




# Effective Communication & Problem Solving





## Effective Communication & Problem-Solving

Involve multiple factors:

- Empathy
- Assertiveness
- Agreement on outcome
- Common language



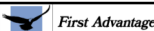
## Agreement On Outcome



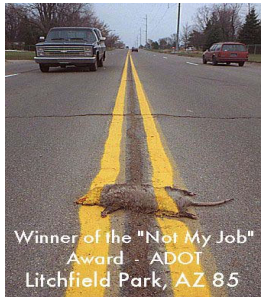


## Common Language






## Do You Think This Is What The Boss Wanted?

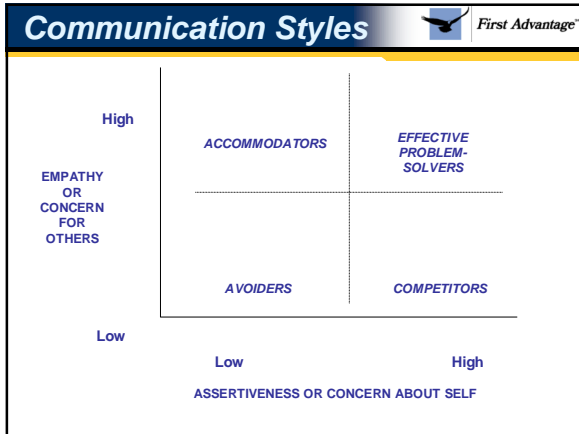


Winner of the "Not My Job"  
Award - ADOT  
Litchfield Park, AZ 85

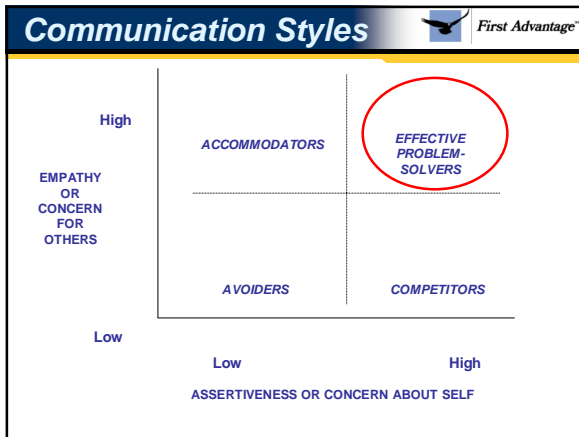


## Empathy & Assertiveness Defined

- **EMPATHY**
  - *Honoring the other person*
  - *Demonstrating an understanding of the other person's perspective, interests & needs to the other person's satisfaction*
- **ASSERTIVENESS**
  - *Speaking for self*
  - *Identifying and taking action on our own perspective, interests & needs*



- ### Outcomes Of Styles
- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <p><u>Competing</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Substantial assertion</li> <li>Little empathy</li> </ul> | <p><u>Accommodating</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Substantial empathy</li> <li>Little assertiveness</li> </ul>             |
| <p><u>Avoiding</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Low empathy</li> <li>Low assertiveness</li> </ul>         | <p><u>Problem-Solver</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Well-developed assertiveness</li> <li>Well-developed empathy</li> </ul> |



### Empathy

Exercise 1:  
The "I's" Have It!

- ### Empathy
- Put yourself in the other person's mindset
  - Identify their perspective
  - Appreciate the value of their feelings and what they have to say
- 

- ### Developing Empathic Skills
- Mirroring
    - Repeat back what the other person said to confirm to their satisfaction
      - "I heard you say"
      - "If I am hearing you correctly"
  - Validate
    - Let the other person know you understand. Does not mean you agree.
      - "From your perspective, it makes sense"
      - "I can see how you came to that conclusion"

## Developing Empathic Skills

- Reflecting
  - Summarizes and communicates empathy
    - “It sounds like you feel...”
    - “It must be difficult for you to see my position”



## Assertiveness

- Make some room for my perspective
- Identify my value, needs & interests
- Appreciate the value of what I have to say



## Developing Assertiveness Skills

- Use “I/me” statements, not “you” statements
  - “I notice that...”
  - “It is important to me that ...”
- Share your experience as 1 perspective, not as the truth or the only valid view
  - “My opinion of that is ...”
  - “it made me think...”
- Avoid generalizations; give specific examples

## Developing Assertiveness Skills

- Don't apologize for your feelings or thoughts
  - “I feel.....”
  - “My thoughts on the subject are...”
- State your wishes & needs
  - “My goal is to ...”
  - “i would prefer that ...”
  - “i need the following to happen ...”
- Request specific behaviors & responses
  - “I need to see the project completed by ...”
  - “i would prefer that meetings focus on ...”

## Conflict Perpetuating Behaviors

- Interrupting
- Showing disinterest
- Verbal barbs
- Put-downs & insults
- Personality attacks
- Complaining
- Focusing on the past
- Asking accusing questions
- Refusing to compromise
- Overuse of “should” language
- Threatening to break off negotiations



## Conflict Perpetuating Behaviors

- Breaking confidences
- Jumping to conclusions
- Personalizing
- Bragging/showing off
- Telling lies
- Being manipulative
- Making others feel guilty
- Ridiculing/being sarcastic

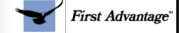


## Assertive vs. Aggressive



- There are 6 scenarios
- After each example,
  - Write "A+" if the situation was assertive
  - Write "A-" if the situation was aggressive

## Answers to Exercise



#1	-
#2	+
#3	+
#4	-
#5	-
#6	+

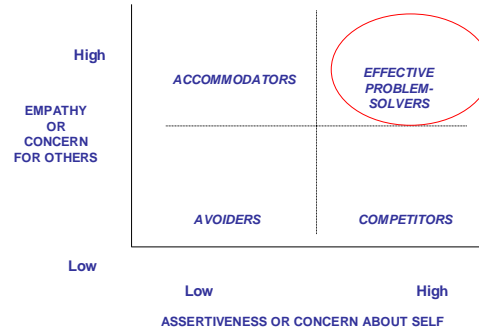
## Summary



Effective communication is multi-faceted & involves the following skills and behaviors:

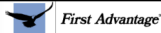
- Agreement on outcome-make sure you both are working on the same goal
- Common language-clarify and do not assume that the other person understands you
- A balance of empathy and assertiveness

## Summary



The goal is to reach high assertiveness/high empathy quadrant

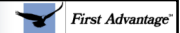
## Summary



If things are not going as planned, step back and gauge your emotional response and the emotional response of the other party. Then adjust accordingly



## Resources



- **Getting to Yes**, Roger Fisher and William Ury/Penguin Books/1992
- **Responsible Assertive Behavior: Cognitive/Behavioral Procedures for Trainers**, Arthur J. Lange, Patricia Jakubowski/Research Press/March 1976
- **The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People**, Stephen R. Covey, Simon & Schuster, 1989
- **Giving and Receiving Criticism**, video/Business Advantage, 1999
- **Northey, Margot. Impact: A Guide to Business Communication**, 4th edition. Scarborough, Ont: Prentiss-Hall & Bacon, 1998.

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