Philosophies of assertiveness

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PHILOSOPHIES OF ASSERTIVENESS

by

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Thanks to all who have had the courage and caring to share with me experiences, hopes, ideas, peaks and valleys.

Thanks to all who have taken my dreams seriously, who have given me criticism, support, and positive expectations, as well as a model to follow.

Where Do We Go From Here

Well, son, I'll tell you:
Life for me ain't been no crystal stair.
It's had tacks in it,
And splinters,
And boards torn up.
And places with no carpet on the floor---
Bare.
But all the time
I'se been-a-climbin' on,
And reachin' landin's,
And turnin' corners,
And sometimes goin' in the dark
Where there a in't been no light.
So, boy, don't you turn back.
Don't you set down on the steps
'Cause you finds it kinder hard,
Don't you fall now---
For I'se still goin', honey,
I'se still climbin',
And life for me ain't been no crystal stair.
(King, 1967, p. 143)
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This paper explores the theoretical background and definitions of assertiveness and examines the philosophical assumptions of assertiveness. Then, the relationship of personal growth to assertiveness will be examined. Finally, communication techniques will be discussed in reference to enhancing one's personal growth through being assertive.

I. Assertiveness: Theoretical Background and Definition

Initial theoretical background influencing assertiveness can be traced back to the work of Ivan Pavlov. Pavlov attempted to determine the characteristics of the nervous system that made it possible for animals and people to adjust adaptively to changing conditions in the environment. He postulated that there are two aspects of the nervous system: (1) inherited, and (2) conditioned (Fensterheim and Baer, 1975, p. 22).

By inherited characteristics Pavlov recognized that biological forces influence sensitivity to stimuli, the level of energy, and the tendency for various moods, like depression and aggressiveness. He demonstrated that these inherited characteristics can be modified, affected, and changed through life experiences.

Pavlov's finding was that a person needs an active relationship with his environment. He indicated that changes in the environment need corresponding changes in the nervous system. The ability to learn to adapt to one's environment Pavlov termed a "conditioned reflex".

Two major processes that influence the ability to form conditioned responses are those of "excitation" and "inhibition". In an excitatory
state, the brain process has a heightened activity which facilitates the formation of new conditioned responses. In the inhibitory state there is a dampening process which decreases brain activity and the ability to formulate new conditioned responses.

Salter (1949), whom many theorists consider as the founder of behavioral therapy, began using the Pavlovian concepts of "excitation" and "inhibition" to treat psychological disorders. He postulated that people are action-oriented and emotionally free when excitatory processes dominate inhibitory processes. Salter views psychological health as the proper balance of these two processes.

Wolpe (1958) proposed that the term "assertiveness" be used in place of the term "excitation". He defined assertiveness as the "outward expression of practically all feelings other than anxiety." Wolpe (1958, 1969) indicates that anxiety inhibits interpersonal responsiveness. He postulates that a person knows what he should do but is "blocked" from full expression because of his anxiety. In facilitating assertiveness, Wolpe is attempting to establish an "excitory" dominance over "inhibitory" processes by restricting the anxiety that blocks the "excitory" processes.

Lazarus (1971), utilizing the theoretical background of Pavlov, Salter, and Wolpe, further developed the concept of assertiveness. He defines assertiveness as "emotional freedom". In training a person to be "emotionally free", Lazarus emphasizes the "recognition and appropriate expression of each and every affective state" (Lazarus, 1971, p. 116). He refers to "assertive behavior" as primarily denotative of only that aspect of assertiveness concerned with standing up for one's
rights. Standing up for one's rights involves:

...(1) knowing your rights; (2) doing something about it; and (3) doing this within the framework of striving for emotional freedom. (Fensterheim and Baer, 1975, p. 25)

Lazarus (1971) indicates that insight into affective states isn't enough. In addition to recognizing and being in touch with emotions, he states that a person needs to learn to express their feelings in a "mature and honest" fashion.

Current writings view assertive behaviors mostly in terms of being a "social skill" (Alberti and Emmons, 1975; Austin and Phelps, 1975; Smith, 1975; and Spector, 1973). Spector (1973), for example, delineates assertiveness as a social skill that is related to other social skills. She indicates that an assertive response may include elements from other related social skill areas. The following diagram depicts Spector's (1973) analysis of this relationship. Confrontation in

Fig. 1. Relationship of Assertive Skills to Other Social Skills.
assertion involves statements which accurately point out discrepancies in another person's behavior. The empathetic component involves the recognition and respect of another's human value. The persuasive component is concerned with defending one's point of view so that others will at least accept it as being serious. An example of an assertive message incorporating these components is in the following dialogue:

   Husband: You're selfish!
   Wife: I'm not selfish (confrontation). I show that I care for you in many ways. I do respect you (empathy). But what you want is unreasonable (confrontation and persuasion). I have a right to have my feelings considered (persuasion).

   Fensterheim and Baer (1975) have helped to further clarify and extend the goals of assertiveness. Unlike the previous theoreticians, Fensterheim and Baer don't limit assertiveness to a social skill. They perceive of assertiveness directed at the self as synonymous with "self-control". Self-control is viewed as a key to the entire assertive process, since a person in control of himself can act towards himself and others in a manner he is able to respect and trust.

   Like the previous theoreticians, Fensterheim and Baer (1975) view the assertive person as having an active approach to life. The assertive person is viewed as being able to communicate openly, directly, honestly, spontaneously, and appropriately with others. They view the assertive person as being able to confidently reveal himself. In revealing himself the assertive person can say: "This is me. This is what I feel, think, and want." (Fensterheim and Baer, 1975, p. 20).
Most of the definitions of assertiveness stress a behavioral objective and approach to enhancing one's self-concept. The theory is that by changing one's behavior and observing that change, one can enhance his self-concept.

Another approach in defining assertive stresses a personal growth objective that may or may not include the use of assertive behaviors. In other words, this approach indicates that a person need not exhibit assertive behaviors to enhance or maintain one's self-concept or level of personal growth, even though in some instances assertive behaviors may be helpful.

In terms of this paper, assertiveness will refer to "being", or "personal growth" as a goal and definition, recognizing a difference, but a possible interrelationship of assertive behavior and "being".
II. Some Assumptions of Assertion Theorists

Assertiveness is a subjective variable.

The goals, components, and considerations of assertiveness by theoreticians find ultimate meaning in the unique individual. This uniqueness is recognized and enhanced partially through providing insight into various processes. For example, rights, limitations of rights, and responsibilities are discussed (Alberti and Emmons, 1975; Austin and Phelps, 1975; Fensterheim and Baer, 1975; Smith, 1975; and Spector, 1973), as well as "cognitive blocks" (Carmody, 1975; Ellis, 1962; and Meichenbaum, 1974), and other processes like marriage, friendship, economic relations, sexual relationships, and social situations (Alberti and Emmons, 1975; Austin and Phelps, 1975; Fensterheim and Baer, 1975; Lazarus, 1971; Smith, 1975; and Spector, 1973).

It is assumed, to a large extent, that if a person knows the techniques for being assertive that he will be able to take the necessary action. The primary emphasis in training a person to be assertive is on technique (Lazarus, 1971).

Assertive behavior is a specific kind of behavior.

It is assumed by assertion theorists that assertive behavior is a distinct type of behavior. For example, Alberti and Emmons (1975) have compared assertive responses with nonassertive and aggressive types of responses. Alberti and Emmons (1975) state that:

...in the case of a non-assertive response in a given situation, the actor is typically denying himself and is inhibited from expressing his or her actual feelings. He often feels hurt and anxious as a result of his inadequate behavior. Allowing
others to choose for him, he seldom achieves his own desired goals.

The person who carries his desire for self-assertion to the extreme of aggressive behavior accomplishes his ends usually at the expense of others. Although he frequently finds his behavior self-enhancing and expressive of his feelings in the situation, he usually hurts others in the process by making choices for them, and minimizing their worth as persons. (p. 10-11)

(See appendix I for charts depicting the relationships of assertive, aggressive, and nonassertive behaviors, as well as examples of these types of responses.)

A further assumption of theorists is that a person generally responds in one of these behavioral styles. A person is assumed to be generally nonassertive, aggressive, or assertive.

These assumptions are unclear as to whether mixes of characteristics of nonassertive, aggressive, and assertive categories could occur. It seems likely that mixtures of characteristics would occur.

It is entirely possible that a person could be self-denying (non-assertive) and self-enhancing (assertive) at the same time. I might deny my need fulfillment to enhance another person's needs, from which I could feel self-enhanced. I could be assertive by not overtly being assertive. My choosing to not socially assert myself could be viewed as assertive behavior.

It might be helpful to simply state the kinds of patterns of behavior noted, if any, rather than attempting to generalize all behaviors into one general category. For example, a person might note a pattern of being nonassertive at work with the boss and aggressive at home after work with one's family. This pattern associated with
its corresponding contexts would be more valuable to know than if the person was generally responding assertively, nonassertively, or aggressively.

Finally, since these categories are interrelated, it might be more productive to emphasize the variables underlying the categories.

Assertive behavior will reduce one's general level of anxiety, allow for more meaningful relationships, self-respect, and social adaptivity.

The assumption that assertion will reduce anxiety is based upon the belief that anxiety stems from a person being unable to act in a manner they trust and respect. Assertion is looked at as a means to attain a greater amount of interpersonal control as well as self-control. Assertion theorists state that a person gains a sense of power from being assertive and that this sense of power is therapeutic (Lazarus, 1971).

Lazarus (1971) states that "contrary to popular belief, the result of emotional freedom is not alienation or increased vulnerability, but decreased anxiety, close and meaningful relationships, self-respect, and social adaptivity" (p. 116).

More meaningful relationships are theorized as being a result of knowing one's interpersonal rights. Individual rights are looked at as being a framework upon which positive connections between people, such as compassion, warmth, trust, and love can be built (Smith, 1975).

Meaningful relationships are further assumed to result from people having the confidence to express themselves and cope with the consequences of that expression.
Self-respect is attributed to assertiveness because "what you do serves as the basis for your self-concept" (Fensterheim and Baer, 1975, p. 25). Fensterheim and Baer (1975) equate assertiveness with self-esteem. They derive their analysis of how assertiveness affects self-esteem partially from William James'(1890) formula that:

\[
\text{Self-esteem} = \frac{\text{success}}{\text{pretentions}}
\]

James' formula is interpreted as meaning that a person does what he can in order to accomplish his goals. Success involves the acquisition of work and social skills necessary to accomplish one's goals.

Pretentions refer to one's goals. James indicates that a person needs to set goals realistically and selectively. The need for selectivity in goal setting stems from people possessing conflicting goals. James suggests that a person review his list of goals and seek out the one upon "which to stake his salvation". Selectivity in goal selection also indicates that success in goal attainment will be influenced by one's ability to set limitations to goals in order to assure success and therefore self-esteem.

In assertiveness the emphasis is switched from a concrete end product to the process itself. The assertive person has a positive self-concept because win or lose the goal, self-respect is maintained by trying to attain that goal. The following diagram illustrates how self-concept is influenced by assertiveness.
An assertive orientation to self-esteem places emphasis upon the process of goal attainment rather than setting limitations of needing to accomplish a concrete end goal. Assertiveness as a means of living becomes the goal.

The assertive person's active orientation to life, his control of self and life situations, his ability to reveal himself, and his ability to communicate openly with others all are variables in affecting his level of self-esteem.

Social adaptability can take place because a person in the assertive state can readily adjust to his environment. Assertive behavior can be adapted to the context within which the person finds himself. For example, two friends may signal their friendship by "flipping the bird" to each other. Within the context of their friendship such behavior might be considered as being assertive, "emotionally free". The previous signal of friendship might be considered as being aggressive with other people or in a different context. In being socially adaptive, and adjusting to contexts, a person's behavior may be viewed as being inconsistent.

I agree with theoreticians that by being assertive one can reduce their level of anxiety, allow for more healthful relationships, self-respect, and social adaptivity. However, I don't think that the processes involved will be problem free.
One problem is that anxiety may be created by a person being assertive. One way this could happen might involve an unhealthy relationship which one is attached to. A woman who suddenly becomes assertive in her marriage might find that her rights can only be attained through divorce. The anxiety of such a process cannot be denied.

Anxiety might also be created in that social adaptivity calls for inconsistency of behavior. Other people one is interacting with may find it difficult to cope with this inconsistency since people strive for consistency across relations (Mead, 1934). Secord and Backman (1961) indicate that three elements among which people strive for consistency, are: (1) some aspect of the person's self-concept; (2) the person's interpretation of those actions which relate to that aspect of his self; and (3) the person's perception of the related aspects of the other person with whom he is interacting (p. 117). Leary (1955) further indicates that interpersonal behaviors are security operations. In many ways, this idea is confirmed by Altman and Taylor's (1973) research in "social penetration". They posit that one structures interaction to minimize conflict and maximize rewards. The purpose of interpersonal behavior, in terms of its function to lessen conflict, is to induce from the other person behavior that is complementary to the behavior proffered. Carson (1969) indicates that complementary behavior is rewarding. Leary further suggests that we train others to respond to us in order to maintain our self-concept at a consistent level. Self-concept then is maintained through interpersonal behavior as well as through the accomplishment of other types of goals. In interpersonal behavior self-concept is confirmed through influencing
others' behavior (through which we see ourselves). The self-concept that influences the interpersonal behaviors becomes influenced by the reactions and perceived reactions of the other person's behavior as we experience it, in reference to one's own interpersonal behavior as that is experienced.

The need for consistent self-concepts seems to necessitate the need for consistent relationships, which seems reciprocal, i.e. the need for consistent relationships necessitates the need for consistent self-concepts. Such a consistency need is problematical when considering the process nature of man in which man must adjust to changing circumstances in order to be assertive. To no longer complement, reciprocate, reinforce, or be consistent with one's past behavior or the behavior another person may have trained one to have, may create anxiety if one's new behavior violates the "social contract" between the communication participants (Metzger and Phillips, 1976). Kiev (1975) states:

As such, any change in the directions you take may evoke anxiety in others who find it hard to adjust to your new ways, which may not fit their concepts of you. (pp. 45-46)

As previously noted, the assertive act may create anxiety if the consistency of the relationship does not allow for inconsistency. Assertions may not always be anxiety free, then, since anxiety may be created in others which may be felt by the person making the assertion. Anxiety may be a direct result of asserting oneself; when in affirming self, others' consistency needs are violated and the person being assertive may feel the need not to create anxiety for others.
Another way anxiety might be created could be through an increased assertive ability to state one's needs and goals without a corresponding ability to accomplish those needs. For example, a person may be interpersonally assertive enough to tell a friend of his sexual needs and yet may be sexually nonassertive. The inconsistency created there could create anxiety; however, theorists assume this isn't a likely problem since behaviors are assumed not to exist in isolation.

Behaviors don't exist in isolation, but interact with each other, forming patterns.

This assumption is based upon the belief that "psychological organization" is a result of behaviors interacting with one another. It is assumed that a change in the level of assertiveness will, therefore, result in a new psychological organization, or lifestyle.

The process of behaviors interacting is assumed to have different organizations at different periods in one's life. For example, a child's psychological organization has security based primarily with the parents. A child is thought to be psychologically organized around his parents.

Maturity in the development of psychological organization of behaviors is perceived by Fensterheim and Baer (1975) as being accomplished when a person becomes less dependent upon generalized others. Security for a mature person is thought to center around a few people or simply a friend.

Other theorists view the mature person as having shifted security needs gained from another human being to security based on self-respect.
Psychological organization theories which base security upon self-respect, in some ways, indicate that the mature person becomes the primary source of reinforcement for himself since he alone can judge if he is acting in a way he respects. It would seem that a person in charge of his own reinforcement could easily slip from a state of psychological health to a state of emotional insulation, unless he had the insight to seek and accept the uniqueness and potential of each person. It could become very easy to label others as perverted if they didn't pursue the same perceived ideals as the person in mastery of his own reward system. Some consequences of such a system of behavior could be a distorted perception of reality, a failure to accomplish interpersonal goals in a healthy manner, and a decreased ability to attain personal growth.

Assertive behaviors facilitate more psychological life space.

Lazarus (1971) indicates that a nonassertive person "who takes his cultural heritage too seriously is bound to face so many contradictory 'do's' and 'don'ts' that almost every interaction will be fraught with tension and uncertainty" (Lazarus, 1971, p. 130). Lazarus (1971) indicates that some people are so distressfully concerned with an arbitrary range of "rights" and "wrongs" that they permit themselves so little freedom of movement that they exist in an "emotional prison" or "confined capsule".
In the figures above, the emotionally free individual considers the territory bounded by the poles AD and GH as his own psychological terrain or life space. He can move anywhere within these boundaries without feeling that he has overstepped his limits or encroached on someone else's emotional property. If somebody enters his territory uninvited, he will unceremoniously stand up for his rights and tell the trespasser to leave.

The encapsulated person is uncomfortable or afraid and very unsure when venturing beyond points B, C, E, or F. He usually feels that he is not entitled to any territory beyond his narrow range inside the capsule (Lazarus, 1971, p. 130-131). He is confused as to what his rights, limitations, and responsibilities are. For example, he may ask: "Am I entitled to a raise?", "Do I have to forfeit every weekend to visit my grandmother?" (Lazarus, 1971, p. 132).

Fensterheim indicates that if a person doesn't stand up for his psychological life space that other people will define his space for him and a person will stop being himself.
To some extent, the psychological "life space" issue and the "psychological organization" issue indicate that assertive behaviors are directed at helping a person attain a satisfactory level of personal growth. The goal of personal growth, however, isn't given the emphasis that one should have in attempting to be assertive.

III. "Being" as an Assertive Orientation

The lack of insight into the personal growth process is a significant problem within the assertiveness literature. A person is given techniques and insights into how to be assertive without a corresponding insight into the primary goal of assertion—a positive self-concept through personal growth.

Personal growth is an important criterion in being assertive.

To be assertive, a person must develop goals. Goals serve as a means to direct a person's behavior, motivate a person's behavior, and as a means to reinforce the self-esteem of the person (Fensterheim and Baer, 1975).

Goals can be set in a variety of ways (e.g. long term vs. short term) and for a variety of purposes (e.g. work and family). One criterion that should govern the choices one makes in conjunction with their goals is that of whether the choice made will facilitate personal growth of the people involved. Maslow (1971), for example, emphasizes that life is a process of making choices, each with possible progression or regression consequences.
This section of this paper will provide some of the needed insight into the personal growth process and assertiveness as a factor in attaining that personal growth so that progression choices can be made.

If a person chooses to look to others for direction in guiding his behavior, there are a variety of belief systems he can choose from. For example, Ellis (1962) advocates a system of long term rational hedonism. Frankl (1959) advocates man's capability to "pull himself toward values"—there are Christian ethics, subcultural and cultural ethics, family ethics, etc. The variance of belief systems indicates that belief systems could be arbitrarily chosen. A recognition of the arbitrary nature of belief systems suggests an ability to courageously trust myself and to make of myself what I want to be.

Tillich (1953) theorizes that there aren't any absolutes as to where self-direction can come from. He states that "we must be ourselves and we must decide where to go." A person is free to choose extraneous direction as long as in doing so a person is pursuing his inner self direction, since the uniqueness of man calls for a person to make his own unique choice as to what that direction means. The process of choosing direction is internalized. The person alone has the responsibility of choosing direction. Tillich (1953) states that in the final analysis the autonomous person must recognize that "nobody can give direction for the actions of the 'resolute' individual, no God, no conventions, no laws of reason, no norms or principles".

Humanistic psychologists also indicate that direction must come from oneself. They point to an inner core of motivation that directs
a person (Buhler and Allen, 1972; Maslow, 1968, 1971). The direction comes from being aware of one's inner self, facing external realities as they are, and striving to encourage the inner core's direction (Giffin and Patton, 1974).

A little more concrete analysis of the process of choosing or finding direction comes from Rogers. Rogers (1961) stresses that a person finds direction through trusting his own direct experiences. He states:

Neither the Bible nor the prophets--
neither Freud nor research--
neither the revelations of God nor man
can take precedence over my own
direct experience. (p. 24)

The pursuit of personal growth is a process and involves trust and risks.

The guidelines that one chooses, the motivations one chooses to pursue, or the experiences one chooses to trust, must allow for cognitive flexibility in pursuing personal growth. This idea is expressed by Rogers (1961) when he states:

The direction which constitutes the good life is that which is selected by the total organism, when there is psychological freedom to move in any direction (p. 186-187)

Rogers indicates that in trusting one's self-experiences, in being aware of psychological alternatives, and in choosing from those alternatives, personal growth will result.

In the pursuit of direction, man can't remain static. This creates problems in a culture where security is based upon the idea of destination rather than direction. A life of personal growth is a process, not a static state of being. "It is a direction, not a destination"
(Rogers, 1961). A person with a personal growth orientation doesn't live exclusively in the past, present, or future. The interrelationship of time is recognized. A personal growth orientation recognizes that a person is what he has been, is now, and will become.

One's inner direction, when known, must be pursued. When a person isn't on track within the process of pursuing personal growth, anxiety will be created. Kierkegaard states that: "to will to be that which one truly is, is indeed the opposite of despair, and the choice is the deepest responsibility of man" (Rogers, 1961, p. 110).

Maslow (1968, 1971) indicates that a failure to pursue one's inner core will result in a failure to self-actualize. Tillich (1953) further reiterates that anxiety will be a consequence of a failure to pursue "being" or personal growth.

Risk is a factor in pursuing one's personal growth. Our culture, for example, could be characterized as not being synergistic (Maslow, 1971). When people are pursuing goals contrary to the way others are pursuing goals, the possibility of conflict is high, particularly if there isn't communication and commitment to mutual personal growth. In a nonsynergistic culture, self-actualization is limited to a few people (Maslow, 1971).

The risk is high that a person will encounter elements in his existence that will conflict with one's personal growth direction. Campbell (1949) views the "universal hero" as that person who can "battle past personal, historical, and local limitations" in order to pursue his inner direction.
Tillich (1953) indicates that the failure to pursue direction will result in a lessened self-concept, a state of "nonbeing". In order to affirm his self-concept, a person must have the courage to pursue his inner direction even though there may be conflicts in doing so. The pursuit of a process calls for the courage to surrender "some or even all security, for the sake of full self affirmation" (Tillich, 1953, p. 74). The only security a person can have would be a mastery of the process of life.

A courage to "be" is an implicated necessity. As Tillich (1953) states, "the courage to be is the ethical act in which man affirms his own being in spite of those elements of his existence which conflict with his self-affirmation" (p. 3).

Assertive behavior is a direct means to affirm one's self. A theoretical assumption of assertiveness is that it equals self-esteem. Since assertion equals self-esteem, a criterion in being assertive would be whether or not a person's actions raise or lower one's self-esteem. A personal growth orientation might be looked at as being synonymous with an assertive orientation in that a personal growth orientation also dictates that a person must affirm himself. Being assertive would be an integral aspect of the courage to be.

The impact of others upon one's personal growth.

Although an assertive personal growth orientation is basically 'selfish' in nature, mastery of the process comes through interaction with others. We must relate to others because the self needs involvement with others for its development and nourishment (Shutz, 1958). Maslow (1971), for example, indicates that self-actualization doesn't
result from isolated intellectual pursuit of personal growth, but is also a consequence of effective interpersonal relationships.

A person striving for growth with an assertive orientation must realize that he has an impact upon other's lives and that this influence in turn affects the quality of his life. A "being" orientation recognizes that I am partially responsible for another person's level of being---and they in turn are responsible for mine. I influence you whether I want to or not, and you in turn influence me. As communication scholars state: "we cannot not communicate". We cannot not affect others and consequently ourself. We cannot not be affected by others and they in turn by us.

A recognition that a person has partial control of his personal growth level and that of others through his interpersonal relationships, indicates the necessity to act in a manner facilitative of personal growth when interacting with others. Assertive personal growth interaction with others then calls for a knowledge of interpersonal rights, responsibilities, and limitations. As with the case of finding personal growth direction and pursuing it, the emphasis within interpersonal relations should be that of mastering the process. Concrete statements of what should be done interpersonally are of little value unless they allow a person to be cognitively flexible in pursuing his direction through the process of life.
Personal growth will be partially affected by a knowledge of Assertive Interpersonal Rights.

Several researchers have approached "emotional freedom" as found through a knowledge of one's interpersonal rights. A previous theoretical assumption by theoreticians has been that one's "life space" is determined by a knowledge of interpersonal rights as well as the ability to stand up for them.

Smith (1975) indicates that the more a person is cognizant of his rights, the more emotional freedom he will have, since manipulation of one's feelings by others will be more difficult. Smith's assumption is that psychological direction is blocked by others manipulating one's feelings. He feels that a person can be manipulated to feel that he should: (1) explain his behavior, (2) change himself rather than rock the system, (3) feel that he must be consistent, (4) be perfect, (5) always know the answer, (6) always be on good terms with others, (7) always be logical, (8) never say I don't understand, and (9) always care.

Smith's analysis could be shortened to say that a person doesn't need to relate to another person in terms of absolute rules for behavior. When a person feels that he must relate to another or to himself in terms of absolutes, he has boxed himself into a system that is too inflexible to allow for a "process" of life.

Ellis (1962) refers to these inflexible cognitive boxes as resulting from "irrational beliefs". He theorizes that effective interpersonal behaviors are "emotionally blocked" by these irrational beliefs. For examples of Smith's interpersonal rights and Ellis's irrational
beliefs, see appendix II.

In general, within a "being" orientation, the primary right recognized is the right to attain personal growth. Whenever "being" is threatened by another person, assertive communication needs to be used.

Personal growth will be partially affected by a knowledge of assertive interpersonal responsibilities.

The first responsibility in any interaction is to perceive the participants accurately. I have a responsibility when relating to others not to project myself onto them, but to allow the other person to be perceived as he is in order that I may perceive myself as I am. One way to help prevent projecting oneself onto others would be through an awareness of one's own values, motives, and need structures which influence perceptions of others (Condon and Yousef, 1975; Worr and Knopper, 1968). Laing (1965), for example, states that "Peter cannot perceive himself as Peter if he does not perceive Paul as Paul."

Another reason perception needs to be accurate is that self-concept, to some extent, will be influenced by my perception of self through how I perceive others as acting toward me. Cooley states: "Each to each a looking glass reflects the other that doth pass." If one distorts his perceptions, he complicates the process of attaining the necessary feedback to guide his behavior.

A second responsibility to a personal growth relationship is that there be a commitment to that relationship. To say it very simply, people aren't stupid, and they aren't going to expend energy into a relationship that isn't meaningful to them. This is problematical
since some meaning will probably be lost if there isn't energy involved into developing that meaning. Meaningful relationships don't just happen, they require work (Metzger and Phillips, 1976; Rogers, 1961, 1972). See the following chart for a depiction of the relationship of commitment, involvement and meaning.

![Diagram of commitment, involvement, and meaning](image)

**Fig. 3. Three interrelated factors affecting interpersonal relationships.**

One important kind of involvement within a relationship involves "confirmation" of the other person. Buber states:

> Confirming means...accepting the whole potentiality of the other...I can recognize in him, know in him, the person he has been...created to become...I confirm him in myself and then in him, in relation to this potentiality that...can now be developed, can evolve.

(cited in Rogers, 1961, p. 55)

Rogers (1961) interprets Buber's statements as indicating a necessity for keeping a relationship free from judgment and evaluation. Rogers (1961) believes that a relationship free from judgment and evaluation will permit the other person to reach the point "where he recognizes that the locus of evaluation, the center of responsibility, lies within himself (Rogers, 1961, p. 55). Since direction must come from oneself, to impose direction upon another person could limit his personal growth, and reciprocally, one's own growth. Limiting another person's personal growth may be the responsibility one will need to
accept in a nonsynergistic culture.

Another kind of important involvement within a relationship would focus upon an expectation for that other person's personal growth. An expectation of personal growth from the other person calls for "caring". Mayeroff (1971), for example, states:

To care for another person, in the most significant sense, is to help him grow and actualize himself... Caring is the antithesis of simply using the other person to satisfy one's own needs.... In helping the other grow, I do not impose my own direction; rather, I allow the direction of the other's growth to guide what I do, to help determine how I am to respond and what is relevant to such a response. (Mayeroff, 1971, p. 1-7).

Mayeroff (1971) further reiterates that through helping the other person grow, one can actualize himself (p. 30).

The caring for another person is only possible if a person cares for himself (Fromm, 1956). The reciprocal relationship of caring for self and for others is illustrated in the following diagram.

![Diagram of reciprocal relationship of "caring".

Fig. 4. Reciprocal relationship of "caring".

A final consideration in terms of caring, is that even in relationships where there is a high degree of commitment and involvement (marriages, lovers) the people involved need the freedom to pursue their individual directions. Laing (1967), for example, states that "love lets the other be". Maslow (1962), in what he refers to as "being love", states:
The lovers are more independent of each other, more autonomous, less jealous or threatened, less needful, more individual, more disinterested, but also simultaneously more eager to help the other toward self-actualization, more proud of his triumphs, more altruistic, generous and fostering. (Maslow, 1962, p. 40).

Caring, "loving", and helping the other toward self-actualization primarily involves helping the other person master the process of pursuing his own direction. Assertive behavior would help the other person in becoming self-actualized, since he would have greater self-control and an ability to relate to others more effectively. It would seem that when the participants in a communication transaction are assertive, they could effectively be involved in working at that relationship. Assertive communicative participants could perhaps create a more synergistic group where individual direction might be satisfied while facilitating, or at least not detracting from, the needs of the other person. Personal growth would then be enhanced by one becoming assertive himself so as to master the process of becoming self-actualized, while also enhancing the other person's level of assertiveness.

Limitations of an assertive personal growth orientation.

A final consideration concerns that point at which a person can limit the process of pursuing personal growth. For example, must a person always care about the other person? If a person must always care, then the necessary cognitive flexibility may be diminished. Maslow (1971) indicates that the self-actualized person may have a "hardened heart" with some people. To always expect caring from other people or one's self would be to add the "strings" that would diminish
personal growth (Cadwallader, 1966).

A person in mastering the process of personal growth would need to learn that other people may not always expect one to personally grow. Others probably will not always care, just as the person striving for personal growth may not always care. The process of attaining personal growth would not always be an upward process. There may be times when "to learn to fly, a person may need to learn to fall" (Simon, 1975).

Tillich (1953) viewed the problems of personal growth limitation as a vacillation between wisdom and courage. At times in a person's life, wisdom may dominate courage. The person may behave in a reasonable manner; however, Tillich (1953) believes that this reasonable approach may result in stagnation. To always act in a manner one sees as best might limit one's psychological freedom to pursue direction. Sometimes a person's "gut feelings" may call for an unreasonable direction (Rogers, 1961), except that one trusts their gut feelings. Tillich (1953) believes that at such a time, courage dominates wisdom. At this time, a person may be acting in disregard for consequences of one's actions. During this time, one may be creative but may also quickly lose direction (Tillich, 1953). Wisdom is then needed to balance the process.

Theoretically then, a person seeking personal growth will be subjected to varying degrees of limitations. It would seem that periods of creativity and spontaneity would be a time of battling past the "personal, historical, or local" limitations through an unbalanced courage. Periods of creativity and spontaneity (times of not regarding
consequences) might allow for opening the levels of awareness of experience, and for heightened perceptual ability of self and others since the cognitive barrier of "reason" may be lessened. It may also allow a person to "fly too high" as the Greek myths state.

After the charge of creativity and courage, I think reason and stagnation may be a necessity to find direction for the new insights gained (to charge the batteries), and to allow oneself some time to adjust to the level of "being" and prepare for the next approach.

IV. Assertive Personal Growth Communication

This section of the paper is concerned with utilizing the communication process to facilitate personal growth. Communication ideas will be suggested as a means to facilitate assertive communications.

Three fundamental aspects of communication will be discussed. They are: (1) perceptions, (2) the message itself, and (3) the intentions of the people involved.

Before being assertive, a person must have an accurate understanding of the situation.

Since communicating is so complex, the probability for messages or message transactions between people to be inaccurate is very high. Values may be different, thought systems may be different, and intentions may be different; all of these could disrupt the accurate perception of what another person is saying. There is a tendency for a person to think that others see the world the same as himself. This is often not the case. (Condon and Yousef, 1975).
The first step in being assertive is to check perceptions and let the other person in the relationship know that the perceptions are yours. For example, I may say:

"I see you as being loud and boistrous."
"I perceive you as being loud and boistrous."
"I think you are loud and boistrous."

These statements allow a person to check his perceptions since the other person can hear you express them. The ownership of the perception by saying "I" indicates that one's actions are responsible and sincere. A statement like "We perceive you to be loud and boistrous." gives the speaker a kind of cop out. The extreme of not owning perceptions would be to say something like: "Some people see you as loud and boistrous." (Giffin and Patton, 1974).

Checking the accuracy of perceptions often involves the commitment to "listen actively". Active listening involves checking a message's accuracy through attaining feedback. For example, a person may say: "What I hear you saying is that I am loud and boistrous." Judgment or interpretation isn't added since the purpose of active listening is simply to understand.

After perceptual checks and/or active listening has been used, a person can proceed in the process of communicating assertively. I have found that this step in itself often alleviates communication problems and helps me to accomplish my goals. For example, I have gone to self-service gas stations where the pumps appear not to be working. I can say: "I think this pump is not working.". The station manager usually then turns the pump on or tells me that it is out of gas. No further interaction is necessary.
Some characteristics of an effective response.

Johnson (1972) indicates that two basic aspects determine the effectiveness of a response in responding to another person. "The intentions of the receiver as he gives his response, and the actual phrasing of the response itself." Intentions are viewed by Johnson as being the "most important single factor in influencing the sender's ability to solve his problems." Five underlying intentions are noted by Johnson (1972):

- **Evaluative:** a response that indicates the receiver has made a judgment of relative goodness, appropriateness, effectiveness, or rightness of the sender's problem.
- **Interpretative:** a receiver attempts to tell the sender what his problem means, how the sender really feels about the situation.
- **Supportive:** a response that indicates the receiver's intent is to reassure, to pacify, to reduce the sender's intensity of feeling.
- **Probing:** a response that indicates the receiver's intent is to seek further information, provoke discussion along a certain line, question the sender.
- **Understanding:** a paraphrasing response that is used to indicate the receiver's intent is to respond only to ask the sender whether the receiver correctly understands what the sender is saying, how the sender feels and sees the problem.

Carl Rogers, in observing people in all sorts of different settings, observed that 80% of all messages sent between individuals were from these categories. Evaluative responses were used most, interpretative was next, supportive was third, probing the fourth, and understanding was used least of all (Johnson, 1972). Rogers further thought that a person using any one of these kinds of responses more than 40% of the time would be perceived by others as always responding in this manner.
Johnson's analysis (1972) indicates that it is important to consider the other person's impact upon the communication process. In the assertion jargon, the other person's psychological organization will influence the effectiveness of one's message. For instance, an assertive person who gives honest negative feedback to a nonassertive person might be considered as being dehumanizing. An assertive person who gives honest negative feedback to an assertive person might be considered as a friend.

A second important aspect of a message is the actual phrasing of that message. The focus in the assertion literature has mostly been concerned with this variable in terms of delineating behavioral characteristics of an assertive response.

Nonverbal assertive behavioral characteristics considered in the literature are: loudness of voice, fluency of spoken words, eye contact, facial expression, and distance from the person with whom one is interacting (Serber, 1972); posture, eye contact, speech rate and pitch (Phelps and Austin, 1975); eye contact, congruent body movement, voice loudness, voice modulation and delivery style (i.e. sending one piece of information at a time and avoiding undue hesitations) (Hill and Rainey, 1975); duration of looking, duration of reply, loudness of speech, compliance content and effect (appropriate intonation) (Hersen, Eisler, Johnson, Pinkerton, 1973); and, inadvertently "smiling" (Herson, Eisler and Miller, 1973).

Although these nonverbal criterion were stated, little information was given as to what was appropriate and/or why it was appropriate. For example, Alberti and Emmons (1975) indicate that duration of look-
ing is an important nonverbal behavior. Subjects are instructed to pay attention to this variable; however, how much duration of looking, how long, when to use and when not to use it, etc. are not specified. Evidently the "norm" of nonverbal behavior for an assertive situation is established by the subjective criteria of the researcher based upon the specifics of the situation. It appears that appropriate nonverbal cues becomes a subjective matter of one's beliefs, awareness, and use of what one feels is appropriate. An individual "art" of using nonverbal cues is apparently established—a must considering the processing nature of man and the continuous changing and interaction of variables—which are given meaning by the "context" within "which nonverbal behaviors occur" (Swensen, 1973, p. 111).

Focus upon verbal assertion behaviors must also be made with a consideration of contextual influences. In general, the components of assertive verbal behavior would be manifest by 1) a refusal to comply with unreasonable requests, 2) requesting changes in thoughtless or unrealistic behavior of others (Eisler, Miller, and Hersen, 1973, p. 299), and 3) pursuing one's growth directions.

Smith (1975) has delineated a few techniques that an assertive person can use in specific situations. For example, in dealing with manipulative criticism, he uses a technique called "fogging". Smith (1973) refers to "fogging" as agreeing with 1) truth, 2) odds, or 3) in principle with the criticism. The purpose of "fogging" is to avoid an escalating conflict by minimizing conflict and interaction. An example of "fogging" is noted in the following dialogue:
Mother: Sally, if you stay out late so much, you might get sick again.

Sally: You could be right, Mom (Or, That's probably true. Or, I agree with you, Mom, if I didn't go out so often I would probably get more sleep.) (Smith, p. 105)

Two other approaches Smith (1975) uses in dealing with criticism are "negative assertion" and "negative inquiry". A "negative assertion" would be used in learning to cope with errors. A person here simply admits the error without becoming defensive, denying the error, or seeking the forgiveness of the other person. A negative assertion is used to cope with valid criticism of a person's performances in learning a concept, a new skill, a new language, or a new trade on the job or in a social situation. An example of "negative assertion" may be noted in the following dialogue:

Boss: "You didn't do too well in...(criticism).

Person: "You're right. I wasn't too smart in the way I handled that, was I?" (negative assertion) (Smith, p. 117)

Exp.: You didn't do too well in....
     I wasn't too smart in the way I handled that, was I?
     I could have done a better job.
     I should have been more careful.
     I would like to do better in this area.

In using negative assertion, Smith (1975) emphasizes:

One important point to remember, these assertive skills were developed to help you cope with social conflicts, not physical or legal ones! If someone says to you critically: 'You just ran over my foot when you backed up your car', the appropriate response is not: 'How stupid of me!' but instead, 'Here is the number of my insurance company (or my lawyer). (Smith, 1975, p. 117-118)
Another technique of Smith (1975) is that of "negative inquiry". This technique is used to prompt someone you care about to be more assertive and less manipulative of you. For example:

Sally: I hate it when you go fishing, Dad!

Dad: What is it about my fishing you hate?

XX: I hate it when you do (whatever).
   I don't understand, what is it about (whatever) that you dislike?
   I don't understand, what is it about xxx that is wrong? etc.

Smith (1975) sees the following values of "negative inquiry":

Although NEGATIVE INQUIRY occasionally is useful in dealing with conflict in formal or partially structured relationships (especially in conjunction with the other assertive verbal skills), it helps most in unstructured equal relationships by: (1) desensitizing you to criticism from people you care about so you can listen to what they tell you; (2) extinguishing repetitive manipulative criticism from these people so it doesn't drive you up the wall; and (3) reducing the use of right-and-wrong structure by these persons in dealing with you, prompting them to assertively say what they want so that compromises giving both of you a piece of the action can be worked out. (Smith, 1975, p. 125-126)

Positive assertion and positive inquiry are two techniques Smith (1975) delineates to cope with positive statements. For example, in response to a compliment, a person may positively assert himself and say:

You're right, I do a good job of typing.

That's true, I do work well with children.

Thank you.
Positive inquiry like negative inquiry is a way of helping to further understand the compliment by helping the other person be more assertive and distinct.

Exp. I don't understand. What is it about my behavior that makes you happy?

I don't understand, why do you think I did a good job?

Some other important aspects of assertive communication viewed by Smith (1975) are those of "broken record", "self-disclosure" and "a workable compromise".

Broken record is:

A skill that by calm repetition---saying what you want over and over again---teaches persistence without you having to rehearse arguments or angry feelings beforehand, in order to be 'up' for dealing with others. (p. 323)

An example of the broken record may be noted in the following dialogue.

Setting of the dialogue: Upon entering the supermarket with his father in tow, Carlo spoke to the clerk at the checkout counter about missing purchases.

Clerk: Yes?

Carlo: When I was here earlier, I bought three steaks, a roast and two chickens with my other groceries, and when I got home, the meat was missing. I want my meat.

Clerk: Did you look in your car?

Carlo: Yes, I want my meat. (BROKEN RECORD)

Clerk: I don't think I can do anything about it. (Evasion of responsibility)

Carlo: I understand how you might think that, but I want my meat. (Broken Record) ........ (p. 75-76)

Self-disclosure according to Smith (1975) is:

A skill that teaches the acceptance and initiation of discussion of both the positive and negative aspects of your personality, behavior, lifestyle, intelligence, to enhance social communication and reduce manipulation. (p. 324)
Smith (1975) refers to a "workable compromise" as a bargaining process whereby a person can attain his material goals. Smith (1975) quickly states: however, that compromise isn't possible if a person's personal feelings of self-respect will be diminished.

Another important criteria of the verbal and nonverbal messages would be the kind of communication climate created by the interaction. A positive "caring" intent would be communicated by behaviors that facilitate a "supportive" rather than "defensive" communication climate.

Gibb (1961) identified six contrasting behaviors that reduce the level of threat in communication. They are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Defensive Behaviors</th>
<th>Supportive Behaviors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Evaluative</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>Problem Orientation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy</td>
<td>Sponteneity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutrality</td>
<td>Empathy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Superiority</td>
<td>Equality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certainty</td>
<td>Provisionalism</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Evaluative behavior is likely to create a threatening climate in that a person being evaluated is likely to protect his self-concept by becoming defensive. Descriptive behavior allows the other person to more readily pursue his psychological direction since he is given that responsibility. Judgments aren't made. "The descriptive speaker simply explains how the other's actions affect him" (Adler and Towne, 1975, p. 107).

Gordon recognizes evaluative speech as "you" language. You is usually spoken as a preface word in being evaluative: "You're stupid", "You're lazy", et. cetera. (Adler and Towne, 1975).
Descriptive language is labeled by Gordon as "I" language. "I" language focuses upon the speaker himself rather than evaluating the other person: "I don't understand why you call me stupid, but I've been hurt by the remark".

Control versus problem orientation is an important consideration in that people dislike being controlled. There is a need to feel some kind of control in relating with others (Shutz, 1958; Lazarus, 1971). A problem orientation gives communication participants a chance to have input into decisions. It gives the other person a feeling of having some control in the interaction.

Strategy versus spontaneity is an important consideration in that manipulation is associated with strategy. Spontaneity refers to simply being honest and sincere in one's actions.

Neutrality versus empathy is important in that neutrality is associated with "indifference" and a lack of caring. Neutrality communicates the idea that people are worthless. Empathy is a "caring" orientation. An empathetic communicator indicates that he has enough caring to try and understand the other person's life (Gibb, 1961) and also tries to facilitate that person's level of personal growth (Carkhoff, 1969).

Superiority versus equality is important in that a person perceived as acting superior communicates that he doesn't want to relate on equal terms with others in the relationship.

"Furthermore, he seems to infer that he doesn't want feedback nor will he need help because the help would be coming from someone inferior to him. This message of superiority alerts the listener to be on guard because the sender is likely to attempt to re-
duce the receiver's worth, power, or status to maintain or advance his own superiority (Adler and Towne, 1975, p. 112)."

Money, power, physical appearance, intellectual ability, and athletic ability are some areas where culturally we are taught to act superior.

Gibb (1961) indicates that even if people have superior abilities they can relate as equals to another person. These people can communicate that even though they may have greater talent in certain areas, they can see others as having just as much worth as human beings. In being assertive with another person, this analysis indicates that the assertion one may choose to give should never question the essential human value of another person. The focus is upon another's behavior rather than the inherent value of the person. In asserting oneself, the other person's behavior is identified. A final consideration in Gibb's categories is that of certainty versus provisionalism. Gibb referred to behavior where a person is certain that his position is the best, is sure he is right, is certain there is no need for additional information, as defensive arousing behavior. Gibb calls this behavior as certainty. A person who is provisional communicates an openness to receiving new information and ideas. This behavior encourages participation and communication.

Giffin and Patton (1974) indicate that personal growth is dependent upon the quality of personal communication. They postulate that personal communication is the offering of "personal (owned) information (feelings and/or perceptions) about events (actions, behaviors, expressions) which are mutually relevant (related) to the "here and now" in an unambiguous manner." (p. 11) See the Appendix III for a
depiction of this analysis.

An example of mutually relevant "here and now" is in the following example:

"Don, I feel very hostile toward you right now; whenever I expressed a thought, verbally, to the group, you reacted to me in a negative way." (p. 14)

An example of "feelings owned" communication is in the following statement:

"Jane, I think you are too authoritative in the group and lead too much. It makes me very uncomfortable and I don't feel able to comment, or make suggestions after you speak." (p. 16)

An example of "feelings source specified" is noted in the previous example.

"The feelings of the speaker are caused by Jane, whose behavior--speaking--is too authoritative. It might be possible to provide this feedback without being specific as to source" (p. 17).

An example of "perception owned" is noted in the following example:

"John, although I know practically nothing about you, I feel good about you; I think you are sad and withdrawn, unwilling to tell what you feel." (p. 17)

In the above example, the source of the perception is specified.

Causal connection applies to feeling and perceptions. The speaker suggests what could be a cause. An example may be noted in the following statement:

"John, you are so aggressive and domineering...I think it's because you are really very insecure."

A final factor Giffin and Patton (1974) look at is that of the behavior being identified. When behavior is specified, there is a greater clarity as to the source of the feeling and the effect of the
feeling. An example of behavior identification may be noted in the following statement:

"Mary, I feel very inferior to you, you seem so capable and self-assured, like when you told us you were an honors student or when you discuss the things you have read in the text." (p. 19)

An overview of communication techniques.

A variety of communication techniques have been presented here. These ideas have merit; however, it is the unique individual that will give the true meaning to these techniques. However a person chooses to assertively communicate, I think some important criteria should be noted.

Perhaps the most important factor in a personal growth orientation in communicating assertively is that of being sincere, honest, and open to one's inner direction and to allow others to pursue their direction, if possible. Such an approach calls for one's experience of himself as matching his externally communicated behaviors. When experience matches awareness then to "cry when you are sad, laugh when you are happy, sleep when you are tired, eat when you are hungry, and quit when you are not---are honest behaviors because they match messages of your awareness of your experience" (Rossiter and Pearce, 1975).

When a person is open to experience himself and communicates this to others, then there is a possibility of valuable feedback being returned. In being assertive, a personal growth orientation would necessitate the openness to feedback from others. Coombs (1971) indicates that the ability to experience self, to be open to the experience of self, has a direct relationship to assessment of self, setting of goals,
attainment of goals, and self-actualization. Coombs illustrates this relationship in the following diagram:

Fig. 5. Openness to Experience

Attaining the goals one sets in being assertive may not be easy. Smith (1975) indicates that a person needs to be very persistent. This persistence often times may not be rewarding in terms of how others may react to you. It is the goal of assertion theorists that over a long period of time one's actions will pay off, that one will have an ability to reward himself, or that a person will have a select other person or group to be a support for their actions.
V. Summary

Current writings on assertive behavior view assertiveness as a skill which enhances one's ability to feel potent. This sense of power is attributed to the assertive person's skill in expressing his feelings and emotions in attaining personal rights, without denying the rights of others.

Assumptions of assertion theorists has been examined. These assumptions and a review of assertion literature indicate that "being" or "personal growth" is not an emphasized goal of assertive behaviors. The central thesis of this paper has been that personal growth should be an integral goal influencing assertive behaviors.

Finally, a personal growth orientation in being assertive has been looked at in terms of communication ideas and techniques.
VI. Bibliography


APPENDIX I

THE RELATIONSHIP OF ASSERTIVE, AGGRESSIVE, AND NONASSERTIVE BEHAVIORS AND EXAMPLES OF THESE TYPES OF RESPONSES
Appendix I

The following chart from Alberti and Emmons (1975, p. 11) indicates the relationship of assertive, aggressive, and nonassertive behaviors.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NON-ASSERTIVE BEHAVIOR</th>
<th>AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOR</th>
<th>ASSERTIVE BEHAVIOR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>As Actor</strong></td>
<td><strong>As Actor</strong></td>
<td><strong>As Actor</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-denying</td>
<td>Self-enhancing at expense of another</td>
<td>Self-enhancing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inhibited</td>
<td>Expressive</td>
<td>Expressive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hurt, anxious</td>
<td>Depreciates others</td>
<td>Feels good about self</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allows others to choose for him</td>
<td>Chooses for others</td>
<td>Chooses for self</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does not achieve desired goal</td>
<td>Achieves desired goal by hurting others</td>
<td>May achieve desired goal</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>As Acted Upon</strong></th>
<th><strong>As Acted Upon</strong></th>
<th><strong>As Acted Upon</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Guilty or angry</td>
<td>Self-denying</td>
<td>Self-enhancing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depreciates actor</td>
<td>Hurt, defensive, humiliated</td>
<td>Expressive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Achieved desired goal at actor's expense</td>
<td>Does not achieve desired goal</td>
<td>May achieve desired goal</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Spector (1973): in a modification of Alberti and Emmons (1970) considerations of nonassertive, assertive and aggressive behavior, helps to further clarify these three kinds of behaviors in the following diagram.
### A COMPARISON OF NONASSERTIVE, ASSERTIVE, AND AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOR

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Nonassertive Behavior</th>
<th>Assertive Behavior</th>
<th>Aggressive Behavior</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Characteristics of the behavior</td>
<td>Emotionally dishonest, indirect, self-denying, inhibited</td>
<td>( Appropriately) emotionally honest, direct, self-enhancing, expressive</td>
<td>(Inappropriately) emotionally honest, direct, self-enhancing at expense of another, expressive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your feelings when you engage in this behavior</td>
<td>Hurt, anxious at the time and possibly angry later</td>
<td>Confident, self-respecting at the time and later</td>
<td>Righteous, superior, deprecatory at the time and possibly guilty later</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The other person's feelings about herself when you engage in this behavior</td>
<td>Guilty or superior</td>
<td>Valued, respected</td>
<td>Hurt, humiliated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The other person's feelings toward you when you engage in this behavior</td>
<td>Irritation, pity, disgust</td>
<td>Generally respect</td>
<td>Angry, vengeful</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Some examples of (a) nonassertive, (b) aggressive, and (c) assertive behaviors (Alberti and Emmons, 1975).

Slumber Party

Your twelve-year old daughter is having a slumber party with five other girls. It is past 2:00 a.m. and the girls should have settled down to sleep by now, but are still quite noisy.

Alternative Responses:

(a) You toss and turn in bed wishing your spouse would get up and say something to the girls. You do a slow burn, but just lie there trying to block out the sounds.
(b) Jumping out of bed, you thoroughly scold and berate the girls, especially your daughter, for their unladylike conduct.
(c) Talking to girls in a tone which they will recognize as meaning business, you tell them that they have had enough fun for tonight. You point out that you need to arise early tomorrow, and that everyone needs to get to sleep. (p. 54)

Haircut

At the barber shop, the barber has just finished cutting your hair and turns the chair toward the mirror so you can inspect. You feel that you would like the sides trimmed more.

Alternative Responses:

(a) You either nod your head in assent or say "that's ok" or say nothing.
(b) Abruptly you state that he should have done a more thorough job or say sarcastically 'You sure didn't take much off the sides, did you?'
(c) You point out that you would like to have the sides trimmed more and ask if he would do so. (p. 55-56)

Quiet Prof

You are in a physics lecture with 300 students. The professor speaks softly and you know that many others are having the same trouble hearing him that you are experiencing.

Alternative Responses:

(a) You continue to strain to hear, eventually move close to the front of the room, but say nothing about his too-soft voice.
(b) You yell out 'Speak up!'
(c) You raise your hand, get the professor's attention, and ask if he would mind speaking louder. (p. 58)

Smoke Gets in Your Lungs

You are at a public meeting in a large room. A man enters the room and sits down next to you, puffing enthusiastically on a large cigar. The smoke is very offensive to you.

Alternative Responses:

(a) You suffer the offensive smoke in silence, deciding it is the right of the other person to smoke if he wishes.
(b) You become very angry, demand that he move or put out the cigar and loudly assail the evils and health hazards of the smoking habit.
(c) You firmly but politely ask him to refrain from smoking because it is offensive to you, or to sit in another seat if he prefers to continue smoking. (p. 60)
APPENDIX II

EXAMPLES OF SMITH (1975) INTERPERSONAL RIGHTS
AND ELLIS (1962) IRRATIONAL BELIEFS
Appendix II

Smith (1975) lists the following rights:

I. You have the right to judge your own behavior, thoughts, and emotions, and to take the responsibility for their initiation and consequences upon yourself.

II. You have the right to offer no reason or excuses for justifying your behavior.

III. You have the right to judge if you are responsible for finding solutions to other people's problems.

IV. You have the right to change your mind.

V. You have the right to make mistakes—and be responsible for them.

VI. You have the right to say, "I don't know."

VII. You have the right to be independent of the goodwill of others before coping with them.

VIII. You have the right to be illogical in making decisions.

IX. You have a right to say, "I don't understand."

X. You have the right to say, "I don't care."

You have the right to say no, without feeling guilty. (Smith, 1975, frontisepiece)
Ellis (1962) irrational ideas:

1. The idea that it is necessary for an adult human to be loved or approved by virtually every significant other person in his community.

2. The idea that one should always be thoroughly competent, adequate, and achieving in all possible respects if one is to consider oneself worthwhile.

3. The idea that certain people are bad, wicked, or villainous and they should be blamed and punished for their villainy (even oneself).

4. The idea that it is awful and catastrophic when things are not the way one would very much like them to be.

5. The idea that human unhappiness is externally caused and people have little or no ability to control their sorrows and disturbances.

6. The idea that if something is or may be dangerous or fearsome, one should be terribly concerned about it and should keep dwelling on the possibility of its occurring.

7. The idea that it is easier to avoid than to face certain life difficulties and self-responsibilities.

8. The idea that one should be dependent on other and needs someone stronger than oneself on whom to rely.

9. The idea that one's past history is an all important determinant of one's present behavior and that because something once strongly affected one's life, it should indefinitely have a similar effect.

10. The idea that one should become quite upset over other people's problems and disturbances.

11. The idea that there is a right, precise and perfect solution invariably to human problems and that it is catastrophic if this perfect solution is not found.
APPENDIX III
Openness in Personal Communication:
THEORETIC PROFILE
Appendix III. Openness in Personal Communication: THEORETIC PROFILE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mutually Relevant</th>
<th>Here and now: feelings expressed are current and based on immediate interactions</th>
<th>Here, not now: feelings expressed relate to immediate interaction but are not current</th>
<th>Not here, not now: feelings expressed are not current and relate to past experience unrelated to present interaction</th>
<th>Not Mutually Relevant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feeling Owned</td>
<td>Owned: Use of &quot;I feel&quot;</td>
<td>General ownership: Other owned: &quot;Some of us feel&quot; &quot;Some people&quot;</td>
<td>General Other: &quot;People...&quot; or &quot;Society...&quot;</td>
<td>Not Owned Feeling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Source of Feeling Specified</td>
<td>Directly specified: &quot;John, toward you I...&quot;</td>
<td>Indirectly specified: &quot;Some people make me feel...&quot;</td>
<td>Generally specified: &quot;I feel around people (in general)&quot;</td>
<td>Source Not Specified</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Causal Connection (Re: Feeling)</td>
<td>Stated: &quot;because...&quot;</td>
<td>Suggested: &quot;may be because&quot;</td>
<td>Alluded to: &quot;there may be a reason&quot;</td>
<td>No Causal Connection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Source of Perception Specified</td>
<td>Directly specified: &quot;Mary, you...&quot;</td>
<td>Indirectly specified: &quot;Some people in the group...&quot;</td>
<td>Generally specified: &quot;I think people are usually...&quot;</td>
<td>Source of Perception Not Specified</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Causal Connection (Re: Perception)</td>
<td>Stated: &quot;You're aggressive because you're insecure...&quot;</td>
<td>Suggested: &quot;The reason may be that you're insecure...&quot;</td>
<td>Alluded to: &quot;There may be a reason...&quot;</td>
<td>No Causal Connection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavior Specified</td>
<td>Specific behavior cited: &quot;...you're yelling at Sue...&quot;</td>
<td>Type of behavior specified: &quot;...say unkind things&quot;</td>
<td>Existence of behaviors indicated but not cited: &quot;...some of the things you do...&quot;</td>
<td>No Behavior Specified</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>