

ASSERTIVE OR AGGRESSIVE: WHICH ONE ARE YOU?

kimcubitt.alphalifestyleacademy.com

Are you assertive? Aggressive? Are you even sure? Most people are familiar with the terms, but many can't clearly articulate the differences between these two qualities.

It's important to understand the differences, as well as the advantages and disadvantages of both. Only then is it possible to make a wise decision about which best suits your situation.

Assertiveness is often a more advantageous choice than aggressiveness. See why:

1. Assertiveness addresses the issue. If you're being assertive, you're interested in the topic. It might be choosing a restaurant for dinner or solving a conflict.

- Aggressiveness involves attacking people or disregarding their feelings.
- "I'd like to go to dinner at McDonald's" is assertive.
- "You always get to pick the restaurant. I don't care what you want tonight. It's my choice." This would be aggressive.

2. Assertiveness leaves the other person feeling respected. Assertiveness isn't disrespectful in any way. **It's simply stating your opinion or desires respectfully.**

- Aggression results in feelings of disrespect.

- “I would appreciate it if you would keep your wet towels off the floor and put them in the hamper” is assertive.
- “Why are you such a slob? Pick up your towel” is aggressive.

3. There is no intention of harm with assertiveness. Assertiveness isn’t about sticking it to the other person. There’s no intention of animosity behind your words.

- Aggression is often about trying to get what you want while also harming the other person in some way, even if it’s only about harming their ego.
Aggression has a component of meanness to it.

4. You value yourself as much as everyone else when being assertive. You’re not putting yourself above or below anyone else. You approach the situation as if you’re both equals.

- With aggression, you’re putting yourself above the other person and treating them as if they aren’t as important as you are.

5. Assertiveness avoids the use of inappropriate emotions. Assertiveness is direct without the overuse of negative emotions.

- Aggression uses emotions as weapons. Anger is often used in aggression as a tool of intimidation. **Aggressiveness is often used to get the other party to give in or to give up.**

6. Assertiveness has a high potential to resolve an issue without increasing the

odds of new problems in the future. There's a lack of animosity on both sides when assertiveness is used, so the relationship isn't damaged. Any issues in the future still have the potential to be resolved without drama.

- Aggression has little hope of finding a solution that pleases everyone and increases the odds of future conflict. The person on the receiving end of the aggression may hold a grudge against the aggressor. Future interactions are likely to be strained.

7. Assertiveness is about finding a solution. Someone choosing to be assertive is attempting to find common ground and reach a solution.

- Aggression is about winning. An aggressive person is trying to win with little concern for the other person.

Assertiveness and aggressiveness are often confused but are actually quite different. In most cases, assertiveness is a much better option.

When someone feels the need to be aggressive, it's usually an attempt to avoid any type of resistance. The hope is that the other party will simply back down and accommodate the aggressor's demands.

Aggressive people often suffer from low self-esteem and don't believe they can compete on their own merits. **Assertive people are clear about what they want and feel confident enough to state their desires.**

Make an effort to be more assertive in your life and leave the aggression for others. Your relationships will flourish, and you'll actually get what you want more often.