

Life Mastery Skills

Communication Exercise

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DISCLAIMER: Should you have any reason to believe that you are not in a mental or emotional condition to begin the exercises provided on this website, you should seek the advice of a mental health professional to assist you in this decision.

Additionally, should you choose to begin any of the exercises provided on this website, you may find that some of the exercises may cause unpleasant or uncomfortable feelings. If you feel confused or overwhelmed by your reactions to this material, it is recommended that you find a mental health professional to assist you in your journey towards self awareness.

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THE BALANCE POINT BETWEEN AGRESSION AND PASSIVITY IS ASSERTIVENS

Ann and Les could not understand why they could not express different points of view without arguing. When they re-enacted one of their conversations, it became apparent why they fought. Both partners made each other wrong, by attacking the other's point of view, rather than stating how they saw it.

Exercise: Imagine you are in a situation where you want something from someone and you do not know if they will agree to give it to you (e.g., a raise from your boss or a favor from a friend). Take two such situations and make one statement in each category, as shown below, that would be aggressive, assertive, or passive relative to each situation. Write each situation in one sentence.

Example

Situation: Telling my son I want him to call more often.

Aggressive: "I want to know why you never call me."

Passive: "It sure would be nice if you thought of calling me more."

Assertive: "I want you to call me once a week."

Situation 1. _____

Aggressive: _____

Assertive: _____

Passive: _____

Situation 2. _____

Aggressive: _____

Assertive: _____

Passive: _____

Remember, being assertive is saying what you want or don't want, how you feel or don't feel, clearly and simply. It is not making the other person wrong. Both aggression and passivity are reactions to your inner communication telling you that you don't have the right to ask for what you want or say how you feel.