

# Assertive Bill of Rights

**The following rights highlight the freedom you have to be yourself without disrespecting others.**

- The right to have and express your own feelings and opinions appropriately and have them taken seriously by others.
- The right to ask for what you want.
- The right to say “no” without feeling guilty.
- The right to be treated with respect and not be taken for granted.
- The right to offer no reasons or excuses.
- The right to set your own priorities.
- The right to make mistakes.
- The right to change your mind.
- The right to make your own decisions and deal with the consequences.
- The right to choose not to assert yourself.

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## As an Assertive Person, You Can...

Accept compliments. You can accept compliments graciously (“Yes, I like this shirt, too”) rather than disagreeing with them (“Oh! This old thing”). You reward rather than punish your complimenter.

Use appropriate facial talk. Your facial expression and voice inflections convey the same feelings your words are conveying. You can look at people directly in the eye when conversing with them.

Disagree mildly. When you disagree with someone, you do not pretend to agree for the sake of keeping the peace. You can convey your disagreement mildly by looking away, or grimacing, or raising eyebrows, or shaking your head, or changing the topic of conversation.

Ask for clarification. If someone gives you garbled directions, instruction, or explanations, you can ask that person to restate them more clearly. Rather than going away confused and feeling dumb, you can say, “Your directions were not clear to me. Would you please go over them again?”

Ask why. When you are asked to do something that does not seem reasonable or enjoyable, you can ask, “Why do you want me to do that?”

Use feeling-talk. You can express your personal likes and interests spontaneously rather than stating things in neutral terms. You say, “I like this soup,” or “I love your blouse” rather than, “This soup is good.” You can use the phrase “I feel” or “I think” when it is appropriate.

Express active disagreement. When you disagree with someone and feel sure of your ground, you can express your disagreement by saying things like, “I have a different view of that matter. My opinion is ...” or “I think your opinion leaves out of consideration the following factors...”

Speak up for your rights. You do not let others take advantage of you when you feel put upon; you can say no persistently without feeling guilty. You can demand your rights and ask to be treated with fairness and justice. You can say, “I was next in line” , or “Excuse me, but you will have to leave me as I have another appointment now,” or “Please turn down your radio” , or “You’re half an hour late for our appointment.” You can register your complaints firmly without blowing up.

Be persistent. If you have a legitimate complaint, you can continue to restate it despite resistance from the other party until you get satisfaction. You do not allow pressure .

Avoid justifying every opinion. In discussion, if someone continually argues and asks you why, why, why, you can stop the questioning by refusing to go alone, or by reflecting it back to the other person. You can state simply, “That’s just the way I feel. Those are my values. I don’t have to justify everything I say. If justifying is so important to you, you might try justifying why you’re disagreeing with me so much.

The above list is from: Bower, S.A, & Bower, G.H (1991),

**Asserting yourself: A practical guide for positive change. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company.**

## Where can I get help?

**Sexual Assault Advocate**—Information—Referral: Kansas State University Women's Center, 206 Holton Hall, 532-6444

**Medical Assistance**—Rape Kit: Lafene Health Center Women's Clinic, 532-6554; Mercy ER, 1823 College Ave., 776-3322

**Mental Health—Well-Being**—Counseling: KSU Counseling Services, 532-6927, web site: <http://www.ksu.edu/counseling>

**Academic:** Office of Student Life, 532-6432

**KSU Police:** 532-6412;

Riley County Police: 537-2112 ) Call 911 for immediate emergency assistance

**Domestic Violence and Emergency Shelter:** The Crisis Center, Inc. 1-800-727-2785 (In Manhattan: 539-2785)

