

Cross-Culture Cafe

ASSERTIVE AND TACTFUL COMMUNICATION

www.crossculturecafe.com



READ



CONNECT



AUDIO



WATCH



DISCUSS



APPLY

CONNECT



DO YOU KNOW HOW TO GREET A FOREIGN FRIEND?



AFTER THIS TRAINING, YOU WILL...



be able to recognize passive-aggressive behavior and discern between being aggressive and being assertive;



understand the importance of 'netiquette' in business;



be able to recognize key differences in communication between Western and Eastern cultures.



WATCH



PASSIVE-AGGRESSIVE?

WATCH THE FOLLOWING VIDEO TO LEARN ABOUT EXAMPLES OF PASSIVE-AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOR.
WHAT EXAMPLES OF PASSIVE-AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOR DID YOU HEAR?



What do you think of the advice at the end of the video? Do you think it is effective?

VOCABULARY



ASSERTIVE VS. AGGRESSIVE

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN BEING ASSERTIVE, AGGRESSIVE, AND PASSIVE?

- Being overly confrontational and bullying.
- Being clear and concise, stating facts, and letting your point of view be known without being overly confrontational.
- Accepting or allowing what happens or what others do, without active response or resistance.

Assertive is the middle ground between aggressive and passive.



DISCUSS



GETTING STRAIGHT TO THE POINT

DISCUSS THE FOLLOWING PHRASES FOR BEING ASSERTIVE AND GIVE EXAMPLES.

My point is...

Long story short,...

Let me get straight to the point...

I'm sorry to tell you, but...

The bottom line is...

We have a lot to get through...

Let's tie up any remaining loose ends...

Let's stick to the agenda...

Let's get the ball rolling...

We're already running late. Let's make a start without them...



APPLY



HOW WILL YOU RESPOND?

COMPLETE THE SENTENCES USING THE PHRASES FROM THE PREVIOUS SLIDE.

- We introduced a new system _____ the old one wasn't efficient.
- Your team has achieved excellent results, _____ we've decided to give you all a bonus.
- Too many people are arriving late for work. _____ there aren't enough staff on duty early in the morning.
- We have decided to start a gym club in the company _____ staff can keep fit.
- _____ our weak position, we can't increase salaries.
- _____ celebrate our 100th anniversary, the directors have decided to give all staff an extra day's holiday.



APPLY



HOW WILL YOU RESPOND?

WHICH IS THE ASSERTIVE, AGGRESSIVE AND PASSIVE RESPONSE TO THESE SCENARIOS?

Scenario 1: The colleague you have been assigned to for a project is often late to meetings and doesn't seem to do his share of the work. He just showed up 20 minutes late for your meeting again. What do you do?

“Hi, let me show you what I’ve been working on so far”
(while you’re actually thinking: once again, I’m doing all
the work!)

Late again?! I wish I hadn’t gotten paired with someone
so irresponsible!

Before we start, I’d like to talk to you about our meetings.
I have been irritated when we don’t start on time. We
were supposed to meet at 8:30 and now it’s 8:50. Can we
discuss this, so that we can work well together?



APPLY



HOW WILL YOU RESPOND?

WHICH IS THE ASSERTIVE, AGGRESSIVE AND PASSIVE RESPONSE TO THESE SCENARIOS?

Scenario 2: Your secretary is driving you up a wall—she never cleans up her mess, she uses your things without asking, and often takes breaks without asking you first. What do you do?

_____ You're such an inconsiderate person to leave your mess all over the place! I wish I had a different secretary!"

_____ I was hoping we could talk about your work attitude. I get irritated when you don't clean up your mess and take breaks without asking. Maybe we could come up with a reasonable solution together."

_____ Say nothing, but get upset when you clean up her mess.



DISCUSS



WHAT'S WRONG WITH THIS EMAIL?

READ THE FOLLOWING EMAIL BELOW. WHAT DO YOU THINK THE ISSUE IS HERE?

Dear EVERYONE,

Someone took my sandwich from the break room refrigerator today. From now on, all employees, please label your items in the fridge with a name card so that NO ONE steals someone else's food. I had to go to the convenience store across the street to buy another sandwich. It's REALLY inconsiderate to take someone else's food or drinks without asking, and this may reflect poorly on your character. We are all adults here. You can find the labels next to the fridge to help keep everyone honest.

How do you think this issue could have been handled better?



AUDIO



BUSINESS NETIQUETTE

LISTEN TO THE RECORDING AND ANSWER THE QUESTIONS.

- How has our way of communicating with people changed over the past couple of years?
- What advantages are there if you possess good communication skills?



DISCUSS



EXCUSE ME?!

CAN YOU UNDERSTAND THIS EMAIL MESSAGE?

From: Howard
Sent: February 23, 11:16 AM
To: Betty
Subject: F2F Mtg Req

Am req a F2F w/ u ITNF, 2 discuss upcoming PRs. R U available Mon @ 3? Pls lv a msg on my vm, as I w/b OOO. L8R, H

Write down how you would improve this message.



DISCUSS



EAST VS. WEST

In most Western countries, being assertive is a positive trait as people believe it's easier getting straight to the point and being direct than implying things or talking around the problem. The latter is considered very time consuming and tiring.

What differences do you know between Western culture and your culture with regards to communication and being assertive?



DISCUSS



EAST VS. WEST

WHAT'S THE PROBLEM IN THE NEXT THREE SCENARIOS?

American 1: We're going to the Orange Bowl in Miami this weekend.

American 2: What fun! I wish I were going to the game with you. How long are you going to be there? (If she wants a ride, she will ask.)

American 1: Three days. By the way, we may need a ride to the airport. Do you think you can take us?

American 2: Sure. What time?

American 1: 10:30 p.m. this coming Saturday.

American 2: All right. No problem.



DISCUSS



EAST VS. WEST

Chinese 1: We're going to the Orange Bowl in Miami this weekend.

Chinese 2: What fun! I wish I was going to the game with you. How long are you going to be there?

Chinese 1: Three days. (I hope she'll offer me a ride to the airport.)

Chinese 2: (She may want me to give her a ride.) Do you need a ride to the airport? I'll take you.

Chinese 1: Are you sure it's not too much trouble?

Chinese 2: It's no trouble at all.



DISCUSS



EAST VS. WEST

Chinese: We're going to the Orange Bowl in Miami this weekend.

American: What fun! I wish I were going to the game with you. How long are you going to be there? **(If she wants a ride, she will ask.)**

Chinese: Three days. **(I hope she'll offer me a ride to the airport.)**

American: **(Everything is fine with her.)** Well, have a great time.

Chinese: **(If she had wanted to give me a ride, she would have offered it. I'd better ask somebody else.)** Thanks. I'll see you when I get back.

How can you avoid uncomfortable situations like these when dealing with foreign clients or traveling abroad?



APPLY



DIFFICULT SITUATIONS

WHAT WOULD YOU SAY TO THE FOLLOWING PEOPLE? USE KEY LANGUAGE.

- One of your managers has been leaving you out of the loop in important emails.
- You have an employee who always says negative things about you, your department or company, but he always says these things within earshot - never to your face.
- You have to end a business agreement with a long-term partner because of a recent pattern of missed deadlines and poor decisions on the part of this business partner.
- You have to fire an employee who you know has revealed confidential information to one of your company's competitors.
- You have to tell a faithful employee that he cannot get a promotion this year. Tell him that you may offer him a promotion next year if certain goals are met.



APPLY



SUMMARY

- Give examples for aggressive, passive and assertive communication.
- What is netiquette? Give examples.
- What are some key differences between Eastern and Western countries in how they communicate?



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FOR MORE TRAINING MATERIALS, PLEASE SUBSCRIBE TO MY NEWSLETTER AND CHECK OUT
WWW.CROSSCULTURECAFE.COM FOR MORE CROSS-CULTURAL AND BUSINESS ENGLISH
TRAINING MATERIALS FOR ESL LEARNERS!

Slide 5

TALK TO YOUR PARTNER OR TRAINER - WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN BEING ASSERTIVE, AGGRESSIVE, AND PASSIVE?

_____ - Being overly confrontational and bullying.

_____ - Being clear and concise, stating facts, and letting your point of view be known without being overly confrontational.

_____ - accepting or allowing what happens or what others do, without active response or resistance.

Slide 6

HERE ARE SOME KEY PHRASES / SENTENCES FOR BEING ASSERTIVE

My point is...

Long story short,...

Let me get straight to the point...

I'm sorry to tell you, but...

The bottom line is...

Let's make a start without them.

We have a lot to get through.

Let's see where we are.

Let's work out what we still need to do.

Let's tie up any remaining loose ends = resolve any remaining small problems

Let's please stick to the agenda.

Let's get the ball rolling.

Slide 7

COMPLETE THE SENTENCES USING THE PHRASES FROM THE PREVIOUS SLIDE.

- We introduced a new system _____ the old one wasn't efficient.
- Your team has achieved excellent results, _____ we've decided to give you all a bonus.
- Too many people are arriving late for work. _____ there aren't enough staff on duty early in the morning.
- We have decided to start a gym club in the company _____ staff can keep fit.
- _____ our weak position, we can't increase salaries.
- _____ celebrate our 100th anniversary, the directors have decided to give all staff an extra day's holiday.

Slides 8 and 9 WHICH IS THE ASSERTIVE, AGGRESSIVE AND PASSIVE RESPONSE TO THESE SCENARIOS?

Scenario 1: The colleague you have been assigned for a project is often late to meetings and doesn't seem to do his share of the work. He just showed up 20 minutes late for your meeting again. What do you do?

_____ "Hi, let me show you what I've been working on so far" (while you're actually thinking: once again, I'm doing all the work!)

_____ Late again?! I wish I hadn't gotten paired with someone so irresponsible!

_____ Before we start, I'd like to talk to you about our meetings. I have been irritated when we don't start on time. We were supposed to meet at 8:30 and now it's 8:50. Can we discuss this, so that we can work well together?

Slides 8 and 9

WHICH IS THE ASSERTIVE, AGGRESSIVE AND PASSIVE RESPONSE TO THESE SCENARIOS?

Scenario 2: Your secretary is driving you up a wall—she never cleans up her mess, she uses your things without asking, and often takes breaks without asking you first. What do you do?

_____ “You’re such an inconsiderate person to leave your mess all over the place! I wish I had a different secretary!”

_____ “I was hoping we could talk about your work attitude. I get irritated when you don’t clean up your mess and take breaks without asking. Maybe we could come up with a reasonable solution together.”

_____ Say nothing, but get upset when you clean up her mess.

Slide 10

WHAT’S WRONG WITH THIS EMAIL?

Read the following email below. What do you think the issue is here?

How do you think this issue could have been handled better?

Dear EVERYONE,

Someone took my sandwich from the break room refrigerator today. From now on, all employees, please label your items in the fridge with a name card so that NO ONE steals someone else’s food. I had to go to the convenience store across the street to buy another

sandwich. It’s REALLY inconsiderate to take someone else’s food or drinks without asking, and this may reflect poorly on your character. We are all adults here. You can find the labels next to the fridge to help keep everyone honest.

Many offices started "business casual" attire in the workplace in the 1990's; this meant no more suits, or ties. Unfortunately, numerous business people also took on a business casual attitude in their business communications.

E-mail is mostly the first communication you have with a potential client. It hasn't changed that first impressions are the most important. If you had a meeting with someone looking scruffy, and who provided you with wrong product information, most likely you wouldn't end up doing business with them. Yet, this same "scruffiness" appears in business communications every single day!

Spelling, punctuation and grammar do count. So, don't be in such a hurry to send your message that you don't make time to re-read it. Once you hit the "send" button, there is no way to change your message.

While you may think you're being funny, keep in mind that there is no way for the recipient to know the "tone" that you intended for your message. You may think you're being brief and concise, but they might think you're being impolite. Nowadays, many people use "emoticons" to try to express emotions. Sending a smiley is OK when the recipient is your friend; however, it's not OK when you're emailing with a CEO.

But something even worse than emoticons is "Internet slang" - that is, the abbreviation of many words. Most people know what "FYI" means, but what about AFAIK and NOOB? So don't use Internet slang unless you are absolutely certain the recipient understands what you mean.

When we communicated with our friends when we were young, we were polite and still used courtesies. This basic politeness has basically been forgotten. Don't you think, it is much better to say: "It was a pleasure meeting you yesterday. I enjoyed learning about your business and as you requested, I am sending you the product information. I'll follow-up with you in a couple of days to answer any questions you may have." More than often, today's communication is something like : "Here's the info. Call me if you have questions." While both statements essentially convey the same information, who would you rather do business with if this was the first communication you had with a company about their product?

So don't forget, no matter what form of communication you use, take the time to make sure it is polite and correct, as you are showing a certain level of respect for your recipient and it will determine your company's image and success.

Slide 12

EXCUSE ME?!

WRITE DOWN HOW YOU WOULD IMPROVE THIS MESSAGE.

From: Howard
Sent: February 23, 11:16 AM
To: Betty
Subject: F2F Mtg Req

Am req a F2F w/ u ITNF, 2 discuss upcoming PRs. R U available Mon @ 3? Pls lv a msg on my vm, as I w/b OOO. L8R, H

Slide 17

DIFFICULT SITUATIONS

WHAT WOULD YOU SAY TO THE FOLLOWING PEOPLE? USE KEY LANGUAGE.

- One of your managers has been leaving you out of the loop in important emails.
- You have an employee who always says negative things about you, your department or company, but he always says these things within earshot - never to your face.
- You have to end a business agreement with a long-term partner because of a recent pattern of missed deadlines and poor decisions on the part of this business partner.
- You have to fire an employee who you know has revealed confidential information to one of your company's competitors.
- You have to tell a faithful employee that he cannot get a promotion this year. Tell him that you may offer him a promotion next year if certain goals are met.