

Interpersonal Effectiveness Skills

Learning to get along with others while also asserting your own needs is essential to healthy relationships. It can be difficult to balance your own needs and the needs of others. How can you get what you need without being aggressive or neglecting of the needs of others? There are three sets of skills you will learn to help achieve this goal: objective effectiveness, relationship effectiveness, and self-respect effectiveness.

Objective Effectiveness (D.E.A.R. M.A.N.)

What is the goal of an interaction? *Objective effectiveness* is about getting what you want out of a situation. The acronym D.E.A.R. M.A.N. will remind you how to clearly express your needs or desires.

Describe	Describe the situation <i>objectively</i> . This means sticking to the facts by avoiding opinion and interpretation. The goal is to get everyone on the same page.
Express	Let others know how a situation makes you feel by clearly expressing your feelings. Don't expect others to read your mind. Try using this line: "I feel ___ because ___."
Assert	Don't beat around the bush—say what you need to say. <i>Don't say:</i> "Oh, well, I don't know if I can cook tonight or not." <i>Do say:</i> "I won't be able to cook because I'm working late."
Reinforce	Reward people who respond well, and reinforce why your desired outcome is positive. This can be as simple as a smile and a "thank you".
Mindful	Don't forget the objective of the interaction. It can be easy to get sidetracked into harmful arguments and lose focus.
Appear	Appear confident. Consider your posture, tone, eye contact, and body language.
Negotiate	No one can have everything they want out of an interaction all the time. Be open to negotiation. <i>Do say:</i> "If you wash the dishes, I'll put them away."

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Relationship Effectiveness (G.I.V.E.)

Relationships aren't only about getting what we need—they're also about the other person. The acronym *G.I.V.E.* will help you achieve *relationship effectiveness* by fostering positive interactions.

Gentle	Don't attack, threaten or express judgment during your interactions. Accept the occasional "no" for your requests.
Interested	Show interest by listening to the other person without interrupting.
Validate	Be outwardly validating to the other person's thoughts and feelings. Acknowledge their feelings, recognize when your requests are demanding, and respect their opinions.
Easy	Have an easy attitude. Try to smile and act lighthearted.

Self-Respect Effectiveness (F.A.S.T.)

Sometimes in relationships you might find yourself betraying your own values and beliefs to receive approval or to get what you want. The acronym *F.A.S.T.* will help you achieve *self-respect effectiveness*.

Fair	Be fair. Not only to others, but also to yourself.
Apologies	Don't apologize unless it's warranted. Don't apologize for making a request, having an opinion, or disagreeing.
Stick to Values	Don't compromise your values just to be liked or to get what you want. Stand up for what you believe in.
Truthful	Avoid dishonesty such as exaggeration, acting helpless as a form of manipulation, or outright lying.