

Assertion Self-Analysis

To test your assertiveness, there are some typical situations below. Be completely honest with yourself and write down how you would naturally react in each situation.

1. You are in a restaurant and order a hot soup, but it is served to you not very warm. You would:
 - a. Accept it without comment because you sometimes like it lukewarm anyway.
 - b. Angrily refuse the soup and insist on seeing the manager to complain about the poor service.
 - c. Call the waiter and indicate you ordered your soup hot and would like your soup to be heated to your requirements.

2. You are a customer waiting in queue to be served in your busy lunch hour. Suddenly, an old lady steps in line ahead of you and claims that she is in a hurry. You would:
 - a. Let her stay in front of you since she is already in line and it would be rude to speak out.
 - b. Pull her out of line and, in a loud and angry manner make her go to the back.
 - c. Calmly indicate to her that you are also in a hurry and have queued, then point out where it begins.

3. After walking out of a store where you purchased some items you discover you were shortchanged by R10. You would:
 - a. Let it go since you are already out of the store and have no proof you were shortchanged. After all it's only R10.
 - b. Go to the manager and argue that the assistant shortchanged you, then demand the proper change.
 - c. Return to the clerk and inform him/her of the error.

4. You are in a group discussion at work which includes your boss. A colleague asks you a question about your work, but you don't know the answer. You would:
 - a. Give your colleague a false, but reasonable answer so your boss will think you are on top of things.
 - b. Do not answer but attack your colleague by asking a question you know he/she could not answer.
 - c. Indicate to your colleague you are unsure just now but offer to give him/her the information later.

5. You are in the middle of watching your favourite TV program when your partner asks you for a non-urgent favour that could mean missing the rest of the show. You would:
 - a. Do the favour as quickly as possible, then return to the program to finish watching what is left of it.
 - b. Say "No way, I'm not missing this. You should have asked me earlier." then finish watching your program.
 - c. Ask if it can wait until the program is over and, if so, do it then.

6. A friend drops into your office to say hello and catch up on the latest office gossip but is staying too long preventing you from finishing an important project. Your friend is unaware that he is interrupting your work. You would:
- Let him stay because you don't want to upset him. Then you would finish your work at home that evening.
 - Tell the person to stop bothering you and to get out.
 - Explain your need to finish your work and request that he/she visit another time.

SCORE INTERPRETATION KEY

In general, there are three broad styles of interpersonal behaviour. These are:

- Passive,
- Aggressive
- Assertive.

If you chose mostly "a" – these are representative of the **Passive style**.

If you chose mostly "b" – these are representative of the **Aggressive style**.

If you chose mostly "c" – these are representative of the **Assertive style**.

- The **Passive style** of interpersonal behaviour is characterised by inaction and indecision. People using this style tend to be easy to get along with and pleasant, but unwilling to stand up for their rights, for fear of offending others. They are very uncomfortable expressing anger and usually deny or suppress this feeling should it occur. As a result, resentment can easily build under the surface producing stress and tension.
- The **Aggressive style** is characterised by intrusiveness. People who use this style tend to go after what they want and are unconcerned about how this will affect others. Their angry, dominating manner tends to alienate people who, in time, may seek to oppose them. Aggressive individuals are usually suspicious of others and are often on the look-out for infractions or violations of their rights. Thus, the Aggressive style produces stress and prohibits the development of close, trusting, and caring interpersonal relationships.
- The **Assertive style** is characterised by both fairness and strength. Assertive individuals stand up for their rights and remain sensitive to the rights of others. People who choose this style are usually relaxed and easygoing and are honest about their feelings. This is the best style for minimising stress and maintaining long-standing intimate relationships.