

NON-ASSERTIVE, ASSERTIVE AND AGGRESSIVE STYLES

by Patricia Jakubowski
(University of Missouri -- St. Louis)

NON-ASSERTION: Failing to stand up for oneself, or standing up for oneself in such an ineffectual manner that one's rights are easily violated.

Characteristics: Indirect, self-denying, inhibited, hidden bargains, emotional dishonesty.

Your Feelings: Hurt, anxious at the time and probably angry later.

Respondent's Feelings Toward Themselves: Guilty or superior.

Respondent's Feelings Toward You: Irritation, pity, disgust.

ASSERTION: Standing up for oneself in such a way that one does not violate the basic rights of another person. It's a direct, honest, and appropriate expression of one's feelings and opinions.

Characteristics: Direct, expressive, leveling.

Your Feelings: Confident, self-respecting at the time and later.

Respondent's Feelings Toward Themselves: Valued, respected.

Respondent's Feelings Toward You: Generally respected.

AGGRESSION: Standing up for oneself in such a way that the rights of the other person are violated in the process. It's an attempt to humiliate or put down the other person.

Characteristics: Direct, domineering at another's expense, cutting off communication, putting down others.

Your Feelings: Righteous, superior, deprecatory of others at the time, and possibly guilty later.

Respondent's Feelings Toward Themselves: Hurt, humiliated.

Respondent's Feelings Toward You: Angry, vengeful.