

manageris

Develop your **assertiveness** to improve your interpersonal relationships

The stakes

When people with legitimate viewpoints disagree, conflicts can arise simply for emotional reasons. If one party feels aggressed, energy may easily be diverted from a constructive search for a solution. However, the way we manage our interpersonal relationships has a decisive impact on the emergence of tension. We can therefore perform better by adopting a positive mindset when we address sensitive discussions or are involved in a conflict, whether or not this attitude is objectively justified.

Develop a positive mindset

Assertiveness is defined as the ability to assert one's point of view while respecting that of others. It is the best way to develop constructive relationships.

Improve your self image

- Love yourself unconditionally. Fight against those little voices inside saying "To be a good person I must be perfect, I must be independent, etc."
- Dare to recognize your own qualities. Tooting your own horn is not very acceptable in our culture. Yet, this is an effective way to note that others also see these qualities in you.
- Accept compliments. We tend to disregard positive signs that others send us, often through a learned sense of modesty. Learning to appreciate compliments will reinforce your self esteem.
- **Refuse unconditional negative messages.** Learn to put generalized criticism into perspective to preserve your self-esteem, e.q., "I am not incompetent; I made a mistake."

I HAVE A NEGATIVE OPINION OF MYSELF AND A POSITIVE OPINION OF THE OTHER PERSON

= PASSIVE

You tend to put yourself down relative to the other person, and feel like a victim.

You have trouble expressing your opinions, and feel increasingly frustrated and angry toward the other person.

I HAVE A NEGATIVE OPINION OF MYSELF AND A NEGATIVE OPINION OF MY COUNTERPART

= PASSIVE-AGGRESSIVE

You adopt a fatalistic attitude and tend to suffer situations as unavoidable or irremediable.

You feel despondent and unable to find solutions, demoralized and often increasingly depressed.

I HAVE A POSITIVE OPINION OF MYSELF AND A POSITIVE OPINION OF THE OTHER PERSON = ASSERTIVE

You recognize that two people can legitimately have different opinions and that each deserves to be heard.

You build constructive relationships and consider the respective contributions of all those involved.

I HAVE A POSITIVE OPINION OF MYSELF AND A NEGATIVE OPINION OF THE OTHER PERSON

= AGGRESSIVE OR DOMINEERING

You tend to judge the other person and decide what is best for him or her, or even attack the person if he or she does not comply with your model.

You do not inspire trust, and make the other person feel put down or manipulated.

Improve your opinion of others

- Distinguish people from their actions. The other person may do things you don't like or which have hurt you without being your "enemy" or "idiotic."
- Deliberately seek the person's qualities.
 Everyone has qualities.
 Trying to think of the other person's qualities before a difficult discussion will help you listen and communicate better.
- Temporarily adopt the other person's point of view. What would you do in his or her shoes? Can you understand the reactions that irritate you (without having to agree)?