

Interpersonal Effectiveness: *Objective Goals*

What do you want to get from your interaction? Your object goal is focused on what you are asking the other person to do for you (or what you're asking the other person to change). The acronym D.E.A.R. M.A.N. is focused on what you say. Keep in mind, the DEARMAN strategy is a playbook – do not worry about going in specific order. Instead, use this to guide your conversation.

Describe the situation

Describe the situation as concretely and factually as you can. You want to avoid *anything* that the other person can argue with. Here, you are framing the conversation. You are establishing a boundary – I am talking about this thing and nothing else.

Express emotion

Let the other person know your emotion. Be the first person to share how you feel. This will let them know why this conversation is important. Worst case – the other person invalidates or ignores your emotion. If this occurs, calmly describe to them what just happened (e.g., “I just told you I was feeling X and you ignored it. This is part of the issue I want to talk about.”)

Assert your need

Tell the person exactly what you need is very concrete, observable, measurable terms. Don't ask them to think about, work on, or consider something. Think of this in terms of “how will I know if my need is met?”

Remind yourself

Why is this conversation important to you? Have in your mind what the consequence of your need not being met as well as the benefit of them working with you. This will keep you in the conversation and give you an answer for commonly asked questions (e.g., if they ask “why do you want that” you will already have an answer ready).

Mindful

Stay on topic! The two ways other people get us to abandon our needs: (1) making the problem too big to solve or (2) changing the topic. Do not be aggressive with this. Simply acknowledge what they say and gently redirect them back to the topic (e.g. “yes, that makes sense and right now we are just talking about...”)

Act confident

People tend to mirror other people's emotions. If you act calm and confident, the other person usually will act the same. You want to show the person that this is a calm, reasonable and workable conversation. They aren't in trouble.

Negotiate the method

Pull the person onto your side and ask them how they can work with you to get to your need. People don't like to be told what to do so ask them how you two can work together to get this done. You are NOT negotiating your need. You are negotiating how your need is met. Maybe you offer to work with them or give them reminders. Maybe you do something in return. Show flexibility and let the other person know it is you and them against a common problem (not you against them and their problem).

