomfortable
- 5 = unbearably threatening

(Note that the varying degrees of discomfort can be expressed whether your feelings are angry, fearful, or passive.)

A) Check	B) Rate
here if the	from 1 to 5
item applies	for comfort
to you	level

When do you behave nonassertively?

- | | | |
|-------|-------|---|
| _____ | _____ | Asking for help |
| _____ | _____ | Stating a difference of opinion |
| _____ | _____ | Hearing or expressing negative feelings |
| _____ | _____ | Hearing or expressing positive feelings |
| _____ | _____ | Dealing with someone who refuses to cooperate |
| _____ | _____ | Speaking up about something that annoys you |
| _____ | _____ | Talking when all eyes are on you |
| _____ | _____ | Protesting a "rip-off" |
| _____ | _____ | Saying no |
| _____ | _____ | Responding to undeserved criticism |
| _____ | _____ | Making requests of authority figures |
| _____ | _____ | Negotiating for something you want |
| _____ | _____ | Having to take charge |
| _____ | _____ | Asking for cooperation |
| _____ | _____ | Proposing an idea |

Personal Bill of Rights

1. I have the right to ask for what I want.
2. I have the right to say no to requests or demands I can't meet.
3. I have the right to express all of my feelings, positive or negative.
4. I have the right to change my mind.
5. I have the right to make mistakes and not have to be perfect.
6. I have the right to follow my own values and standards.
7. I have the right to say no to anything when I feel I am not ready, it is unsafe, or it violates my values.
8. I have the right to determine my own priorities.
9. I have the right *not* to be responsible for others' behavior, actions, feelings, or problems.
10. I have the right to expect honesty from others.
11. I have the right to be angry at someone I love.
12. I have the right to be uniquely myself.
13. I have the right to feel scared and say "I'm afraid."
14. I have the right to say "I don't know."
15. I have the right not to give excuses or reasons for my behavior.
16. I have the right to make decisions based on my feelings.
17. I have the right to my own needs for personal space and time.
18. I have the right to be playful and frivolous.
19. I have the right to be healthier than those around me.
20. I have the right to be in a nonabusive environment.
21. I have the right to make friends and be comfortable around people.
22. I have the right to change and grow.
23. I have the right to have my needs and wants respected by others.
24. I have the right to be treated with dignity and respect.
25. I have the right to be happy.

Photocopy the above list and post it in a conspicuous place. By taking time to carefully read through the list every day, you will eventually learn to accept that you are entitled to each one of the rights enumerated.

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