

Interpersonal Effectiveness Skills

Interpersonal Effectiveness Week 1



Factors in the Way of Interpersonal Effectiveness

YOU DON'T HAVE THE INTERPERSONAL SKILLS YOU NEED

YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU WANT

- You have the skills, but can't decide what you really want from the other person.
- You can't figure out how to balance your needs versus the other person's needs:
 - Asking for too much versus not asking for anything.
 - Saying no to everything versus giving in to everything.

YOUR EMOTIONS ARE GETTING IN THE WAY

- You have the skills, but emotions (anger, pride, contempt, fear, shame, guilt) control what you do.

YOU FORGET YOUR LONG-TERM GOALS FOR SHORT-TERM GOALS

- You put your immediate urges and wants ahead of your long-term goals. The future vanishes from your mind.

OTHER PEOPLE ARE GETTING IN YOUR WAY

- You have the skills but other people get in the way.
- Other people are more powerful than you.
- Other people may be threatened or may not like you if you get what you want.
- Other people may not do what you want unless you sacrifice your self-respect, at least a little.

YOUR THOUGHTS AND BELIEFS ARE GETTING IN THE WAY

- Worries about negative consequences if you ask for what you want or say no to someone's request get in the way of acting effectively.
- Beliefs that you don't deserve what you want stop you in your tracks.
- Beliefs that others don't deserve what they want make you ineffective.



Clarifying Goals in Interpersonal Situations

OBJECTIVES EFFECTIVENESS: Getting What You Want from Another Person

- Obtaining your legitimate rights.
- Getting another person to do something you want that person to do.
- Saying no to an unwanted or unreasonable request.
- Resolving an interpersonal conflict.
- Getting your opinion or point of view taken seriously.

Questions

1. What specific **results or changes** do I want from this interaction?
2. What do I have to do to get the results? What will work?

RELATIONSHIP EFFECTIVENESS: Keeping and Improving the Relationship

- Acting in such a way that the other person keeps liking and respecting you.
- Balancing immediate goals with the good of the long-term relationship.
- Maintaining relationships that matter to you.

Questions

1. How do I want the **other person to feel about me** after the interaction is over (whether or not I get the results or changes I want)?
2. What do I have to do to get (or keep) this relationship?

SELF-RESPECT EFFECTIVENESS: Keeping or Improving Self-Respect

- Respecting your own values and beliefs.
- Acting in a way that makes you feel moral.
- Acting in a way that makes you feel capable and effective.

Questions

1. How do I want to **feel about myself** after the interaction is over (whether or not I get the results or changes I want)?
2. What do I have to do to feel that way about myself? What will work?



Guidelines for Objectives Effectiveness: Getting What You Want (DEAR MAN)

A way to remember these skills is to remember the term **DEAR MAN**:

Describe
Express
Assert
Reinforce
(Stay) Mindful
Appear Confident
Negotiate

Describe

Describe the current SITUATION (if necessary). Stick to the facts.
Tell the person exactly what you are reacting to.

“You told me you would be home by dinner but you didn’t get here until 11.”

Express

Express your FEELINGS and OPINIONS about the situation.
Don’t assume that the other person knows how you feel.

“When you come home so late, I start worrying about you.”

Use phrases such as “*I want*” instead of “*You should*,” “*I don’t want*” instead of “*You shouldn’t*.”

Assert

Assert yourself by ASKING for what you want or SAYING NO clearly.
Do not assume that others will figure out what you want.
Remember that others cannot read your mind.

“I would really like it if you would call me when you are going to be late.”

Reinforce

Reinforce (reward) the person ahead of time (so to speak)
by explaining positive effects of getting what you want or need.
If necessary, also clarify the negative consequences of not getting
what you want or need.

“*I would be so relieved, and a lot easier to live with, if you do that.*”

Remember also to reward desired behavior after the fact.

(continued on next page)

(Stay)

Mindful

Keep your focus ON YOUR GOALS.
Maintain your position. Don't be distracted. Don't get off the topic.

“Broken record”: Keep asking, saying no, or expressing your opinion over and over and over.
Just keep replaying the same thing again and again.

Ignore attacks: If another person attacks, threatens, or tries to change the subject,
ignore the threats, comments, or attempts to divert you.
Do not respond to attacks. Ignore distractions.
Just keep making your point.

“I would still like a call.”

Apppear confident

Appear EFFECTIVE and competent.

Use a confident voice tone and physical manner;
make good eye contact.

No stammering, whispering, staring at the floor, retreating.

No saying, “I’m not sure,” etc.

Negotiate

Be willing to GIVE TO GET.
Offer and ask for other solutions to the problem.
Reduce your request.
Say no, but offer to do something else or to solve the problem another way.
Focus on what will work.

“How about if you text me when you think you might be late?”

Turn the tables: Turn the problem over to the other person.
Ask for other solutions.

“What do you think we should do? . . . I can't just stop worrying about
you [or I'm not willing to].”

Other ideas:

DEAR MAN Practice Sheet

Prompting event/ situation		
Objectives in situation (What result I want)	Relationship issue (How I want the other to feel about me and relationship)	Self- respect issue (How I want to feel about myself)

Priorities: Objective _____ Relationship _____ Self respect _____

D	Describe	
E	Express feelings/opinions	
A	Assert	
R	Reinforce	

M	Mindful of objective	Broken record? ____ Ignore defensiveness? ____
A	Appear confident	
N	Negotiate	Turning the tables? ____

Note: What made DEAR MAN easy or difficult? Other noteworthy thoughts?

Interpersonal Effectiveness Week 2

INTERPERSONAL EFFECTIVENESS HANDOUT 6



([Interpersonal Effectiveness Worksheets 4, 5](#))

Guidelines for Relationship Effectiveness: Keeping the Relationship (GIVE)

A way to remember these skills is to remember the word **GIVE (DEAR MAN, GIVE)**:

(Be) **G**entle

(Act) **I**nterested

Validate

(Use an) **E**asy manner

(Be)

Gentle

BE NICE and respectful.

No attacks: No verbal or physical attacks. No hitting, clenching fists. No harassment of any kind. Express anger directly with words.

No threats: If you have to describe painful consequences for not getting what you want, describe them calmly and without exaggerating. No “manipulative” statements, no hidden threats. No “I’ll kill myself if you . . .” Tolerate a “no.” Stay in the discussion even if it gets painful. Exit gracefully.

No judging: No moralizing. No “If you were a good person, you would . . .” No “You should . . .” or “You shouldn’t . . .” Abandon blame.

No sneering: No smirking, eye rolling, sucking teeth. No cutting off or walking away. No saying, “That’s stupid, don’t be sad,” “I don’t care what you say.”

(Act)

Interested

LISTEN and APPEAR INTERESTED in the other person.

Listen to the other person’s point of view.

Face the person; maintain eye contact; lean toward the person rather than away. Don’t interrupt or talk over the person.

Be sensitive to the person’s wish to have the discussion at a later time. Be patient.

Validate

With WORDS AND ACTIONS, show that you understand the other person’s feelings and thoughts about the situation. See the world from the other person’s point of view, and then say or act on what you see.

“I realize this is hard for you, and . . .”, “I see that you are busy, and . . .”

Go to a private place when the person is uncomfortable talking in a public place.

(Use an)

Easy manner

Use a little humor.

SMILE. Ease the person along. Be light-hearted. Sweet-talk.

Use a “soft sell” over a “hard sell.” Be “political.”

Leave your attitude at the door.

Other ideas:

INTERPERSONAL EFFECTIVENESS HANDOUT 18

([Interpersonal Effectiveness Worksheet 12](#))

A “How To” Guide to Validation

1. Pay Attention:

Look interested, listen, and observe. No multitasking. Make eye contact. Stay focused. Nod occasionally. Respond with your face (e.g., smile at happy statements; look concerned when hearing something painful).

2. Reflect Back:

Say back what you heard or observed to be sure you actually understand what the person is saying. *No* judgmental language or voice tone!

Try to really “get” what the person feels or thinks. Have an open mind. (No disagreeing, criticizing, or trying to change the person’s mind or goals.) Use a voice tone that allows the other person to correct you . . . and *check the facts!*

Example: *“So you are mad at me because you think I lied just to get back at you. Did I get it right?”*

3. “Read Minds”:

Be sensitive to what is *not* being said by the other person. Pay attention to facial expressions, body language, what is happening, and what you know about the person already. Show that you understand in words or by your actions. *Be open to correction.*

Example: *When you are asking a friend for a ride at the end of a long day and the person slumps down, say, “You look really tired. Let me look for someone else.”*

4. Understand:

Look for how the other person feels, is thinking, or if he or she is making sense, given the person’s history, state of mind or body, or current events (i.e. the causes)—even if you don’t approve of the person’s behavior, or if his or her belief is incorrect. Say *“It makes sense that you . . . because . . .”*

Example: *If you sent a party invitation to the wrong address, say, “I can see why you thought I might be excluding you on purpose.”*

5. Acknowledge the valid:

Show that you see that the person’s thoughts, feelings, or actions are valid, given current reality and facts. Act as if the person’s behavior is valid.

Example: *If you are criticized for not taking out the garbage on your day, admit that it is your day and take it out. If people present a problem, help them solve it (unless they just want to be heard). If people are hungry, give them food. Acknowledge the effort a person is making.*

6. Show Equality:

Be yourself! Don’t “one-up” or “one-down” the other person. Treat the other as an equal, not as fragile or incompetent.

Example: *Be willing to admit mistakes. If someone introduces him- or herself by first name, introduce yourself by your first name. Ask other people for their opinions. Give up being defensive. Be careful in giving advice or telling someone what to do if you are not asked or required to do so. Even then, remember you could be wrong.*

Note. Adapted from Linehan, M. M. (1997). Validation and psychotherapy. In A. Bohart & L. Greenberg (Eds.), *Empathy reconsidered: New directions in psychotherapy* (pp. 353–392). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association. Copyright 1997 by the American Psychological Association. Adapted by permission.

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Guidelines for Self-Respect Effectiveness: Keeping Respect for Yourself (FAST)

A way to remember these skills is to remember the word **FAST (DEAR MAN, GIVE FAST)**.

(Be) **F**air

(No) **A**pologies

Stick to Values

(Be) **T**ruthful

(Be)

Fair

Be fair to YOURSELF and to the OTHER person.
Remember to VALIDATE YOUR OWN feelings and wishes,
as well as the other person's.

Don't overapologize.

(No)

Apologies

No apologizing for being alive or for making a request at all.
No apologies for having an opinion, for disagreeing.
No LOOKING ASHAMED, with eyes and head down or body slumped.
No invalidating the valid.

Stick to YOUR OWN values.

S

tick to values

Don't sell out your values or integrity for reasons that aren't VERY important.
Be clear on what you believe is the moral or valued way of thinking and
acting, and "stick to your guns."

(Be)

Truthful

Don't lie. Don't act helpless when you are not.
Don't exaggerate or make up excuses.

Other ideas:

DEAR MAN/GIVE/FAST Practice Sheet

Prompting event/ situation		
Objectives in situation (What result I want)	Relationship issue (How I want the other to feel about me and relationship)	Self-respect issue (How I want to feel about myself)

Priorities: Objective _____ Relationship _____ Self respect _____

Write down your DEAR MAN	Describe your GIVE G – Gentle, no attacks or threats I – Interested, listen, be patient V – Validate E – Easy manner, some humour	Describe your FAST F – Fair to yourself & others A – no Apologies S – Stick to your values T – Truthful
Describe		
Express		
Assert		
Reinforce		

Mindful Broken record? ____ Ignore defensiveness? ____		
Appear confident		
Negotiate Turning the tables? ____		

Note: What made DEAR MAN easy or difficult? Other noteworthy thoughts?

Interpersonal Effectiveness Week 3



Evaluating Options for Whether or How Intensely to Ask for Something or Say No

Before asking for something or saying no to a request, you have to decide how intensely you want to hold your ground.

Options range from **very low** intensity, where you are very flexible and accept the situation as it is, to **very high** intensity, where you try every skill you know to change the situation and get what you want.

OPTIONS

Low intensity (let go, give in)

<i>Asking</i>		<i>Saying No</i>
Don't ask; don't hint.	1	Do what the other person wants without being asked.
Hint indirectly; take no.	2	Don't complain; do it cheerfully.
Hint openly; take no.	3	Do it, even if you're not cheerful about it.
Ask tentatively; take no.	4	Do it, but show that you'd rather not.
Ask gracefully, but take no.	5	Say you'd rather not, but do it gracefully.
Ask confidently; take no.	6	Say no confidently, but reconsider.
Ask confidently; resist no.	7	Say no confidently; resist saying yes.
Ask firmly; resist no.	8	Say no firmly; resist saying yes.
Ask firmly; insist; negotiate; keep trying.	9	Say no firmly; resist; negotiate; keep trying.
Ask and don't take no for an answer.	10	Don't do it.

High intensity (stay firm)

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FACTORS TO CONSIDER

When deciding how firm or intense you want to be in asking or saying no, think about:

1. The other person's or your own **capability**.
2. Your **priorities**.
3. The effect of your actions on your **self-respect**.
4. Your or the other's moral and legal **rights** in the situation.
5. Your **authority** over the person (or his or hers over you).
6. The type of **relationship** you have with the person.
7. The effect of your action on **long- versus short-term goals**.
8. The degree of **give and take** in your relationship.
9. Whether you have done your **homework** to prepare.
10. The **timing** of your request or refusal.

- 1. CAPABILITY:**
 - Is the person able to give you what you want? If YES, raise the intensity of ASKING.
 - Do you have what the person wants? If NO, raise the intensity of NO.
- 2. PRIORITIES:**
 - Are your GOALS very important? Increase intensity.
 - Is your RELATIONSHIP shaky? Consider reducing intensity.
 - Is your SELF-RESPECT on the line? Intensity should fit your values.
- 3. SELF-RESPECT:**
 - Do you usually do things for yourself? Are you careful to avoid acting helpless when you are not? If YES, raise the intensity of ASKING.
 - Will saying no make you feel bad about yourself, even when you are thinking about it wisely? If NO, raise the intensity of NO.
- 4. RIGHTS:**
 - Is the person required by law or moral code to give you what you want? If YES, raise the intensity of ASKING.
 - Are you required to give the person what he or she is asking for? Would saying no violate the other person's rights? If NO, raise the intensity of NO.
- 5. AUTHORITY:**
 - Are you responsible for directing the person or telling the person what to do? If YES, raise the intensity of ASKING.
 - Does the person have authority over you (e.g., your boss, your teacher)? And is what the person is asking within his or her authority? If NO, raise the intensity of NO.

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INTERPERSONAL EFFECTIVENESS HANDOUT 8 (p. 3 of 3)

- 6. RELATIONSHIP:**
- Is what you want appropriate to the current relationship? If YES, raise the intensity of ASKING.
 - Is what the person is asking for appropriate to your current relationship? If NO, raise the intensity of NO.
- 7. LONG-TERM VERSUS SHORT-TERM GOALS:**
- Will not asking for what you want keep the peace now but create problems in the long run? If YES, raise the intensity of ASKING.
 - Is giving in to keep the peace right now more important than the long-term welfare of the relationship? Will you eventually regret or resent saying no? If NO, raise the intensity of NO.
- 8. GIVE AND TAKE:**
- What have you done for the person? Are you giving at least as much as you ask for? Are you willing to give if the person says yes? If YES, raise the intensity of ASKING.
 - Do you owe this person a favor? Does he or she do a lot for you? If NO, raise the intensity of NO.
- 9. HOMEWORK:**
- Have you done your homework? Do you know all the facts you need to know to support your request? Are you clear about what you want? If YES, raise the intensity of ASKING.
 - Is the other person's request clear? Do you know what you are agreeing to? If NO, raise the intensity of NO.
- 10. TIMING:**
- Is this a good time to ask? Is the person "in the mood" for listening and paying attention to you? Are you catching the person when he or she is likely to say yes to your request? If YES, raise the intensity of ASKING.
 - Is this a bad time to say no? Should you hold off answering for a while? If NO, raise the intensity of NO.

Other factors: _____

INTERPERSONAL EFFECTIVENESS WORKSHEET 6 (p. 1 of 2)

[\(Interpersonal Effectiveness Handout 8\)](#)

The Dime Game: Figuring Out How Strongly to Ask or Say No

Due Date: _____ Name: _____ Week Starting: _____

To figure out how strongly to ask for something or how strongly to say no, read the instructions below. Circle the dimes you put in the bank, and then add them up. Then go back over the list and see if some items are much more important than others. Check Wise Mind before acting, if some items are much more important than others.

Decide how strongly to ask for something.		Decide how strongly to say no.	
Put a dime in the bank for each of the questions that get a yes answer. The more money you have, the stronger you ask. If you have a dollar, then ask very strongly. If you don't have any money in the bank, then don't ask; don't even hint.		Put a dime in the bank for each of the questions that get a no answer. The more money you have, the stronger you say no. If you have a dollar, then say no very strongly. If you don't have any money in the bank, then do it without even being asked.	
10¢	Is this person able to give or do what I want?	Capability	Can I give the person what is wanted? 10¢
10¢	Is getting my objective more important than my relationship with this person?	Priorities	Is my relationship more important than saying no? 10¢
10¢	Will asking help me feel competent and self-respecting?	Self-respect	Will saying no make me feel bad about myself? 10¢
10¢	Is the person required by law or moral code to do or give me what I want?	Rights	Am I required by law or moral code to give or do what is wanted, or does saying no violate this person's rights? 10¢
10¢	Am I responsible for telling the person what to do?	Authority	Is the other person responsible for telling me what to do? 10¢
10¢	Is what I want appropriate for this relationship? (Is it right to ask for what I want?)	Relationship	Is what the person is requesting of me appropriate to my relationship with this person? 10¢
10¢	Is asking important to a long-term goal?	Goals	In the long term, will I regret saying no? 10¢
10¢	Do I give as much as I get with this person?	Give and take	Do I owe this person a favor? (Does the person do a lot for me?) 10¢
10¢	Do I know what I want and have the facts I need to support my request?	Homework	Do I know what I am saying no to? (Is the other person clear about what is being asked for?) 10¢
10¢	Is this a good time to ask? (Is the person in the right mood?)	Timing	Should I wait a while before saying no? 10¢
\$	Total value of asking (Adjusted ± ___ for Wise Mind)	Total value of saying no (Adjusted ± ___ for Wise Mind)	\$

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INTERPERSONAL EFFECTIVENESS WORKSHEET 6 (p. 2 of 2)

ASKING		SAYING NO
Don't ask; don't hint.	0–10¢	Do it without being asked.
Hint indirectly; take no.	20¢	Don't complain; do it cheerfully.
Hint openly; take no.	30¢	Do it, even if you're not cheerful about it.
Ask tentatively; take no.	40¢	Do it, but show that you'd rather not.
Ask gracefully, but take no.	50¢	Say you'd rather not, but do it gracefully.
Ask confidently; take no.	60¢	Say no firmly, but reconsider.
Ask confidently; resist no.	70¢	Say no confidently; resist saying yes.
Ask firmly; resist no.	80¢	Say no firmly; resist saying yes.
Ask firmly; insist; negotiate; keep trying.	90¢	Say no firmly; resist; negotiate.
Don't take no for an answer.	\$1.00	Don't do it.