

Assertive Phrases

The following are phrases that can be used in assertive communications. Please, keep in mind that effective, positive, assertive communication depends not only on the words used, but on the demeanor, tone and body language of the communicator. In other words, be respectful, honest and caring when communicating, especially in difficult, challenging, tense situations.

When you need to say “NO”:

I would prefer not to...

I just can't take on anything new right now.

As much as I would love to, I have so many things to do, I just can't.

Thanks, but I can't afford that right now.

Thanks, but I need some time to myself right now.

No, I have to (do something).

Thank you for asking me, but I can't make it this time.

When you disagree:

I respect your opinion and I am sure you can respect mine.

No, I am just not comfortable with that.

Thank you for your input, but let's hear from others.

I just don't know. Could I think about that for a while?

I understand how you feel. I see things a little differently.

You may not be aware of this, but...

I would like to ... Would that be an issue?

I understand you are angry I respect your feelings. But here is what I feel...

When you want help:

Could you lend me a hand?

I feel that I am being stretched too thin. Could you please help by...

I would appreciate your help.

You are good at this. Would you be willing to help me?

When you need to help someone improve:

I know you didn't mean to hurt me, but I feel offended when you...

Next time, I would appreciate it if you would please...

I was worried about you when you were not here on time...

When you have made a mistake:

Yes, you're right. I will try to do better.

I understand you are hurt. I am sorry.

When you need to buy time:

I understand you need some of my time. Can I finish what I am working on and meet you in an hour?

That is an interesting idea. Can I have some time to think it over?