

# ASSERTIVE, AGGRESSIVE, PASSIVE – Definitions

1. **Passive Communicating** – not expressing yourself the way you would like to.

Typical reasons for this include wanting to please (or not wanting to upset) others, and being afraid of confrontation, or not confident about managing confrontation.

Although in the short-term you might avoid unpleasant situations, conflicts and tension, in the longer-term this type of communication frequently leads to feelings of frustration, anxiety, disappointment and anger. Further, this approach often means that you are not achieving what you want to achieve and not getting what you want.

2. **Aggressive Communicating** - expressing yourself at the expense of others, and expressing yourself without consideration for the feelings of others.

Typical reasons for this include wanting to dominate or humiliate other people. Similarly, a common reason for aggressive behaviour is not wanting to be dominated or controlled by others.

Although in the short-term you might get what you want, you might feel “superior” and you might feel as though you have “ventilated” (or let out) your anger, in the longer-term this approach is often associated with feelings of embarrassment and guilt. Other people will also often feel hurt and vengeful.

3. **Assertive Communication** – expressing yourself and your wants in an appropriate, direct and thoughtful way, taking into account the feelings and needs of others.

The intention behind this approach is to communicate assertively and effectively. The aim is to get what you want, while also trying to ensure that others get what they want.

This approach has both short-term and long-term advantages. You are more likely to feel good about yourself and others are more likely to respect and admire you. Notably, you are more likely to achieve what you want to achieve and most of the time, this can be realised without the other person being harmed in any way. At the end of the day, therefore, both parties are more likely to feel good about what has happened and the relationship(s) will be strengthened.

**PS:** You should also review the “Effective Communication” Tip Sheet.