

Assertiveness Skills

Broken Record

We sometimes feel manipulated in conversations with others. What often happens in these situations is that the other person begins to ask for reasons why we will not do as they ask. What we sometimes fail to realize is that we do not have to give reasons if we don't want to. The Broken Record technique is a skill by which we simply re-assert our position over and over, like a broken record. This should be done calmly, without anger. The Broken Record teaches you persistence without having to rehearse arguments or angry feelings beforehand.

EXAMPLE: *"I understand your position; however, this is how I feel about the situation."*

Fogging

Arguments usually occur when the other person meets resistance. If you disagree with the other person, you've given them something to 'push back' against. If, on the other hand, you agree with the other person, there is nothing to 'push back' against. It's as if they are pushing against a wall of fog.

Fogging is accomplished by acknowledging that there may be some truth to what your critic is saying, while at the same time allowing you to be your own judge of the content of your conversation. Fogging allows you to receive criticism with confidence, and without becoming angry or defensive.

EXAMPLE: *"You're probably right. I did make a mistake that time."*

Negative Inquiry

This technique allows you to prompt the other person for negative information. If the information is helpful, then a compromise can be achieved. If the information is being used as a form of manipulation, it allows you to exhaust the attempts at manipulation while remaining calm.

EXAMPLE: *"I don't understand what you mean by _____. Could you explain a little further?"*

Self Disclosure

This is a skill that allows you to acknowledge your own shortcomings, while at the same time focusing also on your positive qualities. This is an open invitation to the other person to discuss how they view the situation, while at the same time allowing you the opportunity to state how you feel about it.

EXAMPLE: *"I'd really like to understand how you feel about the situation. I know I may have made some mistakes in the past, and I'm willing to discuss how you feel about that."*

Workable Compromise

In any conversation where there is disagreement, there are some areas in which you may be willing to compromise, and there are other areas in which you are not willing to compromise. An issue in which you are willing to negotiate is a 'Compromise' issue. An area in which you are not willing to negotiate is a 'Core' issue. The way to tell the difference between a Core issue and a Compromise issue is to ask yourself, "Will my own feelings of self-respect be compromised if I give in on this issue?"

If the end goal requires you to sacrifice your own sense of self-worth, then it is a Core issue, and you should not compromise in that area.

EXAMPLE: *"I'd be willing to _____, if you'd be willing to _____."*