

ASSERTIVENESS INVENTORY

The Assertiveness Inventory is a list of questions that will be helpful in assessing your assertiveness. Completing this inventory may be a useful exercise in increasing your awareness of your behavior in situations that call for assertive responding. The Inventory is not a standardized psychological test, there are no "right" or "wrong" answers, and there is no formal scoring procedure. All you have to do is draw a circle around the number that described you best. For some questions the assertive end of the scale is at 0, for others at 4. The only "score" is your own evaluation of how you close you actually come to your own ideal level of assertiveness. So, be honest with yourself! You might want to use the results as a guide in planning your own personal growth program and keep a log to monitor your progress. Please refer to the "sample log" at the end of the inventory.

Instructions for completing the ratings:

A rating of **0** = no or never; **1** = somewhat or sometimes; **2** = average; **3** = usually or a good deal; and **4** = practically always or entirely.

1. When a person is highly unfair, do you call it to their attention? 0 1 2 3 4
2. Do you find it difficult to make decisions? 0 1 2 3 4
3. Are you openly critical of others ideas, opinions, behavior? 0 1 2 3 4
4. Do you speak out in protest when someone takes your place in line? 0 1 2 3 4
5. Do you often avoid people or situations for fear of embarrassment? 0 1 2 3 4
6. Do you usually behave confidence in your own judgment? 0 1 2 3 4
7. Do you insist that your spouse or roommate take on a fair share of household chores? 0 1 2 3 4
8. Are you prone to "fly off the handle"? 0 1 2 3 4
9. When a salesman makes an effort, do you find it hard to say "NO" even though the merchandise is not really what you want? 0 1 2 3 4
10. When a latecomer is waited on before you are, do you call attention to the situation? 0 1 2 3 4
11. Are you reluctant to speak up in a discussion or a debate? 0 1 2 3 4
12. If a person has borrowed money (or a book, garment, thing of value) and is overdue in returning it, do you mention it? 0 1 2 3 4
13. Do you continue to pursue an argument after the other person has had enough? 0 1 2 3 4
14. Do you generally express what you feel? 0 1 2 3 4
15. Are you disturbed if someone watches you at work? 0 1 2 3 4
16. If someone keeps kicking or bumping your chair, in a movie or a lecture, do you ask the person to stop? 0 1 2 3 4
17. Do you find it difficult to keep eye contact when talking with another person? 0 1 2 3 4

LOG FORM -- INSTRUCTIONS

Use the results of the Assertiveness Inventory to help plan your own personal growth program. Consider using the following Assertiveness Log Form to monitor your progress.

Situation Assessment: Review the Assertiveness Inventory and choose a situation or two in which you might want to be more assertive.

Attitude Assessment: Write down how you would feel if you were to behave more assertively in these one or two situations.

Behavior Assessment: This requires you to take an “outsider’s perspective” and become “an observer” of your own behavior.

1. Consider whether what you said in the selected situation was Passive (this usually involves indirect messages), Aggressive (this usually involves trying to make decisions for others), or Assertive (this usually involves “I” statements).
2. Next, consider what your body language and nonverbal communication said about your assertiveness (Eye contact -- how long did you look at the person with whom you are speaking?; Hand and facial gestures -- did they match the spoken message?; Voice volume -- was the volume consistent with the intent or purpose of the message?; Interpersonal distance -- how close were you to the person with whom you are speaking?; Posture -- was it threatening or withdrawing?; and, Give and take of speech -- were you taking appropriate turns?).
3. Finally, consider the outcome of the conversation (What were the reactions of others? How did you feel about yourself? What were the effects on relationships? What was your motivation for action?)

If you monitor your own behavior carefully for a time (a week or more) and record your observations regularly in your log, you will have a good idea of your own style. It will probably help you if you make it a point to watch some other people whom you consider effectively assertive, and to note in your log some of their behavioral qualities as well.

Obstacle Assessment: We know that many people want to act assertively. However, there are barriers that seem to make being assertive more difficult. Common obstacles:

1. Anxiety or fear of the possible consequences (Maybe the other person won’t like me, or will hit me, or will think I am crazy. Or, maybe I’ll make a fool of myself. Or, maybe I’ll fail to get what I want.)
2. Lack of skills (I don’t know how to meet new people. How do I express a political opinion? I never learned how to show affection.)

3. Other people in your life (Relatives, friends, business associates and others have interest in making it difficult for you to change. Even if they believe they want you to be more assertive, it may be easier for them if you remain passive.)

Record in your log the obstacles that you feel are holding you back from becoming more assertive. After you have kept your log or journal for a week, examine carefully the four entries: situations, attitudes, behaviors, and obstacles. Look for patterns. Assess your particular strengths, and weaknesses. You will find that the results will shine a spotlight on what you will need to do to increase your assertiveness.

Adapted from Alberti, R. & Emmons, M. (1995). Your perfect right: A guide to assertive living. San Luis Obispo, CA: Impact Publishers.

ASSERTIVENESS LOG

Dates: From _____ To _____

Situations:

Attitudes:

Behaviors:

Obstacles:

Progress / Problems / Comments:

Source: Adapted from Alberti and Emmons (1986) op. cit., pp. 40-42.