Four communication styles

Passive, aggressive, passive-aggressive and assertive.

We all use every style at times. Most of us lean on one or two, especially under stress. Only one of them respects both people.

	Passive	Aggressive	Passive-aggressive	Assertive
The message	"You matter. I do not."	"I matter. You do not."	"I will not say it, but you will know about it."	"We both matter."
Sounds like	"I do not mind." "Whatever you want." "Sorry."	"You always..." "That is ridiculous."	"Fine." Sarcasm, sulking, "forgetting".	"I would like..." "I feel..." "No, I cannot."
Looks like	Quiet voice, little eye contact, hunched	Loud, staring, pointing, in your space	Sighs, eye-rolling, the silent treatment	Steady voice, relaxed, open, direct
Short term	Avoids conflict	Gets its way	Avoids direct conflict	May feel uncomfortable
Long term	Resentment, being overlooked, low self-worth	Fear and distance in others, guilt	Mistrust, confusion, problems unsolved	Respect, clearer relationships, more needs met

Why we end up passive or aggressive

- We were taught that our needs come last, or that being nice means agreeing.
- We fear conflict, rejection or being disliked.
- We hold it in for so long that it finally bursts out.
- Nobody ever showed us another way.

Assertiveness is a skill

It is not a personality type, and it can be learned. It means saying what you think, feel and need, clearly and respectfully, while accepting that the other person may say no.

The style I use most, and with whom

A situation where I would like to be more assertive

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