

Assertive Communication

Challenge

To confront someone upon a delicate subject, making your point clearly and firmly, but without causing offence or conflict.

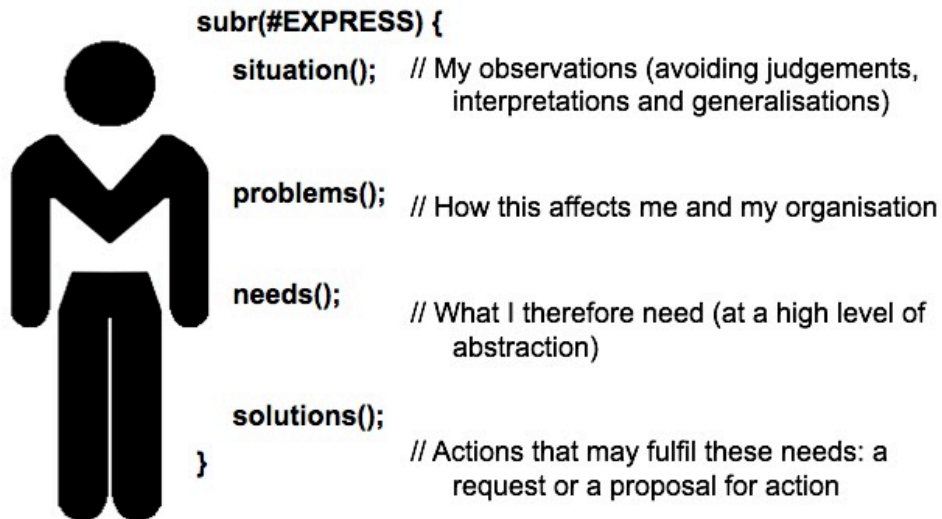
Instructions

Follow the instructions given by your facilitator.

Scenarios

1. **A client keeps you waiting for 90 minutes**, and you have another appointment after seeing him. You tell them that you will shorten your meeting in order to be at the other appointment on time.
2. **You are working on something difficult and colleagues** in an adjacent cubicle are **distracting** you with their conversation. You have them stop distracting you.
3. **A client wants you to do an expensive demonstration/evaluation** – they do not expect to pay anything, or give any commitment to a future purchase. You refuse.
4. **You have booked a meeting room** for 11h00 but when you arrive some colleagues are in the room and claim that their meeting is important – please can you go somewhere else. You also have an important meeting to hold and you insist that they go elsewhere.
5. **Your boss is expecting you to travel** at the weekend in order to satisfy a demanding customer. You can see that there is no good technical reason for your to travel at the weekend. You insist that your boss stands up to the customer and protects you from this unreasonable request.
6. **You have made repeated requests** to your product group to help you with a particular problem, and they have not responded in any useful way. You insist.
7. **You made a commitment** to do something for a client by a certain date, but your **success depended on them delivering something** to you first, and they did not do this. You inform them of the delay but decline responsibility.

Assertive Communication Cheat Sheet



- The more a Problem is expressed in a personal way, the less likely it is that the client will object to it
 - “I am very worried about the consequences of a software failure”, cannot be disputed
 - “That software could easily crash and cause a huge mess”, could cause objections
 - The closer I can get to expressing my true Needs, the smaller the chances of conflict
 - “It is very important to me to get away at 3pm. The person I am meeting next has come a long way, and I want to show my appreciation by being on time”, is difficult to argue with.
 - “I’m afraid that I have to go by 3pm”, could make a client feel unloved.
- Similarly:
- “I would like some recognition for this unplanned work – something that will reassure my boss that what I am doing is necessary”, sounds reasonable
 - “Your engineers delivered the XYZ data late. It’s made me late too, and my boss doesn’t understand what’s going on”, could degenerate into an argument about who was at fault.
- Again, try to avoid certain habits that are, unfortunately, entrenched in our culture, e.g.:
 - Interpretations:
 - Projections: he thought ..., their idea was ..., they wanted to ...
 - Accusations: after he did this ..., their software caused ..., you told me that ...
 - Judgements: good, bad, fast, slow, complicated, stupid, useless, boring, ...
 - Rules & generalisations: they always ..., my boss never ..., it must ...