



**Mastering Difficult Situations: Communication
Techniques to Handle Difficult Discussions and
Situations in Your Law Office**

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Dr. Strauss has authored over 30 books, book chapters, and articles in professional journals. She has been featured on *20/20*, *CBS Evening News*, and other television and radio programs as well as interviewed for newspaper and journal articles such as the *Times of London*, *Lawyers Weekly*, and *Harvard Education Newsletter*.

Susan has presented at international conferences in Botswana, Egypt, Thailand, Israel, and the U.S. She has consulted with professionals from other countries such as England, Australia, Canada and St. Maartin. She has her doctorate in organizational leadership, is a registered nurse with a bachelor's degree in psychology and counseling, a master's degree in community health, and professional certificate in training and development.

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Objectives

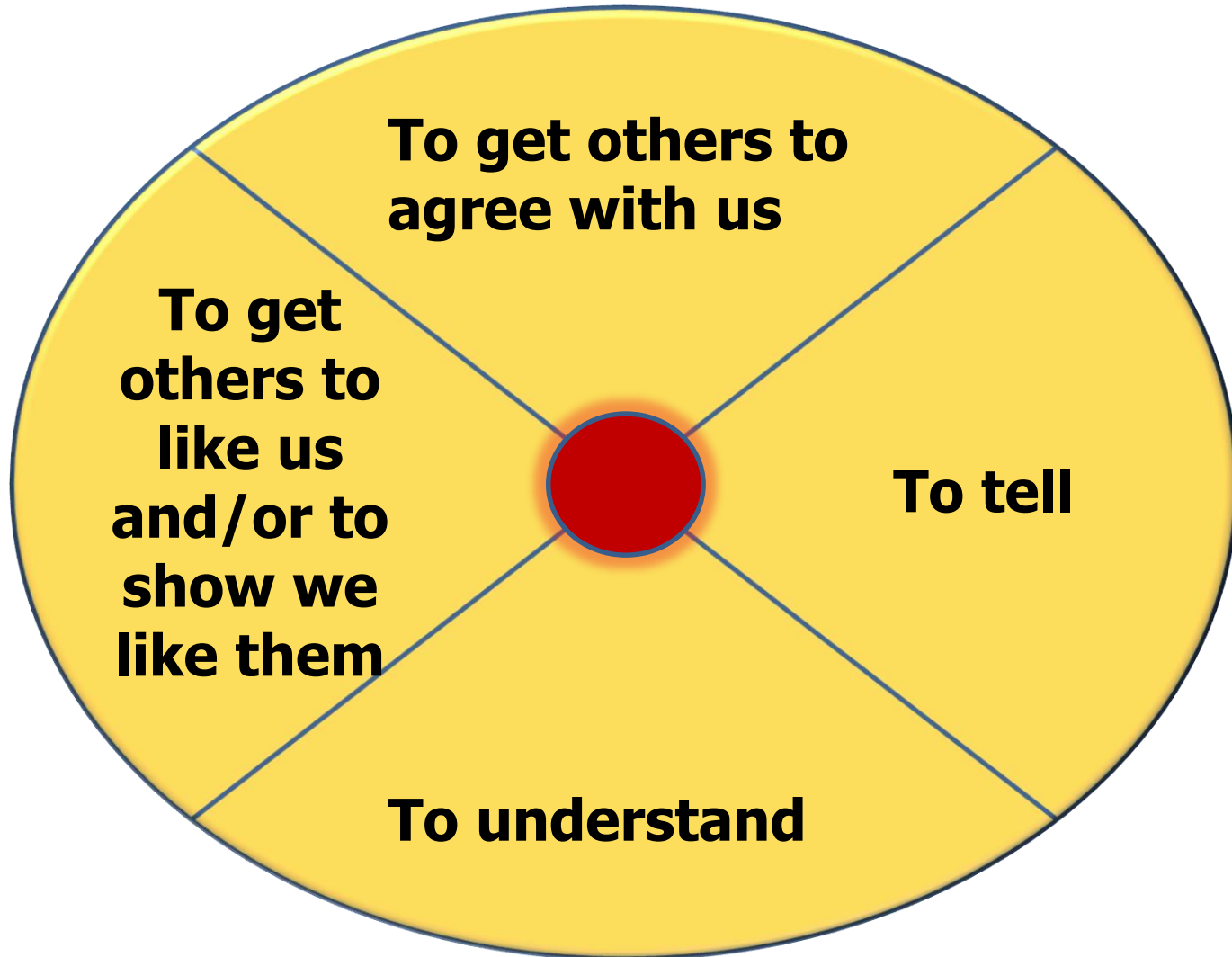
- 1. Identify the components of communication**
- 2. Differentiate between passive, aggressive, assertive and passive-aggressive communication styles**
- 3. Use specific phrases to deliver difficult messages with respect**
- 4. Identify roadblocks that prevent you from delivering difficult messages**
- 5. Use assertive communication to enhance your message**

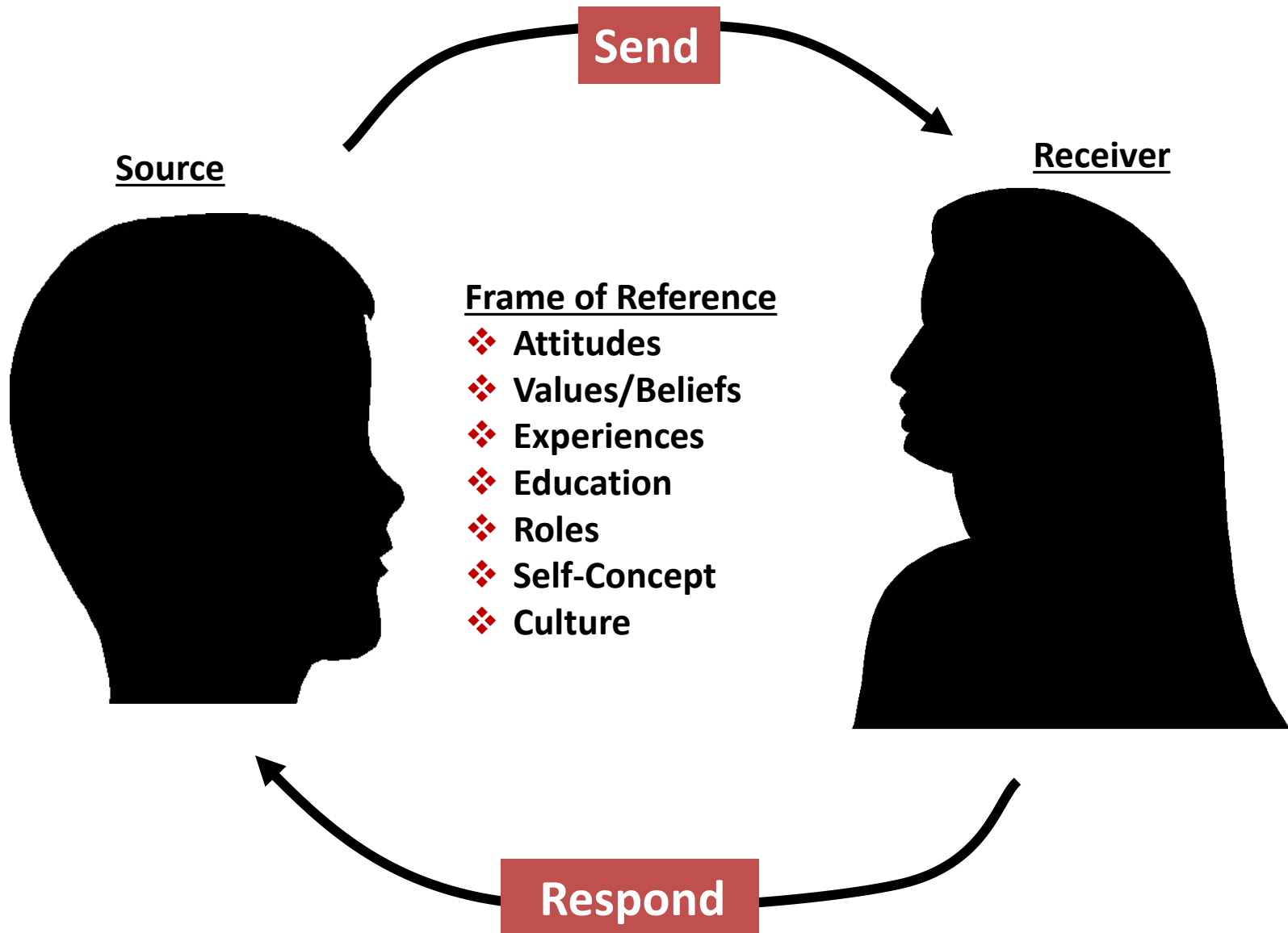
What is Communication

- ❖ **Process people use to share information with others**
- ❖ **Happens whether we want it to or not**
- ❖ **Occurs when one person notices another's behavior and assigns meaning to it**



Goals of Communication





Expectations Theory & Confirmation Bias

EXPECTATIONS
vs.
REALITY



Types of Communication

Verbal - Use of words - 7%

Intentional

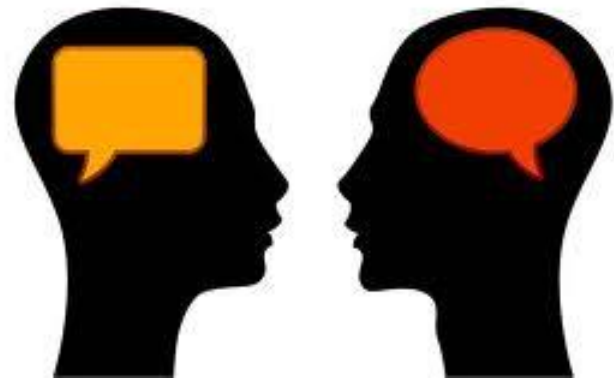
Accompanied by non-verbal

Non-verbal - 93%

Intentional

Silence

Non-intentional



Types - Vocal

Tone of voice

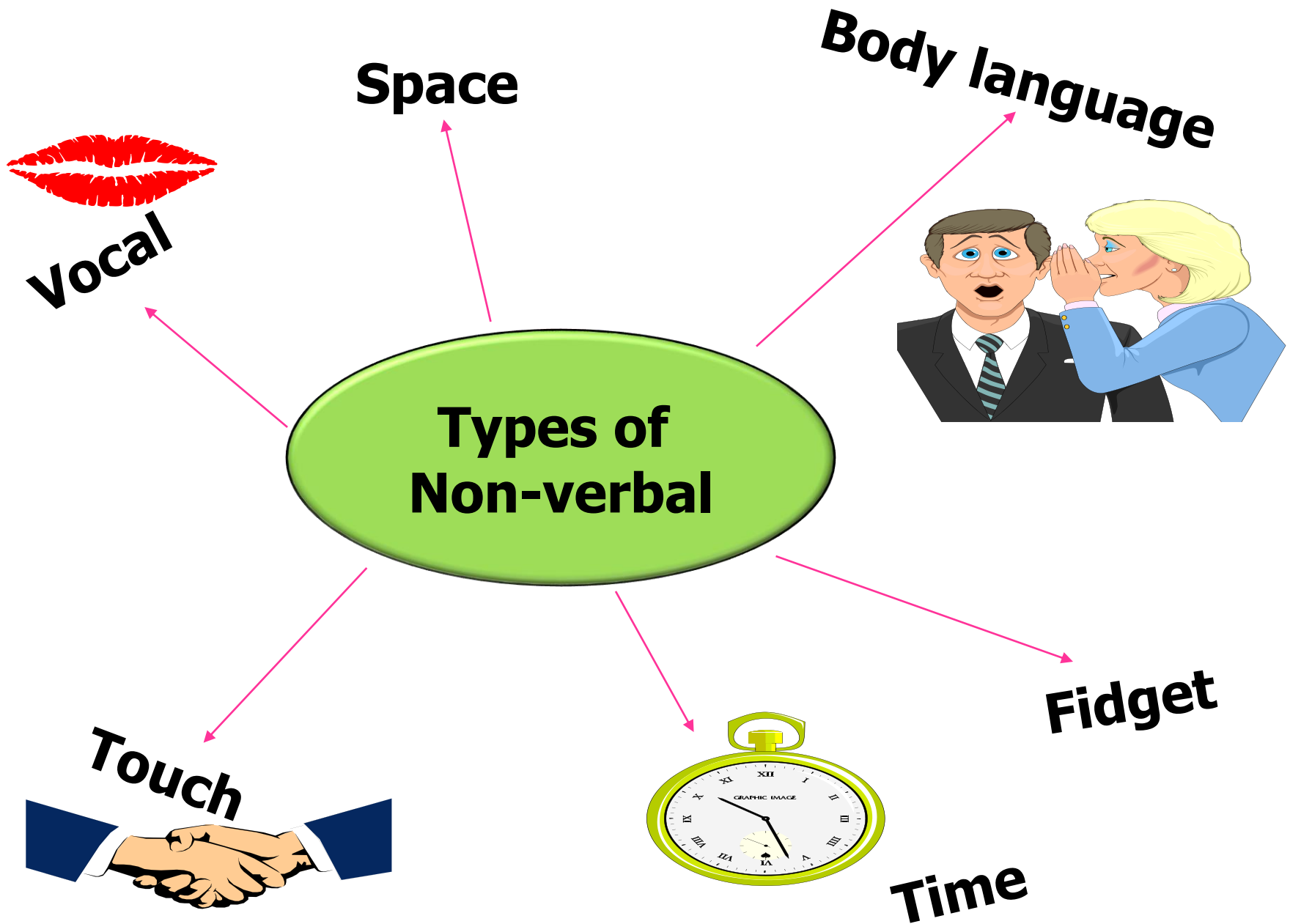
Way we connect words, pauses etc.

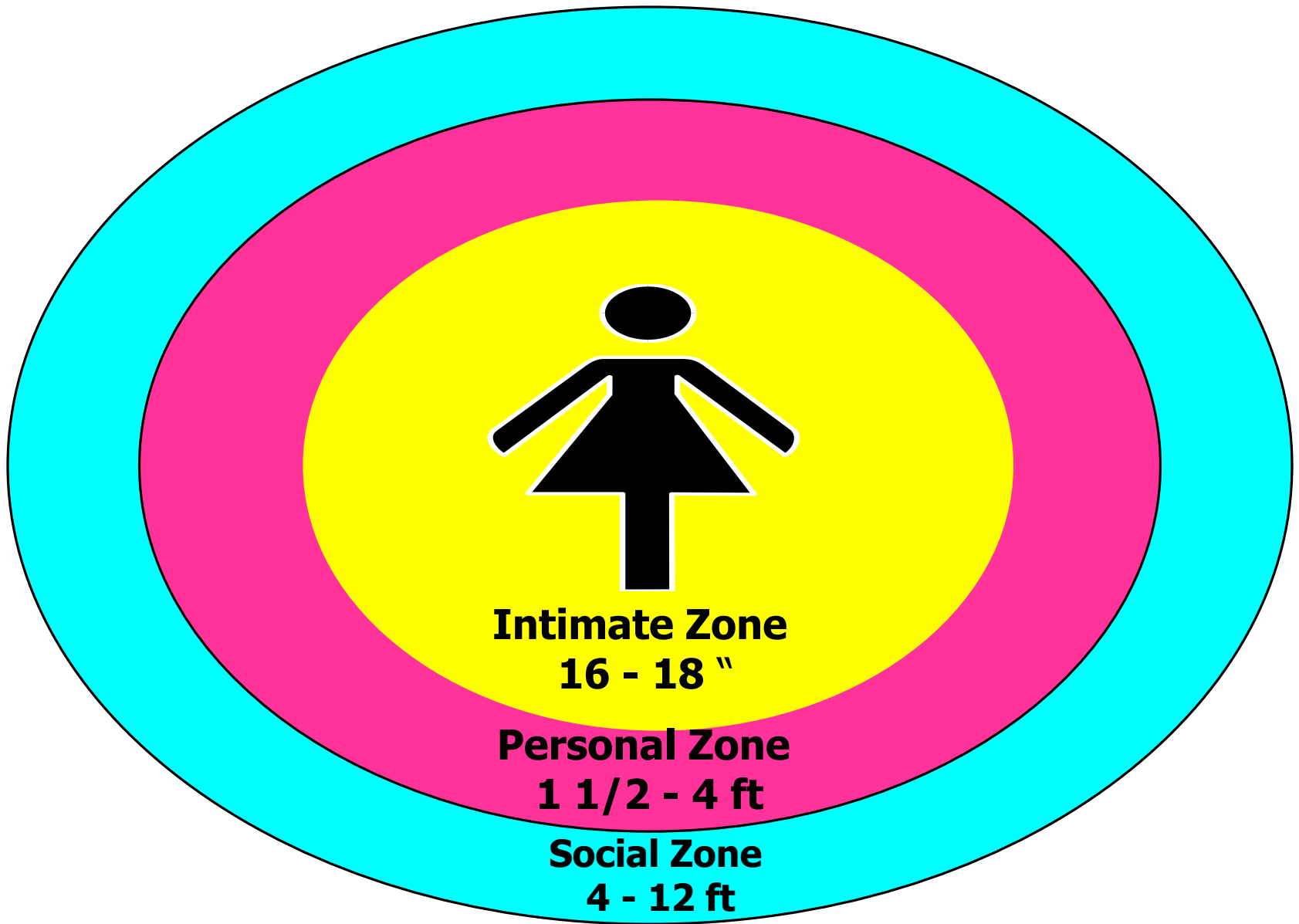
Pitch

Noises - Aahhh, Yuk, Hmmm, Ooooh

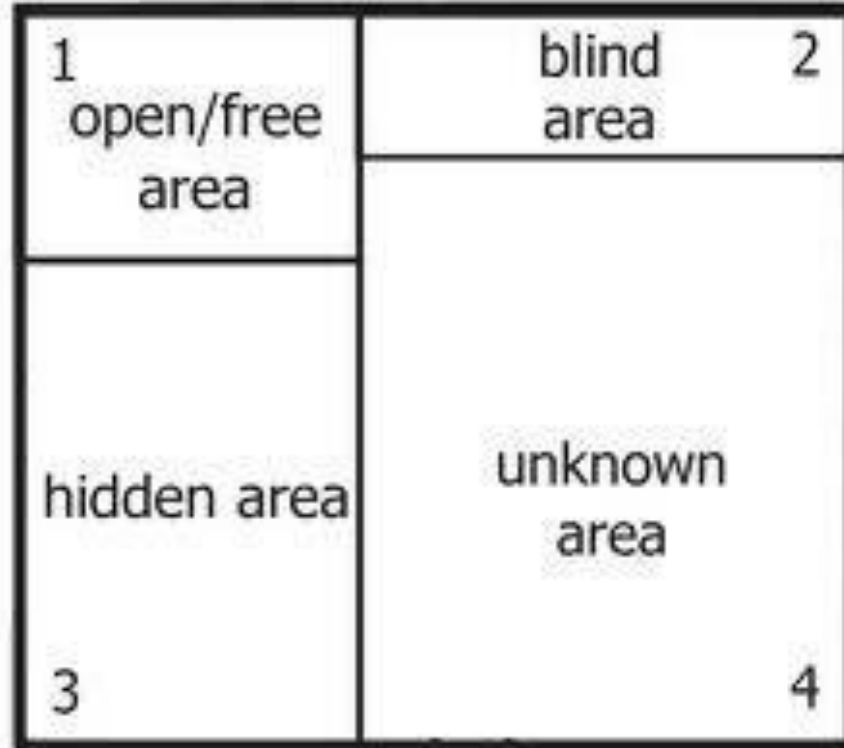
Accenting words



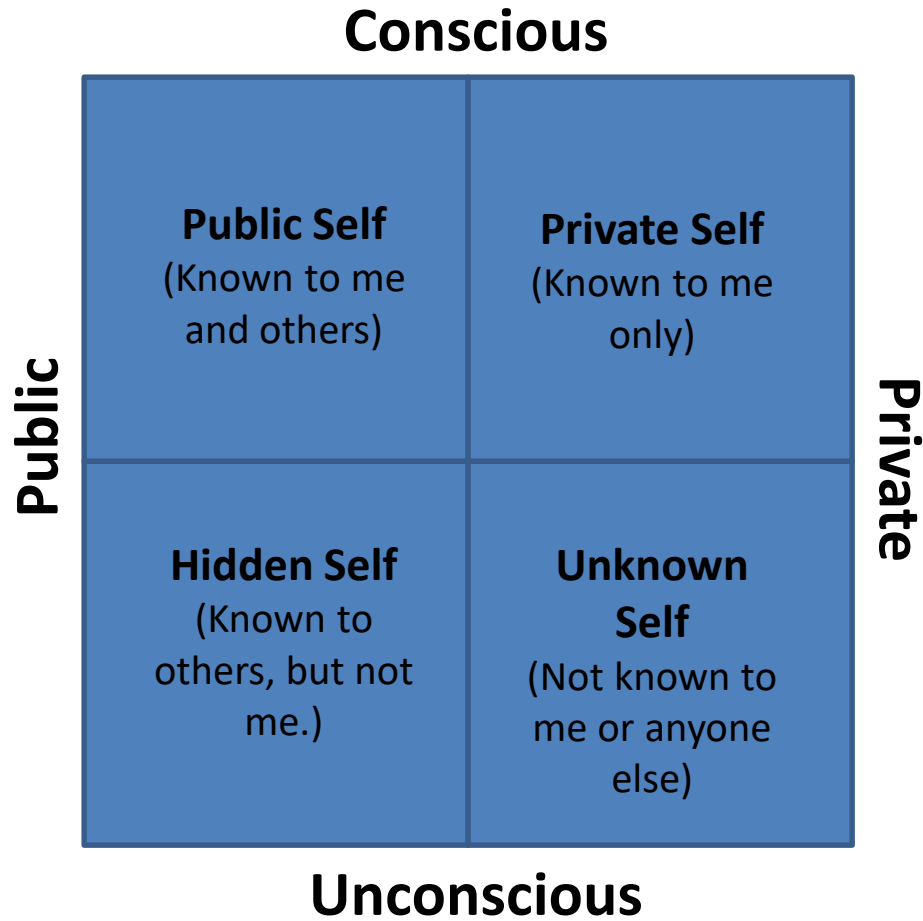




The Johari Window



Johari Window

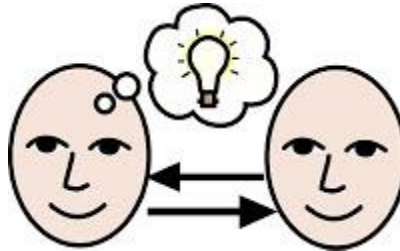


➤ **1/2 communication time
Listening**

➤ **1/2 information forgotten
soon after hear it**

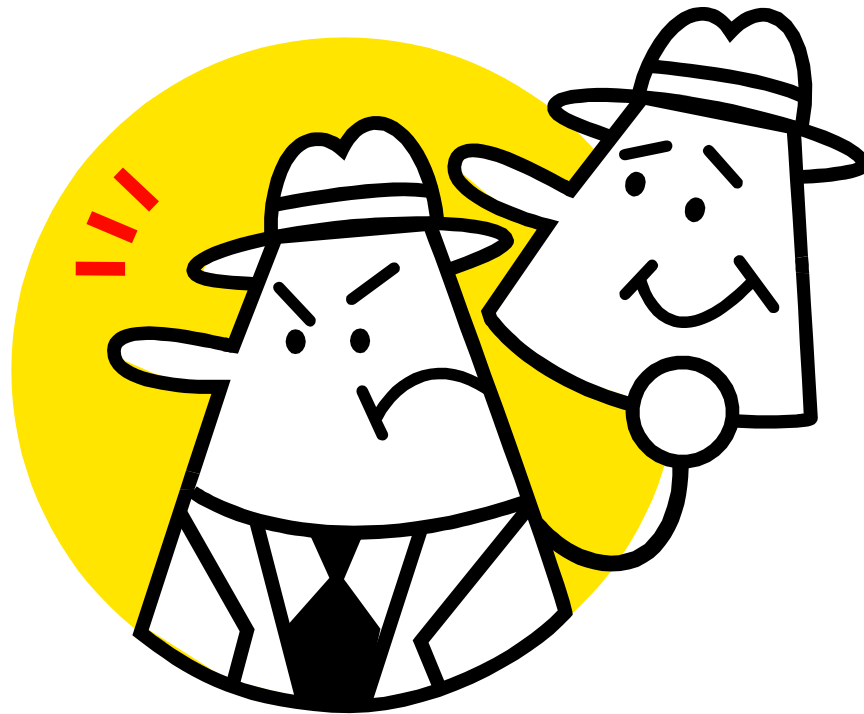


**“Seek first to understand
and then to be understood”**



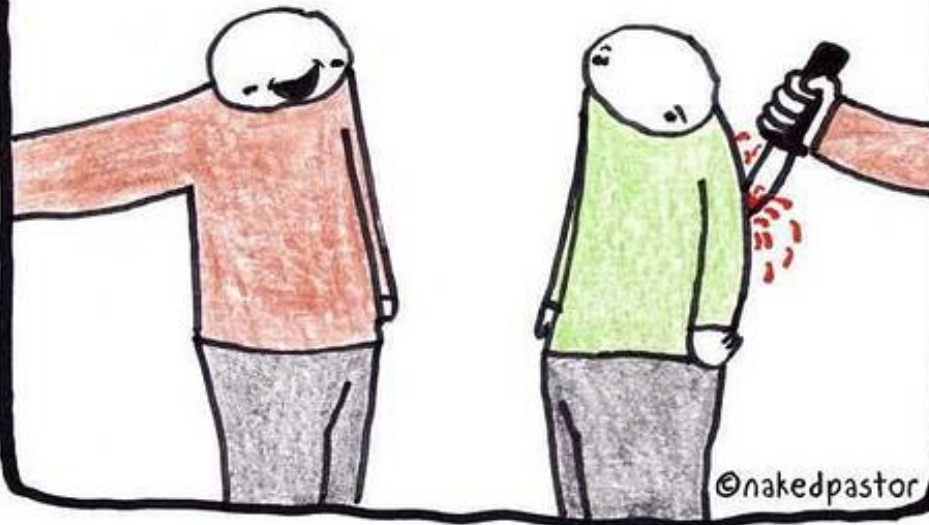
**“Most people do not listen with the
intent to understand; they listen with
the intent to reply. They’re either
speaking or preparing to ask.”**

Comparison of Passive, Aggressive and Assertive Communication





Of course I'm behind
you 100%. Why would
you think otherwise?



Comparison of Passive, Aggressive & Assertive Communication

PASSIVE	AGGRESSIVE	ASSERTIVE
<p>Passive is allowing other people to treat you, your thoughts and feelings, in whatever way they want without your challenging it. It means doing what others want you to do regardless of your own desires.</p>	<p>Aggressiveness is standing up for what you want regardless of the right and feelings of others. Aggression can be either physical or verbal.</p>	<p>Assertiveness is thinking and acting in ways that stand up for your legitimate personal rights. It is the act of giving expression to your own thoughts and feelings in a way that defines your own human perspective without subtracting from the legitimate human rights of others.</p>
Problem is avoided.	Person is attacked.	Problem is attacked.
Your legitimate rights are relinquished.	Your rights are claimed.	Your legitimate rights are claimed.
You view the rights of others as superior to yours.	You view your rights as superior to others' rights.	You recognize the rights of others as equal to yours.
Establish a pattern of others taking advantage of you.	Establishes a pattern of fear and avoidance of the aggressor.	Establishes a pattern of respect for future dealings.
Lets the other person guess how you think and feel.	Lets the other person know how you feel.	Lets the other person know how you think and feel.
Hopes goals will be achieved.	Works towards goals.	Works toward goals.
Lets others choose activities for you.	Chooses own activities and the activities of others.	Chooses activities for self.
Builds anger and resentment.	Acts out anger.	Deals with anger.
Talks to others with respect for the other person.	Talks to others with respect for self only.	Talks to others with respect for that person and yourself.
Lacks confidence.	Cocky, hostile.	Confident.
Hopes (for favors, service, etc.)	Demands (favors, service, etc.)	Requests (favors, service, etc.)

Reasons for the behavior

PASSIVE	AGGRESSIVE	ASSERTIVE
To avoid conflict and unpleasant, risky situations	To express hostility and anger	To achieve objectives
	To achieve objectives (in the short run at least)	To have positive feelings about self

Your feelings when you engage in this behavior

PASSIVE	AGGRESSIVE	ASSERTIVE
Low self-confidence and low-esteem	High or low self-esteem	Self-respect
Hurt	Hostile	Confident
Helpless	Superior	Self-sufficient
Anxious	Righteous	Powerful
Powerless	Alienated	Relaxed
Possibly resentful and angry (at a later time)	Defensive	
Guilty	Frustrated	
Inhibited	Bitter	
	Tense	

Feelings of others toward you when you engage in this behavior

PASSIVE	AGGRESSIVE	ASSERTIVE
Guilty	Hurt	Respectful
Angry	Humiliated	Respected
Disrespectful	Defensive	Threatened (occasionally)
Irritated	Vengeful	
Frustrated	Angry	
Disgust		
Pity		

ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS BEFOREHAND

1. What do I want?
2. What is the least I can accept?
3. What problems may arise?
4. How will I handle them?
5. How will I conclude?

HOW TO BE ASSERTIVE

1. Be direct
2. Think things through
3. Confront problem STAT – say “NO” ASAP
4. Separate anger
5. Use your own “turf”
6. Practice
7. Be willing to risk rejection
8. Be honest
9. Use non-verbal cues
10. Match your expressions to your words – erect, comfortable, eye contact
11. Avoid empty threats
12. Be brief and to the point
13. Be specific
14. Deal with present problems – not past ones
15. Do not apologize for asserting yourself
16. Express feelings
17. Speak clearly and loudly
18. Don’t make up a reason
19. Use assertive words such as “who, what, where, let’s work it out”
20. Avoid words such as “kinda, sorta, I guess, ya know, maybe”
21. Say “NO” without excuses
22. Use “I” statements
23. Be firm
24. Show respect for other person
25. Do not be sarcastic, whining or pleading
26. Do not blame other person for your feelings
27. Say “I won’t” – not “I can’t”
28. Extend and demand courtesy
29. Assume equality – don’t allow yourself to be intimidated
30. Express appreciation
31. If someone makes an insulting comment, ask them to explain
32. When someone goes too far, confront the offender and ask for an apology
33. Give “positive” statements
34. Address the behavior – not the person
35. Avoid nervous laughter, jokes and gestures
36. Relax!
37. Comments should state what you believe and feel and not be accusatory
38. Whenever you’ve gained a major concession, express your appreciation
39. Be clear about your goals.

ASSERTIVENESS TECHNIQUES

1. **BROKEN RECORD**

- Why do we usually lose in a conflict with — say, an auto mechanic — about correcting the sloppy repairs she/he made on the car? *Because we give up after his/her “No.” We give up too easily.*
- Be persistent — over and over.
- A calm repetitive voice states what you want to say until the other person agrees or compromises.
 - “I will not be put off - I can do this all day if necessary.”
- It allows us to repeat a point without getting sidetracked by irrelevant issues. For example,
 - “Yes, I know, but my point is...”
 - “Let me get back to my original point...”
 - “As I said, I really cannot take on that responsibility this year, I realize you are concerned...”

2. **EYE CONTACT/BODY LANGUAGE**

3. **FOGGING**

- This is a response to manipulative criticism
 - Don’t deny criticism
 - Don’t get defensive
 - Don’t counter-attack
- Basically agree with the truth segment, the principle, or odds

4. **NEGATIVE ASSERTION**

- Cope with your errors
- Accept those negative things about yourself
- Admit that an error indeed has been made. It separates the mistake from your value as a person. For instance:
 - “Yes, I know I was late for work today. I am usually more responsible and I will see that it does not happen again.”
- You are agreeing with the criticism, yet backing yourself up with affirmation.

5. **AGREE WITH THE TRUTH**

- “Thank you. I like it, too.”
- “I haven’t decided how I feel about it yet.”

6. **NEGATIVE INQUIRY**

- This is an assertive, but non-defensive, response. It does not criticize the other person, but produces a question that allows the person to examine whether he or she is right or wrong. For instance, you might say,
 - “I don’t understand why you think all the housekeeping staff at this hospital is unprepared.”
 - “Do you think that we don’t know what we are doing?”
- It suggests the need for re-examination of the criticism.

7. **SELF DISCLOSURE**

- Share information about yourself — how you think, feel, and react to the expectations of others, to life, and to issues in the workplace.
 - “I feel...” vs. “You are...”
- It can be used to help you gain information about how others see you and to help you build trust with other people.

8. **WORKABLE COMPROMISE**

- Compromise or bargain as long as it doesn’t affect your self-respect.
- Use it when working with an equally assertive person; someone whom you respect and with whom you know can work on a compromise. For example,
 - “You and I have worked together for a long time. I trust your judgment and abilities. I know we can work out a compromise to do with this problem.”

9. **HUMOR**

- Do not use at the expense of women, minorities — or people, in general.

10. **CONTENT TO PROCESS SHIFT**

- Shift the focus of the discussion from the topic to an awareness of what is happening between the two people in an interaction.
 - “We are getting off the point now and I am feeling uncomfortable because we are bringing up old history. You appear to be angry with me. Let’s talk about what is really happening now.”
 - “I really feel we are getting off the track and we are talking about issues that are not relevant to this problem. Let’s begin to talk about what is happening here.”

11. **DIFFUSING**

- Ignore the content of someone’s anger and put off further discussion until a better time. For instance,
 - “Dr. Smith, I can see you are very upset and angry. I suggest you take a little time to calm down and we will discuss this later today.”

12. **REFUSE TO DISCUSS IT ANY FURTHER**

ASSERTIVE LANGUAGE

DISAGREEMENT STATEMENTS

- "I don't agree with that, I think..."
- "I understand your position, but in my opinion..."
- "I believe differently. I believe that..."

RESOLUTION STATEMENTS

- "I would like to see if we could..."
- "I can see merit in what you're saying, though I don't agree with it entirely." "I agree that..., but I disagree that..." "Therefore, I'd like us to start with those things on which we can agree and see where we can end up."
- "Even though I can't do [what he or she required], I'd like to find some way to reach an accommodation."

WORDS TO USE:

- "Will you" or "Are you willing?"
- "Here are some options..."
- "What are the alternatives?"
- "How can I help"
- "I understand..."
- "This is what I can do"
- "However..."
- "I can"
- "I will"

WORDS TO AVOID:

- "Would you mind?"
- "You have to"
- "You're required to..."
- "You need to"
- "It's policy"
- "But"
- "You can't"

ALTERNATIVES FOR "I UNDERSTAND HOW YOU FEEL..."

I can see how you would...

- think that
- wonder why...
- feel worried, angry, frustrated
- be upset
- feel that...

SELECTIVE AGREEMENT RESPONSES

If you Agree with the Person...

- "You're right about that."
- "I sure can't argue with you there."
- "I agree with that."

If the Person says "Should" or "Ought"...

- "You have a point there."
- "Basically, you're right."

If the Person has Predicted Terrible Outcomes...

- "Odds are if that happens, we'd have a serious problem"
- "If what you predict is true, then..."

Attacks You...

- "Sometimes I am that way."
- "I sure give that impression sometimes."
- "I don't deny it."
- "It's not my strongest point."

Attacks You or Your Organization...

- "I see your point."
- "I know some people who would agree with that."
- "There's some truth to that."
- "It's hard to argue with that."
- "I couldn't disagree with that."
- "It must seem that way to you."
- "I understand how you could see it that way."
- "It would be most difficult to prove you wrong."
- "You have every right to believe that."

An Easy-To-Remember Guide for CONSTRUCTIVE FEEDBACK

Sequence	Explanation
1. <i>"When you..."</i>	Start with a "When you..." statement that describes the behavior without judgment, exaggeration, labeling, attribution, or motives. Just state the facts as specifically as possible.
2. <i>"I feel..."</i>	Tell how their behavior affects you. If you need more than a word or two to describe the feeling, it's probably just some variation of joy, sorrow, anger, or fear.
3. <i>"Because I..."</i>	Now say why you are affected that way. Describe the connection between the facts you observed and the feelings they provoke in you.
4. <i>Pause for discussion</i>	Let the other person respond.
5. <i>"I would like..."</i>	Describe the change you want the other person to consider...
6. <i>"Because..."</i>	...and why you think the change will alleviate the problem.
7. <i>"What do you think?"</i>	Listen to the other person's response. Be prepared to discuss options and compromise on a solution.

How the feedback works:

When you (do this), **I feel** (this way), **because** (of such and such). What **I would like** you to consider doing is (doing X), **because** I think it will accomplish (Y). **What do you think?**

DEALING WITH DIFFICULT FEEDBACK SITUATIONS

The following steps can guide you through a highly-charged situation and let you move to resolution:

1. Recognize and acknowledge the emotions expressed. Use Reflecting statements.
 - "You seem really excited."
 - "This must be very painful."
 - "It sounds like you're quite angry."
2. Probe to discover the cause of the disagreement. (This is difficult as you are caught up in your frame of reference.)
 - Use a reflecting statement until you get to acknowledgment or "yes".
 - Reminder: don't add your point of view to a reflection, just reflect the feelings.
 - Paraphrase information the individual is presenting. (Be sure to keep your tone of voice and body language neutral.)
 - In reflecting and paraphrasing, consider the other person's frame of reference.
3. Pause
4. Make a bridge statement (paraphrase all points of view, considering the other person's frame of reference)

Considering the other person's frame of reference is essential to this step. By "putting yourself in the other person's shoes" she/he is more likely to listen to what you have to say. Some examples of bridge statements appear below.

- "The issue for you is... and for me the issue is..."
- "From our point of view... and from mine..."
- "Your concern is... and mine is..."
- "We see this issue a little differently...you see it... and I'm approaching it..."

Note:

- Don't label their feelings negatively
- Don't tell them they "shouldn't" feel the way they do
- Don't evade or ignore the situation

Delivering Difficult Messages



- 1. On behavior rather than the person**
- 2. Feedback on observations rather than inferences**
- 3. Feedback on description rather than judgment**
- 4. Feedback on descriptions of behavior**
- 5. Feedback on behavior related to specific situation**
- 6. Feedback on sharing ideas/info instead of giving advice**

Delivering Difficult Messages



7. Feedback on exploration of alternatives rather than answers or solutions
8. Feedback on the value it may have to the receiver
9. Feedback on the amount of information the receiver can use
10. Feedback on what is said rather than why it is said



for Clarity

DELIVERING DIFFICULT MESSAGES

Self-disclosing about how you are reacting to the way another person is behaving is often called feedback. Delivering difficult messages is, perhaps, one of the most difficult kinds of feedback. The purpose is to provide constructive information to help another person become aware of how her/his behavior affects you and how you perceive her/his actions. It is important, therefore, to give difficult messages in a way which will not be threatening to the other person and increase her/his defensiveness. The more defensive an individual is, the less likely it is that she/he will correctly hear and understand the messages. Some characteristics of helpful, non-threatening feedback are as follows.

- 1. Focus feedback on behavior rather than the person.** It is important that you refer to what a person does rather than comment on who you think she/he is. To focus on behavior implies that you use adverbs which relate to actions rather than adjectives which relate to qualities when referring to a person. Thus you might say a person "talked considerably in this meeting" rather than that this person "is a loudmouth." It is directed toward behavior which the receiver can do something about.
- 2. Focus feedback on observations rather than inferences.** Observations refer to what you can see or hear in the behavior of another person, while inferences refer to interpretations and conclusions which you make from what you see or hear. In a sense, inferences or conclusions about a person contaminate your observations, thus clouding the feedback for another person. When inferences or conclusions are shared, and it may be valuable to do this, it is important that they be so identified.
- 3. Focus feedback on description rather than judgment.** The effort to describe represents a process for reporting what occurred, while judgment refers to an evaluation in terms of good or bad, right or wrong, nice or not nice. Judgments arise out of a personal frame of reference or value system, whereas description represents neutral (as far as possible) reporting. By describing your own reactions, it leaves the individual free to use it or not to use it as she/he sees fit. By avoiding evaluative language, it reduces the need for the individual to respond defensively.
- 4. Focus feedback on descriptions of behavior** which are in terms of "more or less" rather than in terms of "either – or". When you use "more or less" terminology, it implies that the behavior falls in a continuum. This means you are stressing quantity, which is objective and measurable, rather than quality, which is subjective and judgmental. Thus participation by a person may fall on a continuum from low participation to high participation, rather than "good or bad" participation. If you don't think in terms of more or less and the use of a continuous scale of measurement, you will be trapped into thinking in categories, which may not reflect reality.
- 5. Focus feedback on behavior related to a specific situation,** preferably to the "here and now", rather than on behavior in the abstract, placing it in the "there and then". What you and I do is always related in some way to time and place. We increase our understanding of behavior by keeping it tied to time and place. When observations or reactions occur, feedback will be most meaningful if you give it as soon as it is appropriate to do so.

- 6. Focus feedback on the sharing of ideas and information rather than on giving advice.** By sharing ideas and information you leave the other person free to decide for herself/himself, in the light of her/his own goals in a particular situation at a particular time, how to use the ideas and the information. Insofar as you tell her/him what to do, you take away her/his freedom to determine for herself/himself what is for her/him that most appropriate course of action.
- 7. Focus feedback on exploration of alternatives rather than answers or solutions.** The more we can focus on a variety of procedures and means for accomplishing a particular goal, the less likely we are to accept premature answers or solutions - which may or may not fit a particular problem. Many of us have a collection of answers and solutions for which there are no problems.
- 8. Focus feedback on the value it may have to the receiver,** not on the value of "release" that it provides the person giving the feedback. The feedback provided should serve the needs of the person getting the feedback rather than the needs of the giver. Help and feedback need to be given and heard as an offer, not as something you force upon another person.
- 9. Focus feedback on the amount of information that the person receiving it can use,** rather than the amount that you have which you might like to give. If you overload a person with feedback, it reduces the possibility that she/he may use what she/he receives effectively. When you give more than she/he can use you are satisfying some need for yourself rather than helping the other person
- 10. Focus feedback on time and place** so that personal data can be shared at appropriate times. Because receiving and using personal feedback involves many possible emotional reactions, it is important for you to be sensitive to when it is appropriate to give feedback. Excellent feedback presented at an inappropriate time may do more harm than good. In short, the giving (and receiving) of feedback requires courage, skill, understanding, and respect for yourself and others. In general, feedback is most useful at the earliest opportunity after the given behavior.
- 11. Focus feedback on what is said rather than why it is said.** When you relate feedback to the what, how, when, and where, or what is said, you relate it to observable characteristics. If you relate feedback to why things are said, you go from the observable to the preferred, bringing up questions of "motive" or "content".

AND...

Check for clarity – one way of doing this is to have the receiver rephrase the feedback she/he received to see if it corresponds to what you, the sender, said.

Source: Unknown

RECOGNIZE AND ACKNOWLEDGE THE EMOTIONS OR REACTIONS EXPRESSED

Examples:

- "I can see you're upset about this situation."
- "With all the other projects you're working on, you seem overwhelmed."
- "You don't seem concerned by this."
- "Oh! I had no idea this was happening. This must be frustrating for you."
- "I can understand why you feel that way."

Make a Bridge Statement

"You're seeing this as an issue between..."	AND	I'm seeing this as an issue between..."
"From your perspective, we need to..."	AND	From my perspective, we need to..."
"You're saying...is the cause of the delays"	AND	I'm saying...is the cause of the delays."
"Your main concern here is..."	AND	My main concern in..."

INCREASING YOUR ASSERTIVENESS

- Observe your own behavior
 - ⇒ Are you passive, assertive, aggressive?
 - ⇒ Are you satisfied with your behavior?

- Keep a journal
 - ⇒ Keep track of **Passive, Aggressive, Assertive and Passive Aggressive** responses

- Identify your goals
 - ⇒ What do you want for an outcome or result?

- Imagine yourself behaving assertively.
 - ⇒ What would you say and how?
 - ⇒ Practice in your mind's eye.

- Practice the Behavior
 - ⇒ Role-play with a friend.
 - ⇒ Check out your weaknesses and strengths.

- Test the Behavior
 - ⇒ What were the consequences? Results?
 - ⇒ What went well? What went wrong?
 - ⇒ How can you improve?

- Keep practicing

- Reward yourself
 - ⇒ Good inner feeling, encouragement from others.
 - ⇒ Others' changed response.

YOUR ASSERTIVENESS DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Week 1

Keep a journal of interactions you had which did not have your desired outcome. Each night, before you go to bed, analyze your role in those outcomes. *Did you behave passively, aggressively, or assertively? What could you have done differently?*

Week 2

Choose a situation that's been bothering you for a long time. Practice how you'd like to confront the person – in front of the mirror and with a tape recorder. Listen to yourself. *Do you sound the way you want to sound?*

Week 3

Go through with it! Confront the situation as you've practiced it. Afterwards, do a post-assessment. *Did you get what you wanted? How could you do better the next time?*

Each week, repeat all three steps of this process. The more you consciously assert yourself, the more proficient you'll become at it. Don't get discouraged if you don't always get what you want. The most important outcomes of assertiveness are feeling free to ask for what you want, taking an active role in your life and respecting yourself for trying.

COMMON BARRIERS TO EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

Read through Gordon Thomas* twelve barriers to communication. Check off the ones you have used in the last week at work, home or "play"

- A. ___ Ordering, Directing, Commanding: "You must...," "You shouldn't do that..."
- B. ___ Warning, Admonishing, Threatening: "If you do that, then...," "You shouldn't do that..."
- C. ___ Moralizing, Preaching, Imploring: "If you want to do the right thing...," "Please don't do that..."
- D. ___ Advising, Giving Suggestions or Solutions: "If I were you...," "May I suggest..."
- E. ___ Persuading with Logic, Lecturing, Arguing: "Let's look at the data...," "The right way to do this is..."
- F. ___ Judging, Criticizing, Disagreeing, Blaming: "That's a dumb move...," "I strongly disagree."
- G. ___ Praising, Agreeing, Evaluating Positively, Buttering Up: "What a great idea...," "Now aren't you creative..."
- H. ___ Name-calling, Ridiculing, Shaming: "You should be ashamed of yourself for...," "You blew it..."
- I. ___ Interpreting, Analyzing, Diagnosing: "What they meant to say was...," "You are just frustrated..."
- J. ___ Reassuring, Sympathizing, Consoling, Supporting: "It will be all right...," "Things will change..."
- K. ___ Probing, Questioning, Interrogating: "Why did you do it?...," "Who have you been talking to?..."
- L. ___ Distracting, Diverting, Kidding: "Let's not talk about it now...," "Let's do something and you'll forget about it..."

POTENTIAL ADVERSE REACTIONS TO ASSERTIVE BEHAVIOR

Sometimes people react in a disagreeable manner when they face assertion from another. Even if the assertion is handled properly, with neither being non-assertive or aggressive to any degree, one may, at times, still be faced with uncomfortable situations such as the following:

Backbiting – *After you have asserted yourself, the other person involved may be somewhat disgruntled, but not openly.* ▶ For example, if you see others in line jumping ahead of you and you assert yourself, the person may grumble as she/he passes you to go to the end of the line. You may hear such things as “Who does she/he think she/he is anyway?” “Big deal!” and so forth. The best solution is simply to ignore the childish behavior. If you do retort in some manner, you are only likely to complicate the situation by reinforcing the fact that her/his words “got to you.”

Aggression – *In this case, the other party may become outwardly hostile toward you.* ▶ Yelling or screaming could be involved or physical reactions, like bumping, shoving, or hitting. Again, the best approach is to avoid escalating the condition. You may choose to express regret that she/he is upset by your actions, but you must remain steadfast in your assertion; this is especially true if you will have further contacts with her/him. If you back down on your assertion, you will simply reinforce her/his negative reaction. As a result, the next time you assert yourself with her/him, the probability will be high that you will receive another aggressive reaction.

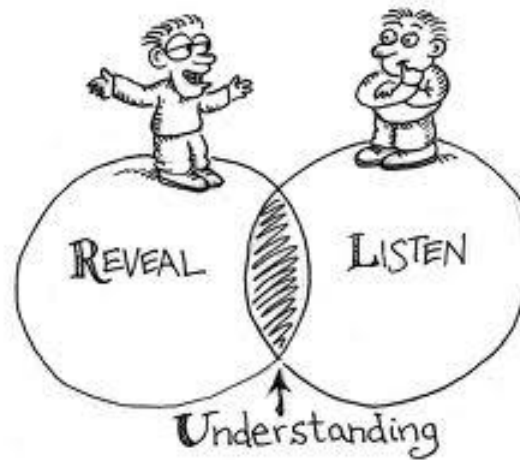
Temper Tantrum – *In certain situations, you may assert yourself with someone who has had her/his own way for a long period of time.* ▶ She/he may react to your assertion by looking hurt, saying her/his health is precarious, saying you don't like her/him, crying and feeling sorry for her/himself, or otherwise attempting to control you by making you feel guilty.

Psychosomatic Reaction – *Actual physical illness may occur in some individuals if you thwart a long-established habit.* ▶ Abdominal pains, headaches and feeling faint are just a few of the possible symptoms. However, be firm in the assertion, recognizing that the other person will adjust to the new situation in a short time. You should also be consistent in your assertion whenever the same situation recurs with this individual. If you are inconsistent in asserting your rights, the other person involved will become confused. She or he may eventually just ignore your assertions.

Over-apologizing – *On rare occasions after you have asserted yourself, the other party involved will be overly apologetic or over-humble to you.* ▶ You should point out to her/him that such behavior is unnecessary. If, in later encounters with her/him, she/he seems to be afraid of you, or overly deferent toward you, do not take advantage of her/him.

Revenge – *If you have a continuing relationship with the person to whom you have asserted yourself, there is the chance that she/he may seek revenge.* ▶ At first it might be difficult to understand what she/he is attempting to do, but as time goes on, her/his taunts will become evident. Once you are certain that she/he is trying to make your life miserable, you should squelch her/his actions immediately. A recommended method is to take her/him aside and confront her/him directly with the situation. Usually this is enough to get the individual to stop the vengeful activities.

Disagreeing is possible without disliking



Understanding is possible without agreeing

**“Our lives begin to end the day
we become silent about things
that matter.”**



Martin Luther King, Jr.

