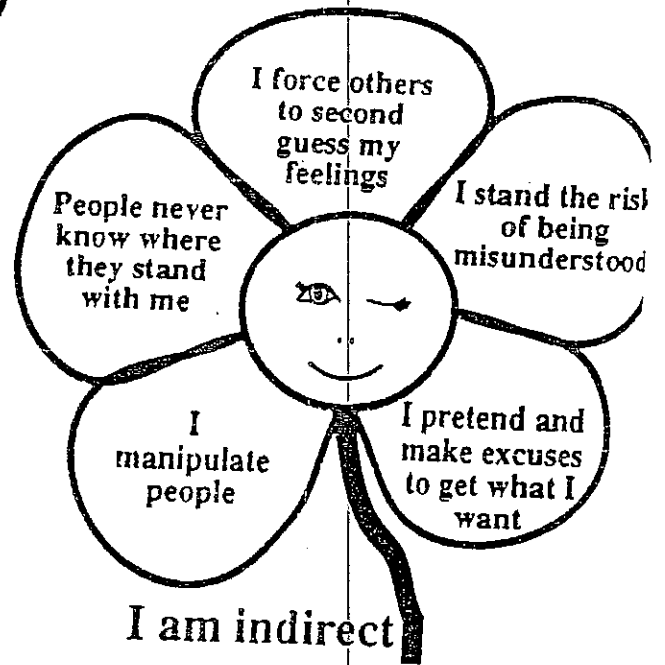
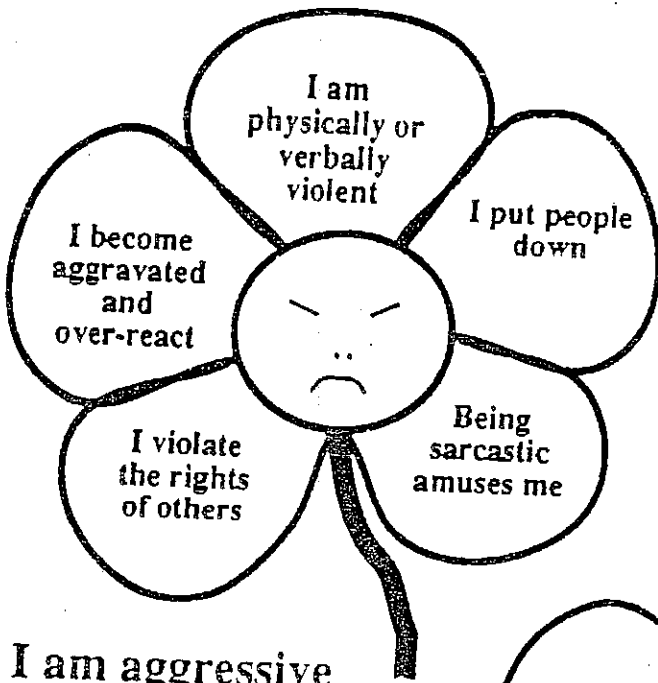


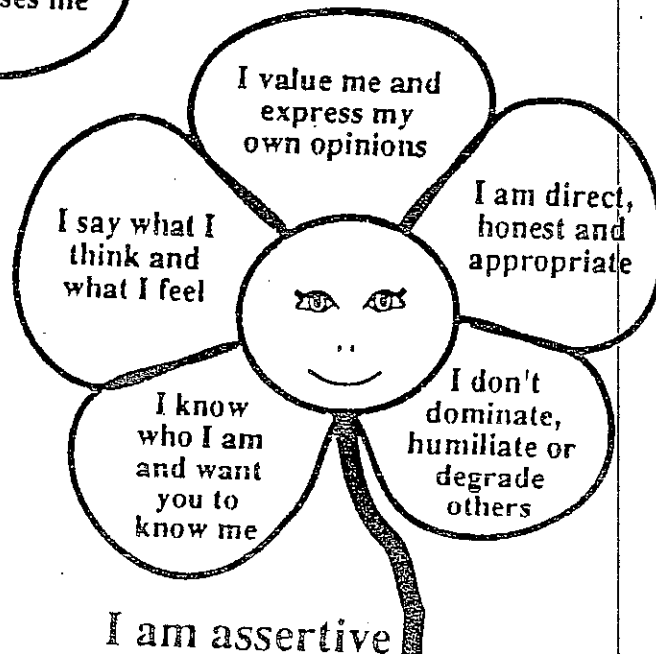
I am passive



I am indirect



I am aggressive



I am assertive

I MESSAGES

"HOW TO TALK SO PEOPLE
WILL LISTEN TO YOU"

IMPORTANT POINTS

- relationships thrive on honest, open communication
- each person has a right to his/her needs and to express them
- conversely, if sufficient needs are not being met, relationships can suffer
- the way we express our needs can be constructive or disruptive in relationships

SENDING "I" MESSAGES

What are they?

- owning your own feelings and thoughts and
- expressing them in a non-blaming way
- e.g. "I feel"

What they are not

- blaming
- disguised "you" messages, e.g. "I feel that you've been lazy"
(which is) "You are a lazy devil"
(which is) name calling
- a tool to manipulate

Why use them?

- It is an effective way of communicating your needs because
 - (a) it doesn't threaten or alienate the other person
 - (b) it improves your mental health if you are listened to

When you use them

- when you own the problem; your needs are not being met

When you do not use them

- when it's inappropriate because of
 - (a) time
 - (b) circumstances
 - (c) the state of the other person

What "I" messages may do

- help other people to express themselves likewise
- avoid "generation gaps"
- keep relationships healthy
- keep individuals healthy

VERBAL MESSAGE - HOW WE SAY THINGS ASSERTIVELY

1. 'I' message. 'I disagree' versus 'you're wrong'. 'I' messages describe your own behaviour, e.g. 'I feel' plus a description. 'I' messages are assertive and communicate. 'You' messages are aggressive and punish.
2. Send clear messages - avoid misunderstanding, e.g. Say 'I am angry with you', not slam the door, stop talking, etc. People are then sure you're angry and why.
3. Apologies and explanations. Don't say 'I'm sorry' unless you really mean it. Don't give long explanations for what you're doing or saying. They won't make the other person feel any better. It could encourage an argument or appear that you are putting yourself down.
4. Talk for yourself. 'I think' not 'Don't you think?'
'I like this' not 'Don't you like this?'
'I don't want you to do that' not 'Are you sure you should do that?'
5. Be Direct
Use of non-words or fillers to what you are saying, e.g. 'you know', 'ah', 'um'. 'I am angry at this' not 'I am quite ah angry you know ah at this'.

PASSIVE LANGUAGE - THE "WHY NOTS"

- | | |
|---|---|
| you, they, it | - distancing |
| 'I can't', rather than 'I won't'
'I have to' rather than 'I want to' | - indicates compulsion rather than choice |
| maybe, sort of, quite | - (qualifiers) |
| oh, it's nothing really,
I'm sorry but ... | - (negators) |
| Isn't it ...
We should ...
Shouldn't we ... | - (tag questions) |

AGGRESSIVE LANGUAGE - THE "WHY NOTS"

- | | |
|--------------------------------|-------------------|
| should, ought, must, have to | - (used with you) |
| you're blaming
you'd better | - (threats) |

THE ASSERTIVE SKILL OF FOGGING

PURPOSE: To deal with criticism

REMEMBER: Criticism is an attempt to manipulate
Criticism arises from judgements about good and bad, right and wrong, shoulds and shouldn't, do's and don'ts.
Behind most, if not all, criticism lies an explicit or implicit judgment about the rightness or wrongness of our behaviour. Usually there is an edge of truth in the criticism at the behavioural level.

REACTION Most of us respond to criticism with anxiety, defensiveness, denial and justification.
Fogging allows us to minimise anxiety, defensiveness and counterattacking behaviour. It helps us feel comfortable about mistakes, errors of judgement, our own preferences.

FOGGING Fogging is the skill of agreeing with criticism.

WHEN FOGGING I do not deny the criticism nor fight back
INSTEAD
I agree with the criticism
I agree with any truth in the critical statement
I agree with any possible truth in the statement
I agree with any general truth in logical statements of criticism

I SAY STATEMENTS LIKE
That's true
That's probably true
You're right I am/did....
You're probably right
You could be right
That's right
You're correct

FOLLOWED BY AN AGREEMENT WITH THE CRITICISM
That's true, I did make a mistake
You're probably right, I could budget my money better
You could be right. I do have a lot of faults

Sometimes I even add to my agreement more self criticisms to prevent further insult.
For example

1. Your clothes are a mess.
That's right, my clothes are a mess, my hair is untidy and needs a cut, my hands are dirty, and my shoes haven't been polished in weeks.
2. Can't you do anything right.
No, I probably can't do anything right. I'm a dead loss. I'm so dumb and stupid, etc.

BROKEN RECORD

For use in a conflict situation when your needs are unlikely to be met unless you assert yourself.

When using the BROKEN RECORD skill

- ☞ I am persistent
- ☞ I repeat what I want over and over and over again just like a stuck record
- ☞ I use a short statement
- ☞ I stick to my point
- ☞ I keep saying what I want without getting angry, irritated or loud
- ☞ I give no reasons or excuses as to why I want what I want
- ☞ I am not deterred by anything the other says but keep repeating in a calm, repetitive voice what I want until the other person accedes to my request or agrees to a compromise
- ☞ I keep going until I get the desired result
- ☞ I transmit the same message, in the same assertive voice tone, repeatedly

EXPRESSING ANGER ASSERTIVELY

I HAVE THE RIGHT TO EXPRESS MY FEELINGS, INCLUDING ANGER.

I have a responsibility not to humiliate or abuse other people in the process of expressing my angry feelings.

Many people have been taught that they should not express anger, that they should not let other people know that they feel it, and even that they should not feel angry. It is almost impossible not to feel some anger at some time, and we believe that it is healthy and even helpful for a individual or a relationship to express anger appropriately, and with respect for the other person's feelings.

ANGER CAN BE EXPRESSED ASSERTIVELY

People are taught not to express anger because they are likely to become aggressive in expressing it. However, expression of anger need not involve aggressive behaviour. I can raise my voice, keep a firm expression, and indicate my anger clearly, without threatening you, without insulting you, without being punitive or sarcastic. By using "I" statements and the three-part message described below, I will reduce the likelihood that aggressive content will creep into my verbal behaviour.

GUIDELINES FOR EXPRESSING ANGER ASSERTIVELY

1. I choose the time and place to express my feelings – not in front of others, but as soon as possible.
2. I keep it brief. I say exactly what I want to say initially. Once the other person has received the message, I don't belabour the point. (That runs the risk of rubbing it in, or of escalating the exchange).
3. I use assertive repetition only to emphasis my point if the other person does not appear to "hear" me – but I don't rub it in.
4. I use specific, objective language. I avoid words like "always" and "never". I describe (not label) the behaviour I am angry about. Not "You're always rude and inconsiderate" but "You've just interrupted me twice".
5. I incorporate "I" statements and "feeling" talk into the following three-part message framework:

I FEEL (your feelings)

WHEN/BECAUSE (behaviour you dislike)

NEXT TIME, I WOULD PREFER (behaviour you want) I indicate in my message that I feel a certain way because of specific behaviour on the part of the other person. I sometimes also communicate to you how I would like you to behave in the future. For example: I feel really annoyed because you didn't ask my opinion before you made the decision. Next time I would like you to consult me before making a decision that affects us both.