

Suggestions for Delivering an Assertive “I” Message

Write and practice your message before delivering it

- It allows you to review it and determine if it is going to negatively interpreted by the other person, and likely to get you your needs
- Practice allows you to carry it out when you are under stress

Develop Assertive Body Language with your “I” message

- Maintain direct eye contact
- Maintain an erect body posture
- Speak clearly and firmly
- Emphasize your message with appropriate gestures
- Do not whine or have an apologetic tone in your voice

Don’t be sidetracked by the defensiveness or manipulation of others (If they are defensive or manipulative, this is another problem to deal with)

- Yes, but
- Yes, I know, but my point is...
- I agree, but
- Yes, but I was saying

You may need to calmly repeat your point without getting sidetracked. Focus on your main point

Persistence is one of the keys to being effect in being assertive. One place where people fail at being assertive is giving up in the face of opposition by those who are resistant or manipulative.

How to Say No without Feeling Guilty

You do not have to say yes all the time to be nice. If we keep on saying yes when we really should not, then anger and resentment can build.

Learning to say no with confidence, kindness is a skill that takes practice. You will have less stress and more time for the things you enjoy.

The following are the starting points for starting to say no
([page 315](#))

- Start small
- Keep it simple
- Buy Time
- Remain Generous
- Understand your Yes

Strategies for Handling Conflict

When you have a conflict situation, you can choose to be passive, aggressive or assertive.

There are different strategies that you can use when dealing with conflict. These strategies differ in terms of your level of assertiveness (getting what you want and pursuing your interests) and cooperativeness (the concern you have for maintaining your relationship).

The five strategies your book discusses are:

- Avoiding (lose-lose)
- Accommodating (lose-win)
- Competing/forcing (win-lose or lose-lose)
- Compromising (partial lose-lose)
- Collaboration (win-win)

Strategies for Handling Conflict

Avoiding Strategy:

Individuals attempt to passively ignore the conflict rather than resolve it (page 319). They don't deal with it. People who use this strategy hope the problem will go away. If the conflict is minor, it might be easier to use the avoiding strategy. However, if the relationship is important or it is a major conflict, avoiding the conflict creates more problems through misunderstandings and hurt feelings that are created. Future conflicts may be more difficult to resolve.

Accommodating strategy:

This is the strategy where individuals resolve the conflict by passively giving into the other person's demands. You don't assert your position and cooperate with others. This strategy can create harmony among all parties. If you have no strong preferences, then this strategy may be appropriate. However, if you find yourself giving in to please the other person, you may start to feel resentment and the feeling that you are being taken advantage of. There is a low concern for the self, and a high concern for others.

Competition/forcing strategy:

In this strategy, you use aggressive behavior to get what you want with an uncooperative attitude. Your needs are taken care of at the expense of others. If close supportive relationships are not important, this strategy is used. Since there is low concern for others, this strategy tends to produce deep feelings of resentment and hostility.

These negative feelings can be reduced if you communicate the decision making process in advance and are as open as possible.

Compromising strategy:

This strategy resolves conflicts through assertive give-and-take concessions or cooperation. Users of this strategy value harmony as well as individual satisfaction. Everyone gets some of their needs met while maintaining their relationship.

Collaborating strategy:

This strategy attempts to jointly resolve the conflict with the best solution agreeable to all parties through being assertive and cooperation. Collaborating encourages and requires openness and honesty and stresses criticizing ideas rather than people. Since there is concern for all parties involved, collaboration tends to produce a climate of trust and respect ([page 320](#)).

Mastering Interpersonal Conflict (page 320)

- Choose your battles carefully. Is this a minor, moderate or major conflict?
- Be calm. Do not yell or speak in harsh, loud tones. Avoid loaded words that may hurt or harm others.
- Don't blame the other person or make accusations. Tell the other party how you feel ("I" statements).
- Do not demand. Remember to request
- Do not bring up past resentments.
- Avoid categorical statements such as "You always" or "You never"
- Take responsibility for your actions. Stop wanting to be right. Do not be afraid to say "I made a mistake" WHEN you are wrong and when you trampled on someone else's rights.
- Listen without judging by showing respect for the other person and their position.

Steps for Win-Win Conflict Resolution

The following steps make a win-win situation outcome more likely:

- Define the problem in terms of needs, not solutions
- Share your problem and unmet needs
- Listen to the other person's needs
- Brainstorm possible solutions
- Evaluate the possible solution and choose the best one
- Implement the solution
- Evaluate the solution at a later date

Success requires both parties to make an honest attempt at listening and working together.

Steps for Win-Win Conflict Resolution

The following steps make a win-win situation outcome more likely:

- Define the problem in terms of needs, not solutions
 - What is it that you need or want. You may need to think about the underlying need (transportation) and not the solution (the car)
- Share your problem and unmet needs
 - It is important to communicate your needs. Find an appropriate time when the person is not busy or distracted with emotions.
 - Use “I” statements
 - Get feedback from the person to make sure the message has been understood
- Listen to the other person’s needs
 - Make sure both understand each other’s needs
- Brainstorm possible solutions
 - Seek quantity rather than quality
 - Avoid ownership of a solution
 - List every possible solution
- Evaluate the possible solution and choose the best one
 - Have both parties identify the solution that meet both parties needs.
 - It is extremely important that each person be satisfied with the final solution and if you are not satisfied, you should say so.
- Implement the solution
 - It is extremely important that you agree on exactly how the solution will be implemented.

Describe the details. Each should describe who is going to do what and what in what time frame.

- Evaluate the solution at a later date

When Conflicts Cannot be Resolved