



# Measuring Assertiveness

Sometimes assertiveness gets a bad name because people confuse it with aggressiveness. But if there were a yardstick to measure human behavior, assertiveness would be right in the middle, with passiveness at one end and aggressiveness at the other.

Here are some of the ways passive, assertive, and aggressive people come across to others. You may know people who fit these descriptions. Can you think of other traits these people have?



### Passive people:

- have trouble saying no.
- do whatever others ask, even if it's very inconvenient.
- get "stepped on" a lot.
- talk softly and don't stand up for their rights. They're not even sure if they have any rights.
- do anything to avoid a conflict.
- are taken advantage of. They get resentful but don't tell anyone.
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- \_\_\_\_\_



### Assertive people:

- are firm and direct.
- don't blame others but take full responsibility for their own feelings.
- concentrate on the here-and-now.
- can express their needs and feelings calmly and easily.
- are confident about who they are.
- speak firmly and make eye contact.
- respect others' rights and expect the same from others.
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- \_\_\_\_\_



### Aggressive people:

- are loud, bossy and pushy.
- get their way, no matter what.
- react instantly.
- like to get even.
- don't care about feelings.
- give vise-like handshakes.
- believe that winning is everything.
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Few of us are exactly in the middle of this yardstick, but all of us benefit from consciously practicing assertive behavior. Very passive and very aggressive people often have an underlying lack of self-esteem. If you see yourself as usually at one extreme or the other, self-esteem may be an issue for you to explore further.