

**Segment:** Negotiation Strategy v. Style

**Lesson Title:** Lesson 2: Assertive Communication

**Grade Band:** 6-12

**Approximate Time to Complete:** 30 minutes plus 25 minute extension

**Objectives:** Students will be able to define and practice assertiveness.

**Materials/Set up:**

- What is Assertiveness? handout (one per student)
- Assertiveness and Respect Worksheet (one per student)
- Assertiveness and Respect Educator Resource (one copy)
- Tough to Refuse Worksheet (one per student) for the lesson extension
- Tough to Refuse Educator Resource (one copy)

**Resource:**

- Online Video Clip - [James Baker: The Man Who Made Washington Work: The Peacemaker](#) (Watch 1:36-2:45)

**Overview**

Being assertive requires practice. When you are assertive, you are standing up for yourself. You aren't attacking anyone and you aren't letting yourself get hurt. Through various situations, students will practice assertive responses.

**Instructional Plan**

1. Define assertiveness, "Being assertive is acting in your own best interest and standing up for yourself in a direct, honest, and appropriate manner. You consider your own rights and the rights of others. When you are assertive you are not aggressive and you are not passive."
2. Explain, "I messages are a common assertive technique". Give examples of "I" messages instead of "You" messages:
  - a) **You** did not explain that very well. v. **I** didn't understand the explanation.
  - b) **You** need to speak up. v. **I** had difficulty hearing the instructions.
  - c) **You** never share your toys. v. **I** would like a chance to play with your toys as well.

- d) **You** always interrupt me. v. **I** would appreciate being able to finish my sentence before you begin talking.
3. Distribute and review the What is Assertiveness? Handout. After each of the three scenarios ask students, “How would you react if you were the secretary?”
  4. Distribute the Assertiveness and Respect handout. Read over the handout and work through the scenarios as a class. Engage in an all-class discussion of some of the questions at the bottom of the handout.
  5. Play Online Video Clip - [James Baker: The Man Who Made Washington Work: The Peacemaker](#) (Watch 1:36-2:45). This segment shows Baker successfully using an I-message and non-verbal communication to be assertive towards President Assad. Baker’s assertiveness works and Assad backs down. As students watch the video ask them to pay attention to the language James Baker uses to communicate his position.  
After the video lead a discussion using the following questions as prompts where necessary:  
“What might have happened if Baker had not been assertive and threatened to leave?”  
“What might have happened if Baker had been *aggressive* and challenged Assad with a “you” message?”  
“Would Baker’s I-message have worked if he had not behaved assertively (by closing his folder)?”

### **Extending the Lesson (25 minutes)**

1. Distribute the Tough to Refuse Worksheet.
2. Break students up into pairs. Tell students they will have 10 minutes to work in pairs to complete the Worksheet.
3. Review the answers as a class, discussing alternative responses as necessary.
4. Discuss the self-assessment questions at the bottom.
5. Ask, “Do you think it will be easy or hard to communicate in a more assertive way, why or why not?”

## Assertiveness and Respect

People sometimes have problems with assertiveness because they think only about what they want. They forget that respect, considering others' needs as well, is the key to effective assertive behavior.

Assertiveness = Respecting Yourself + Respecting Others

Aggressiveness = Considering Only Yourself + Not Respecting Others

Non-assertiveness = Considering Others + Not Respecting Yourself

### Situation

Pam is angry because her friend Michael didn't meet her at the bowling alley at the time he had said.

She may respond in several ways. Write one type of behavior on each line. Below that, put the names of the people being respected.

She could call Michael, saying she's angry and that he should never again stand her up without calling. She'd then hang up the phone even if Michael asks her to listen to his explanation.

Type: \_\_\_\_\_ Persons Respected \_\_\_\_\_

When she saw Michael she could say she was angry and disappointed because she didn't like bowling by herself. She could ask why he didn't come or call, listen carefully, and ask him to please call in the future.

Type: \_\_\_\_\_ Persons Respected \_\_\_\_\_

She could think to herself that he probably just forgot and decide not to say anything. She would then probably hope he'd call again, or she'd feel angry but not say anything.

Type: \_\_\_\_\_ Persons Respected \_\_\_\_\_

### Discussion

How would Pam feel in each situation?

What would Michael be thinking and feeling?

How would you be able to find out if Michael didn't show up because his little sister got hurt and he had to stay with her or if Michael didn't show because another friend asked him to the movies?

Which style is most respectful?

Which style is most effective?

## What Is Assertiveness?

We define assertiveness by looking at these examples of students asking the school secretary for a registration form for the chess team.

### Assertive

Regina walks up to the counter looking directly at the secretary. She smiles and waits for her to look up from her work. Using a pleasant tone of voice, she leans forward and says, "I'd like a form for the chess team, please."

Regina is behaving in an assertive manner. She asks for what he wants in a direct, pleasant way. She also shows respect for the other person by waiting for her attention and behaving politely.

### Non-Assertive

Joe walks slowly and hesitantly to the counter, looking down. He stands and waits for the secretary to notice him. When she does, he speaks in a whisper and says, "You don't have any more forms for the team, do you?"

Joe is behaving in a non-assertive manner. He doesn't feel important enough to ask for what he wants. He depends on the other person to give him what he wants.

### Aggressive

Shawn storms to the counter, looking in all directions. He calls for the secretary's attention even though he can see the secretary is on the telephone. He leans on the counter and says, "G'mme one of those registration forms."

Shawn is behaving in an aggressive manner. He's considering only his wants and needs and tries to ask very important. He uses his power to try to make the other person do what he wants.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## **Tough To Refuse**

How would you respond to the following requests? How would you refuse while being respectful, without causing hurt or angry feelings? Use I-statements when possible.

### **Scenarios**

1. One of your best friends told you something very personal and asked you not to tell anybody. Now a second friend is bugging you to tell what you know. How can you refuse?
2. Your friend wants to borrow your sweater. This friend has leant you clothes many times. But the sweater is brand new. You haven't even worn it yet. How can you refuse?
3. Two of your friends found out your parents will be away next weekend. They want you to throw a party at your house. You know your house would probably be trashed and you'd get in a lot of trouble. How can you say no?
4. Your friend asks to copy off of you during the next math quiz. She really needs a good grade to pass the course. But you don't want to cheat. How can you say no and preserve the friendship?
5. Just when your shift at work is ending, your boss asks you to stay longer. You already made plans for the evening. How can you refuse without jeopardizing your job?

### **Self-Assessment**

In what situations would you be most comfortable saying no? Least comfortable?

What underlying conflicts and complications do you see?

Does it matter who is asking the favor?

## Assertiveness and Respect: Educator Resource

People sometimes have problems with assertiveness because they think only about what they want. They forget that respect, considering others' needs as well, is the key to effective assertive behavior.

Assertiveness = Respecting Yourself + Respecting Others

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Non-assertiveness = Considering Others + Not Respecting Yourself

### Situation

Pam is angry because her friend Michael didn't meet her at the bowling alley at the time he had said.

She may respond in several ways. Write one type of behavior on each line. Below that, put the names of the people being respected.

She could call Michael, saying she's angry and that he should never again stand her up without calling. She'd then hang up the phone even if Michael asks her to listen to his explanation.

Type: Aggressive \_\_\_\_\_ Persons Respected Pam\_\_\_\_\_

When she saw Michael she could say she was angry and disappointed because she didn't like bowling by herself. She could ask why he didn't come or call, listen carefully, and ask him to please call in the future.

Type: Assertive \_\_\_\_\_ Persons Respected Pam and Michael

She could think to herself that he probably just forgot and decide not to say anything. She would then probably hope he'd call again, or she'd feel angry but not say anything.

Type: Non-assertive \_\_\_\_\_ Persons Respected Michael\_\_\_\_\_

### Discussion

How would Pam feel in each situation?

What would Michael be thinking and feeling?

How would you be able to find out if Michael didn't show up because his little sister got hurt and he had to stay with her or if Michael didn't show because another friend asked him to the movies?

Which style is most respectful?

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## Tough To Refuse- Educator Resource

How would you respond to the following requests? How would you refuse while being respectful, without causing hurt or angry feelings? Use I-statement when possible.

### Scenarios

1. One of your best friends told you something very personal and asked you not to tell anybody. Now a second friend is bugging you to tell what you know. How can you refuse?

*It is important for me to keep the trust of people. I learned this information in confidence and I am not comfortable sharing with you. I would not want you sharing something that I told you to someone else. I hope you understand and know that I would do the same thing for you.*

2. Your friend wants to borrow your sweater. This friend has leant you clothes many times. But the sweater is brand new. You haven't even worn it yet. How can you refuse?

*This is a brand new sweater. I appreciate that you have leant me clothes in the past, but I have not even worn the sweater yet. Let me know if there is anything else that I have that you would like to borrow.*

3. Two of your friends found out your parents will be away next weekend. They want you to throw a party at your house. You know your house would probably be trashed and you'd get in a lot of trouble. How can you say no?

*Getting together sounds like it would be a lot of fun. I am not comfortable having all of those people over my house without my parents at home and know that I will get into a lot of trouble and my house will likely get trashed. We have been friends for a while so you know how my parents are. What other things do you think we could do next weekend that don't involve a party at my house.*

4. Your friend asks to copy off of you during the next math quiz. She really needs a good grade to pass the course. But you don't want to cheat. How can you say no and preserve the friendship?

*I know you need a good grade to pass this course. I am willing to work with you to study and prepare. I am not willing to help you cheat which is against the rules and will get me in trouble as well.*

5. Just when your shift at work is ending, your boss asks you to stay longer. You already made plans for the evening. How can you refuse without jeopardizing your job?

*Your last minute request puts me in a tough position. If I did not already have plans for the evening I would be able to stay and work later. If you can give me some advance notice next time, I can plan around your needs.*

### **Self-Assessment**

In what situations would you be most comfortable saying no? Least comfortable?  
What underlying conflicts and complications do you see?  
Does it matter who is asking the favor?