



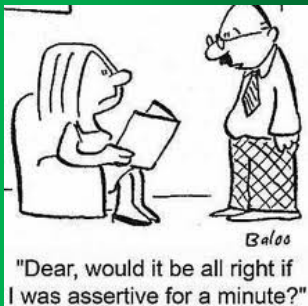
# Rosario Counseling & Associates

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Angela Mills, LPC

*"The more important the relationship is to you, the more important it is to be assertive."*



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## Assertiveness

Growing up, many are taught to be "pleasers", to avoid "making waves" or speaking up when someone says or does something they don't like. They become **passive**, failing to communicate what they know to be right and true.

On the other hand, others are modeled and taught **aggressive** behaviors, expressing their rights at the expense of another or forcibly denying the rights of others. Shout, push, growl, intimidate... let others know you are in control and demand to be heard.

Instead of passivity and aggression, **assertiveness** is an essential life skill. Assertiveness is the ability to honestly express your opinions, feelings, attitudes, and rights, without undue anxiety, in a way that doesn't infringe on the rights of others.

Why is assertiveness important? If you don't know how to be assertive, you might experience:

- Depression- Anger turned inward, a sense of being helpless, hopeless, or having no control over your life.
- Resentment- Anger at others for manipulating or taking advantage of you.
- Frustration- Why did I allow this to happen?
- Temper- You become aggressive because of the build up of anger unexpressed.

The more important the relationship is to you, the more important it is to be assertive. Assertive behaviors and communication open the door for others to know and understand your values, perspective, and boundaries. Being assertive communicates a value and respect for oneself, a confidence in being who you are.

What are some ways you can be effectively assertive?

- Use assertive body language- face the other person, use a pleasant, calm tone with a serious facial expression.
- Use "I" statements- Focus on the problem you're having and not on accusing or blaming another person. i.e. "I want...", "I need...", "I would prefer...", "I'm upset about..." Don't minimize these statements with "is that o-kay with you?" or "do you mind?"
- Express ownership of your thoughts, feelings, and opinions. "I get angry when you don't let me know you're going to be late."
- Learn to make requests instead of demands. "I'd like to make a request. It would help me if you \_\_\_\_\_."

At Rosario Counseling, we strive to help our patients grow in a greater understanding of who they are as well as develop confidence and skills to have deep, healthy relationships with others. When you use direct, open, and honest communication in relationships, you feel more confident, gain respect from others, and live a happier, fulfilled life.

[www.mindtools.com/pages/article/Assertiveness.htm](http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/Assertiveness.htm)

Jolla, La. *Assertiveness*. Regents of the University of California. 2013.

**If you or someone you know would like to improve your assertiveness skills, please call us at (919) 649-5882. One of our caring, experienced therapists can help.**