

Kick Butt Therapy
**PASSIVENESS, ASSERTIVENESS & AGGRESSIVENESS:
 A COMPARISON IN BEHAVIORS**

NON-ASSERTIVE (PASSIVE) BEHAVIOR	ASSERTIVE BEHAVIOR	AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOR
<p>Allowing other people to treat you, your thoughts & feelings in whatever way they want without you challenging it. Giving in to what others want regardless of your own wants & needs. Not wanting to make waves; afraid to say no.</p>	<p>Directly, honestly & appropriately stating what your thoughts, feelings, needs or wants are. Taking responsibility for self without denying the rights of others. Being an effective listener & problem solver, & respectful of others.</p>	<p>Being demanding, hostile or rude to get what you want regardless of the rights & feelings of others. Disrespectful & insensitive to others' rights & needs. Intimidating others – either physically or verbally – into doing what you want.</p>
<p>Letting others choose activities for you, saying “You decide...”</p>	<p>Choosing activities with others that include self, saying “We’ll decide...”</p>	<p>Choosing own activities AND those of others, saying “I’ll decide...”</p>
<p>Hoping – for favors, service, etc.</p>	<p>Requesting – favors, service, etc.</p>	<p>Demanding – favors, service, etc.</p>
<p>Forcing the other person to GUESS or ASSUME how you think & feel – due to your indirectness and avoidance of the problem. Using vague messages. Results in only a 50/50 chance of being correctly understood. Avoidance.</p>	<p>Letting the other person KNOW how you think and feel, by being direct, forthcoming & emotionally honest. Dealing with problem appropriately. Using “I” messages, such as “I want / I need / I prefer.” Honesty.</p>	<p>Making the other person aware of your thoughts & needs, while disregarding theirs. Attacking the other person instead of the problem. Using “You...” messages that blame or label. Threatening.</p>
<p>Viewing rights of others as superior to yours. Giving messages of “I don’t count / I’m not OK.” Establishing a pattern of others taking advantage of you.</p>	<p>Recognizing rights of others as equal to yours. Giving messages of “I do count / We’re OK.” Establishing a pattern of respect for the future.</p>	<p>Viewing your rights as superior to others’. Giving messages: “You don’t count / You’re not OK.” Establishing a pattern of fear & avoidance of the aggressor.</p>
<p>Results in feelings of inadequacy, low self-worth, low self-respect, pity, irritation, disgust, anger, guilt & resentment.</p>	<p>Results in feeling confident, valued, respected. Maintaining a sense of high self-esteem, inner peace & emotional integrity.</p>	<p>Results in feeling misunderstood, guilty, unloved... perceived as cocky, hostile... OTHERS feeling hurt, humiliated, defensive, disrespected, angry, vengeful.</p>
<p>Mistaking non-assertive behavior for politeness & being helpful.</p>	<p>Realizing assertive behavior means physical & mental well-being.</p>	<p>Believing aggressive behavior is winning or conquering.</p>

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Additional Signs of Non-Assertive (Passive) Behavior
(H.A.R.D = Honest Appropriate Respectful Direct)

Watch for body signals of tension due to non-assertiveness: stomach churning, headache, faster breathing, etc.

Does the behavior actually involve “rescuing” the other person? This is *not* a desirable scenario.

Also check for a “hidden bargain” when sacrificing important rights or preferences expecting that the other person will do something in return, but without telling the other person what is expected in exchange. Ask “Will I feel used if the other person doesn’t do what I expect him to do?”

Are necessary skills missing? For example, adults who as children rarely went to restaurants may simply not have learned how to request service or return badly cooked food.

Is there anxiety about negative consequences, i.e., what would happen as a result of any assertive behavior? **Common fears** are that he/she will lose others’ affection or approval; others will think he/she is foolish, stupid, or selfish; he/she will hurt others’ feelings or badly damage others’ lives; and that others will become angry or rejecting.

Adapted from Your Perfect Right: A Guide to Assertive Behavior, Robert E Alberti & Michael L Emmens