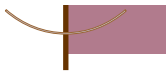




## ASSERTIVE OR SELF-EFFACING ?



### **When you do not assert yourself, you die a little bit each day**

by PIERRETTE DESROSIERS, M. Ps.,  
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Why do so many people seem unable to assert themselves? Because they are afraid to displease others, or to lose their love. They fear the consequences; the other person might pout, yell, be insulted, or judge them.

In order to assert yourself, you must become an adult. It is naive to believe that everyone can love you or agree with you, isn't it? Certainly, when we assert ourselves, we do risk being judged. There is the risk that someone will pout, that someone will not be pleased, or that we will be criticized. But what happens after that? Even when we don't assert ourselves, there are consequences. What's worse, we experience frustration and lose self-esteem, in addition to having the impression we are missing our own lives.

If you seek love from others by always saying yes, remind yourself that if others withdraw their love because you said no to doing them a favour, the love they provide is truly egotistical.

But be careful! Being assertive does not mean destroying or crushing the other person, nor does it mean treating them with scorn or acting egocentrically yourself. As an adult, asserting yourself means expressing your ideas, expectations and boundaries while also respecting those of others. Assertion is located midway between passive and aggressive.

#### **Tips for being assertive:**

- ❖ Identify your boundaries (what is acceptable, desirable and unacceptable in your life). Share them with those close to you, and respect these boundaries yourself.
- ❖ Always take time to consider a request. Sometimes, if you say yes on the spot, you may regret it later.
- ❖ Give yourself permission to change your mind. When you realize you have made a mistake, say so.
- ❖ Do not give justifications. The more you justify yourself, the more others will attempt to convince you you're wrong.

Before blaming others because they do not respect you, make sure you have expressed what you want clearly. If, after a clear explanation, the other person does not consider what you have said, you can re-assess the value of the relationship. It is poor and immature. In this case, it is only a matter of time before it ends, unless the passive party becomes resigned to it.



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An association or relationship cannot be satisfying or enriching if one of the two parties is mainly passive or aggressive. Successful interpersonal relationships involve being assertive in an adult manner while also taking others into consideration.

Passive	Assertive	Aggressive
❖ Does not express needs, expectations and dissatisfaction.	❖ Asserts needs, expectations and wishes while also considering those of others.	❖ Asserts and demands rights, needs and wishes and does not consider those of others.
❖ Is not responsible for problems. Rarely gets what he or she wants. Avoids rejection. Causes and participates in few conflicts.	❖ Does not get everything he or she wants.	❖ Gets almost everything he or she wants.
❖ Allows him or herself to be exploited. Accumulates frustration. Is not responsive to his or her own needs.	❖ Has good self-esteem. Develops good relationships. Has a sense of responsibility and controls his or her life.	❖ Inspires distrust and hatred in others. Becomes paranoid. Has very few relationships.

Comments or suggestions? Please contact Pierrette Desrosiers.

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