



# Assertiveness

A new way to communicate in the new year.....

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People of all ages struggle to communicate effectively. Often communication ends up in either the “passive” ditch, or the “aggressive” ditch, both destructive to relationships. Assertive communication is a way of speaking with others that clearly shares expectations, feelings, needs, and desires.

Communicating assertively can be challenging, and usually takes practice. Here are some positive steps to consider:

STATE THE SPECIFIC SITUATION to which you are referring. Stick to the facts. (*“You came home at 9 pm when you said you would be home at 5 pm.”*)

STATE YOUR EMOTIONAL RESPONSE or feelings associated with the situation. (*“I feel scared when I do not know where you are.”*) Nobody can argue with your feelings, because they are your own. It is helpful to use “I” statements so that the other person can absorb the information rather than feeling attacked.

STATE WHAT YOU NEED. Do not assume others know this. Be as specific as possible. (*“I would like for you to call when you will be late coming home.”*) Consistency and staying firm are key. Do not apologize. You have the right to request something or refuse something. You may need to repeat yourself, but you are not required to elaborate or justify your assertive communication.

STATE WHAT THE BENEFIT WILL BE for both parties if your needs are met. (*“It is important to me that we communicate. We can both feel more secure in a relationship where we have consistent communication.”*)

By using assertive communication, deeper understanding and love are fostered. The Bible encourages us to be “quick to hear, slow to speak, and slow to anger” (James 1:19). It also encourages us to “speak the truth in love” (Ephesians 4:15). Assertive communication promotes honesty, respectful language and trust. A new year is a time of new beginnings. Make assertive communication more a part of your relationships in 2017!