

Co-operantics

People skills for co-operatives

Are you assertive?

Behaviour towards others can be classified as either:

Aggressive – trying to get your own way by bullying or other power strategies

Passive – accepting other people’s opinions or decisions

Manipulative – using underhand or devious strategies to get your own way

Assertive – neither passive nor aggressive, but standing up for yourself and your ideas, without pushing others around and without being pushed around yourself.

How do I know?

Below you will find a list of questions to help you assess how assertive you are. Be honest – do your responses tend to be Passive? Aggressive? or Assertive?

	Aggressive	Passive	Assertive
Are you openly critical of other peoples ideas, opinions and behaviour?			
Do you speak out in protest when someone else takes your place in the queue?			
Do you avoid people or situations for fear of embarrassment?			
Do you have confidence in your own judgement?			
Do you insist that your spouse or partner takes their share of the housework?			
Are you prone to “fly off the handle”?			
When a salesman makes an effort, do you find it hard to say “No” even though the goods are not really what you want?			
When a latecomer is served in a restaurant before you are, do you draw attention to it?			
Are you reluctant to speak up in a debate or discussion?			
If someone has borrowed a book or some money, and is late returning it, do you mention it?			
Do you continue to pursue an argument after it is clear that the other person has had enough?			
Do you generally express what you feel?			
Are you disturbed if someone watches you at work?			
Do you find it difficult to maintain eye contact when talking to another person?			

In a restaurant, if the food is not up to standard, do you complain?			
When goods are faulty or are not what you expected when you paid for them, do you return them?			
Do you show your anger by name-calling or obscenities?			
Do you often step in and make decisions for others?			
Are you often a wallflower in social situations?			
Are you able to openly express love and affection?			
Are you able to ask friends for small favours or help?			
Do you think you always have the right answer?			
When you differ with a person you respect, are you able to speak up for your own viewpoint?			
Are you able to refuse unreasonable requests from friends?			
Do you have difficulty praising or paying compliments?			
If you are disturbed by someone smoking near you, can you say so?			
Do you shout or use bullying tactics to get others to do as you want?			
Do you finish other people's sentences for them?			
At family meals, do you control the conversation?			
When you meet a stranger, are you the first to introduce yourself and begin a conversation?			

As you can see, we all tend to exhibit a mix of passive, aggressive and assertive behaviours. However, co-operatives need assertive members – to inform and educate themselves, to have opinions and to know how to express and defend them, without pushing other people around and without being pushed around themselves. We can all learn to be more assertive.

Assertive behaviour is:

- ★ honest
- ★ direct
- ★ not hurtful to others
- ★ appropriate for the person and the situation, not universal
- ★ learned, not an inborn trait

More information:

<http://www.coping.org/relations/assert.htm#Steps>