

A DEESC Script is an **assertive communication tool** designed to help you respectfully but assertively ask another person for a change in behavior.

## What is assertive communication?

Is the ability to clearly express one's ideas, desires and feelings while at the same time, maintaining respect for the other's rights and feelings. Expressing anger appropriately and working to resolve conflicts is being assertive.

1. "I win, you win."
2. Considerate of others
3. Uses "I" statements
4. Direct
5. Decisive
6. Erect posture
7. Meets confrontation head on
8. Compromises
9. Negotiates and expects needs to be met without abusing others
10. Feels in control/confident

**The goal is for the 2 individuals to improve the relationship. (They are best used with people with whom have an investment in your happiness.)**

Everyone has the right to let others know that their behavior bothers them. You also have the right to ask them to modify their behavior. When you do not exercise this right, you deny the importance of yourself as well as the relationship. Don't get caught in the trap of the other person saying, "why are you trying to change me?" That is not what you are doing. **You are asking them to change their behavior.** You are not how you behave. Another way to say that is that your behavior does not determine your identity.

**This tool is just a springboard to more in-depth discussions** and not always a solution in itself. Our eventual hope is to strengthen our assertiveness and negotiating skills so that greater trust, friendship, and partnership can be built into our significant relationships.

DEESC Script is an opening for further discussion, not a notification of what must happen. At the same time, by being direct and clear you've decreased avoidance or aggressive behaviors and increased your chances of your desired outcome. Remember: avoidance just reinforces bad behaviors.

- 1<sup>st</sup>: Get consensus on a good time to talk
- 2<sup>nd</sup>: Let the other person know the topic
- 3<sup>rd</sup>: Acknowledge that it may be difficult to share and to listen
- 4<sup>th</sup>: Only one DEESC Script per issue/topic/situation

<b>D</b>	• Describe ("When you ____.")
<b>E</b>	• Express ("I feel ____.")
<b>E</b>	• Empathize ("I understand/realize ____.")
<b>S</b>	• Specify ("I want/need ____.")
<b>C</b>	• Consequence ("If __, then ____.")

## DESCRIBE

- Describe the other person's behavior objectively.
- Use concrete terms.
- Describe a specific time, place, and frequency of the action.
- Describe the action, not the motive. (Point out a behavior, not an analysis of a behavior).
- Describe the behavior I see and/or hear in the other person. (Be descriptive, not judgmental).
- It is important to use descriptive language, rather than labeling words. (Ex: You have been leaving your dirty laundry all over the room," which is more effective than, "you are an inconsiderate slob!")
- It can be hard to know where the boundary is between being honest and being hurtful. Describe behaviors vs giving judgements, because it is your judgements that are most hurtful.
- **Now, describe: "When you \_\_\_\_\_"**

## EXPRESS

- Express your feelings; emotions leave less room for argument.
- Express them calmly.
- State feelings in a positive manner related to goal.
- Direct yourself to the specific offending behavior, not the whole person.
- Express the feelings you experience as a result of the other person's behavior (Ex: I feel angry and resentful when you leave your dirty laundry all of the room."
- **Express: "I feel \_\_\_\_\_."**

## EMPATHIZE

- If possible, show some understanding for the position of others.
- Be honest, not sarcastic.
- **Empathize: "I realize/I understand \_\_\_\_\_."**

## SPECIFY

- Ask explicitly for change in behavior.
- Request a small change.
- Request only one or two changes at one time.
- Specify the concrete actions you want to see stopped, and those you want to see performed.
- Take account of whether your person can meet your request without suffering large losses.
- If appropriate, specify what behavior you are willing to change to make the agreement.
- Ask for a specific change in behavior.
- (Ex: I would like you to keep you dirty laundry in the closet. Are you willing to do this?"
- **Specify: "I want \_\_\_\_\_" or "I need \_\_\_\_\_."**

## CONSEQUENCES

- Make consequences explicit.
- Give a positive reward for change in the desired direction.
- Select something that is desirable and reinforcing for the other person.
- Select the reward that is big enough to maintain the behavior change.
- Select a punishment with a magnitude that "fits the crime" of refusing to change behavior.
- Select a punishment that you are actually willing to carry out.
- Consequence: It may be necessary to spell these out. (Positive – "I would enjoy living with you more." Negative – "I will sweep your clothes under the bed.") Ideally find a positive for them (what's in it for them?), you, and both of you (this is where I see you in this, not just me).
- What is the difference between a consequence and an ultimatum? A consequence is a result or effect of an action or condition. An ultimatum is a consequence for when a boundary is not respected.
- **Consequence: "If \_\_\_\_\_, then \_\_\_\_\_." – Make sure you can carry it out!**