

# BUSINESS VITAMINS

## Assertiveness Bill of Rights

### Introduction

How many times do we feel ourselves stuck being unable to share our thoughts, ideas, needs or even feedback fearing judgment or disagreement from others? Holding back our emotions and needs may cause frustration and low self-esteem, resulting in low job performance and an increased chance of conflict. One of the best ways to overcome these challenges is by communicating with assertiveness.

### Definition

Being assertive involves expressing your thoughts, feelings and needs while respecting the person you are talking to. It also means recognizing that other people have the right to express themselves as well. Communicating assertively can help one feel understood, increase confidence, and decrease conflict.

### Bill of rights

The bill of assertive rights is 10 things that highlight the freedoms we have to be ourselves without disrespecting others. These 10 statements are choices that we have and, like many other rights, are things that we are all entitled to. They help us to understand how and when we can all be more assertive and how we can respond to others who are not being assertive with us. They also point out that we also have the right to choose not to be assertive if we don't want to be – but we also have to accept the consequences of not choosing to be assertive.

The 'Bill of Assertive Rights' shown as below:

- You have the right to judge your own behavior, thoughts, and emotions, and to take the responsibility for their initiation and consequences upon yourself.
- You have the right to offer no reasons or excuses for justifying your behavior.
- You have the right to judge if you are responsible for finding solutions to other people's problems.
- You have the right to change your mind.
- You have the right to make mistakes and be responsible for them.
- You have the right to say, 'I don't know'.
- You have the right to be independent of the goodwill of others before coping with them.
- You have the right to be illogical in making decisions.
- You have the right to say, 'I don't understand'.
- You have the right to say, 'I don't care'.

### Protecting your assertive rights:

To ensure you live out and protect these rights, you need to be assertive. Making your decisions about your right and how and when you will use them should be made through assertive decision making. Choosing the most appropriate response should be made through conscious choice and not through emotion.

Tips for being more assertive:

- **Focus on self-awareness:** you cannot communicate clearly with others about your preferences and boundaries until you know what those preferences and boundaries are. Take the time to pause and reflect on your needs and wants.
- **Be calm:** normally, people will be more receptive to what you have to say if you communicate calmly. Try not to get frustrated if someone doesn't understand you.
- **Be selective and considerate:** be thoughtful about the words you say and the tone you use. It's important to share your opinion and provide a solution.

- **Be clear and specific:** it's important to really state your needs, your likes and dislikes to avoid frustration.
- **Practice:** imagine possible scenarios you might face, write down what you'd like to say and rehearse it. Like any skill, assertiveness improves with lots and lots of practice.
- **Start small:** start with low-impact situations to increase comfort and be more at ease.

## Misconceptions about Assertive Communication:

Some people confuse being assertive with being aggressive, difficult, rude or selfish.

Let's explore the key differences between Aggressive & Assertive communication or behavior:

Assertive Communication	Aggressive Communication
An assertive person is positive about his opinions and behavior. At the same time, he respects other's thoughts and actions as well. He generally follows a 'Live and let live' policy in life.	An aggressive person feels that only his opinions and actions matter while others are incapable in decision making.
An assertive person usually speaks out his honest views on a subject in a polite conversational tone.	An aggressive person will talk loudly to make others listen to him. He usually has poor listening skills.
An assertive person aspires to reach his own aims and goals. At the same time, he makes sure that others are respected and encouraged to make similar progress.	An aggressive person on the other hand, tries to achieve his goals and dreams by hurting others or by stepping on other people's self-esteem.
An assertive person views everyone including himself on the same plane or on par. His approach is more of democratic way.	An aggressive person puts himself before others and is ruthless by nature.