



Assertive Versus Unassertive and Aggressive Behavior

Many people are concerned that if they assert themselves others will think of their behavior as aggressive.

But there is a difference between being assertive and aggressive. Assertive people state their opinions, while still being respectful of others. Aggressive people attack or ignore others' opinions in favor of their own.

Passive people don't state their opinions at all.

The chart below gives some examples of the differences between passive, aggressive, and assertive behavior.

Differences Between Passive, Aggressive, and Assertive Behavior.

Passive Behavior (The Passive Person) -- Aggressive Behavior (The Aggressive Person) -- Assertive Behavior (The Assertive Person).

| The Passive Person | The Aggressive Person | The Assertive Person |
|---|--|--|
| Is afraid to speak up | Interrupts and 'talks over' others | Speaks openly |
| Speaks softly | Speaks loudly | Uses a conversational tone |
| Avoids looking at people | Glares and stares at others | Makes good eye contact |
| Shows little or no expression | Intimidates others with expressions | Shows expressions that match the message |
| Slouches and withdraws | Stands rigidly, crosses arms, invades others' personal space | Relaxes and adopts an open posture and expressions |
| Isolates self from groups | Controls groups | Participates in groups |
| Agrees with others, despite feelings | Only considers own feelings, and/or demands of others | Speaks to the point |
| Values self less than others | Values self more than others | Values self equal to others |
| Hurts self to avoid hurting others | Hurts others to avoid being hurt | Tries to hurt no one (including self) |
| Does not reach goals and may not know goals | Reaches goals but hurts others in the process | Usually reaches goals without alienating others |
| You're okay, I'm not | I'm okay, you're not | I'm okay, you're okay |



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