

Legendary Love. Module 2. Lesson 11.

Four Ways of Communicating

In the last lesson, you explored the fascinating world about natural differences in the ways that people think, feel, notice social cues, and relate to the world. These differences affect the way they communicate. If you've completed the reflection exercises, you've discovered how it applies to you.

The way you communicate is the topic of this lesson. You'll learn about four basic communication styles and when to use them.

A Word on Cultural Differences

In the last three lessons, you learned about personal differences in temperaments and how that affects the way people relate to their world. We've not talked about cultural differences. That's an entirely different topic.

It's important to know that there are differences. For instance, in Western cultures, people are taught to look each other in the eye when speaking. If you don't, you're thought to be dishonest or not paying attention.

In Eastern cultures, it's considered rude to look people in the eye. Not looking people in the eye is considered a sign of respect and of humility. Keep this in mind if you're speaking to someone from a different culture.

Four Ways to Communicate and When to Use Them

If you've read about different communication styles, you've probably read the words "healthy" and "unhealthy" to describe particular ways of communicating. Rather than using those words, let's use the terms "appropriate" and "inappropriate." **An appropriate communication style achieves its goal in the given situation.**

Passive: Not Saying What's on Your Mind

When you sit back and don't express your opinions, desires, or needs, you're being passive. You may not get what you want, but you also don't rock the boat.

There are times when it's appropriate to be passive:

Legendary Love. Module 2. Lesson 11.

1. **You're not interested in others knowing your opinion.** Some people enjoy gathering information and learning about others.
2. **When the time just isn't right.** Certain situations may require you wait until another time to express yourself. For example, if your partner is having a bad day, you may want to hold off on relating bad news. Just ensure you do have that conversation.
3. **Expressing yourself is dangerous.** You don't want to escalate the situation. Being passive may prevent a bad situation from getting worse.

Being passive in your communication often causes challenges, such as:

1. **If you don't speak up, others won't know what you think or want.**
 - Your partner may become frustrated because they don't know what's important to you. This can negatively affect emotional intimacy.
 - Your partner may feel unappreciated or unimportant because they feel that you're not expressing yourself because you don't trust them.
2. **When you don't stand up for yourself, others may take advantage of you.**
 - When you project yourself as being unimportant, other people, even your partner, may think less of your needs and focus on their needs.
 - **When you're passive most of the time, you reinforce within you that you aren't important.** This makes it more difficult for you to set healthy boundaries.
3. **Standing up for yourself is a skill. It's also a muscle you need to exercise.**
 - When you're reluctant to stand up for yourself, fear and anxiety can prevent you from taking care of yourself.

Legendary Love. Module 2. Lesson 11.

Aggressive: This Is the Way It Is

When you're aggressive in stating your needs or opinions, you do so in such a way that leaves no room for people to express their needs or opinions. You give off an energy which says you don't care about others.

There are times you want to express yourself in such a way that you don't care about what the other person wants:

1. **If someone is taking advantage of you, you want to tell them to stop in a no-nonsense way.** People who take advantage of others rarely listen unless your message is given in an aggressive manner.
 - You may need to speak aggressively to your partner if you feel they aren't paying attention to your needs.
2. **When confronting a bully, you need to speak in an aggressive manner.** Bullies act from a place of insecurity and fear.
 - Of course, it's important to consider the bully's reaction to you. You wouldn't want to be aggressive with someone who will respond in a physically aggressive manner.

Passive Aggression: The Passive Way to Being Hostile

If you're using the passive aggressive style, you're expressing your hostility without seeming to.

If you see some of the following actions in your relationship, it's time to have a heart-to-heart talk with your partner:

1. **Saying you'll do something but "forgetting."** This is a common, and sometimes unconscious, passive-aggressive behavior.
2. **Refusing to speak when angry, also known as "the cold shoulder."** This behavior increases feelings of separation.

Legendary Love. Module 2. Lesson 11.

3. **Using sarcasm to mock or ridicule.** Although sarcasm can sometimes be funny, when used regularly it demonstrates hostility or a lack of respect for the individual.
4. **Any of the aggressive characteristics hidden in such a way that it's difficult to confront, such as:**
 - Talking behind your partner's back
 - Mumbling so they can hear your voice but not your words

Assertive: Letting People Know What You Want

Being assertive in your communication is the most effective way to express your needs and opinions. The next lesson is about being assertive in your communication style.

Some characteristics of the assertive style are:

1. Telling people in a respectful and direct manner what you want them to know
2. Stating calmly what you need
3. Expressing your opinion without putting anyone down

Summary

In this lesson you've learned about the four communication styles of Passive, Aggressive, Passive-Aggressive, and Assertive. In the next lesson you'll learn a powerful method of communicating in an assertive manner with your partner.

Before you move on, please answer the following reflection questions to learn how this lesson applies to you.

Reflection

1. List five times you've used the Passive communication style. Was this effective?

Legendary Love. Module 2. Lesson 11.

2. List five times you've used the Aggressive communication style. Was this effective?
3. List five times you've used the Passive-Aggressive communication style. Was this effective in communicating your needs?
4. List five times you've used the Assertive communication style. Was this effective?