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How assertive are you? Take our test

Giving employees critical feedback, negotiating with vendors, sticking up for your people (or your budget)—they’re all communications situations that require a certain amount of assertiveness.

Some HR pros are naturally assertive; others may need to learn to be more assertive. The payoff can be significant: When people understand exactly what you’re saying or asking, you’re far more likely to get what you need.

These 18 questions, developed by psychologist and business consultant Judith Tingley, can help you pinpoint areas of weakness in your ability to express yourself. Use your results to figure out where you can improve.

Instructions:
Using the following scale, score yourself on how you usually react to a particular situation, or your usual attitude.

0 = Almost always
1 = Usually
2 = Sometimes
3 = Seldom
4 = Rarely or never

_____ 1. Do you ignore it when someone pushes in front of you in line?
_____ 2. Do you raise your voice when you’re trying to make a point in a conversation?
_____ 3. Do you find it difficult to accept compliments from your boss?
_____ 4. Do people think you have a temper?
_____ 5. Do you find it difficult to ask a friend to do you a favor?
_____ 6. When someone criticizes you, do you find something about him to criticize?
_____ 7. Do you keep your opinions to yourself when talking to people whom you do not know very well?
_____ 8. Are people afraid of you?
_____ 9. If you are angry with someone, is it difficult for you to tell her?
_____ 10. Are you sarcastic with people?
_____ 11. Do you find it difficult to refuse people’s requests?
_____ 12. Do you think up smart remarks and quick comebacks to put other people down or on the defensive?
13. Do you let other people make decisions about where to go and what to do?

14. If someone disagrees with you, do you strongly dispute his viewpoint?

15. Do you tend to drag out apologies?

16. Are you pretty sure you are right?

17. Is it hard for you to express your negative feelings to others?

18. Do you tend to be judgmental?

**Scoring:**
Score the odd-numbered questions separately from the even-numbered questions.

A low score (under 10) on the even-numbered questions indicates that you generally are aggressive. *Aggressiveness can be detrimental to communication.*

A high score (higher than 25) on the odd-numbered questions indicates that you usually are able to assert yourself. *Assertiveness enhances understanding.*