

The 4 Communication Styles

Your communication style is the way you interact with others and it determines how you speak, act and react in various situations. Here are the four primary communication styles:



PASSIVE

Passive communicators are typically quiet and don't seek attention. They rarely take a strong stance or assert themselves during debates or conflict. They don't usually share their needs or express their feelings, so it may be difficult to know when they are uncomfortable or need help. This person tends to have a lack of eye contact, apologises a lot, finds it hard to say "no", and easily agrees with people even if they truly disagree on the inside. If this person is not careful, people can take advantage of them or walk over them.



PASSIVE-AGGRESSIVE

Passive-Aggressive is like being quiet on the outside, but secretly aggressive on the inside. While their words might sound agreeable, their actions don't always align with what they say. They sometimes manipulate a situation to benefit them. They usually approach people or situations using sarcasm, denial, giving the silent treatment or presenting a happy face when they are obviously upset. This person needs to be mindful not to bottle things up as it can lead to more personal stress and harming relationships.



AGGRESSIVE

Aggressive communicators openly express their thoughts and feelings and tend to dominate conversations. This person forces others to do what they want, and tends to dominate conversations with no regard to how people feel. Sometimes they react before thinking, which can negatively affect relationships and productivity. This person tends to interrupt people while they're speaking, invade personal space and uses aggressive gestures. If this person continues, they will struggle to form strong relationships and increase more stress in their life.

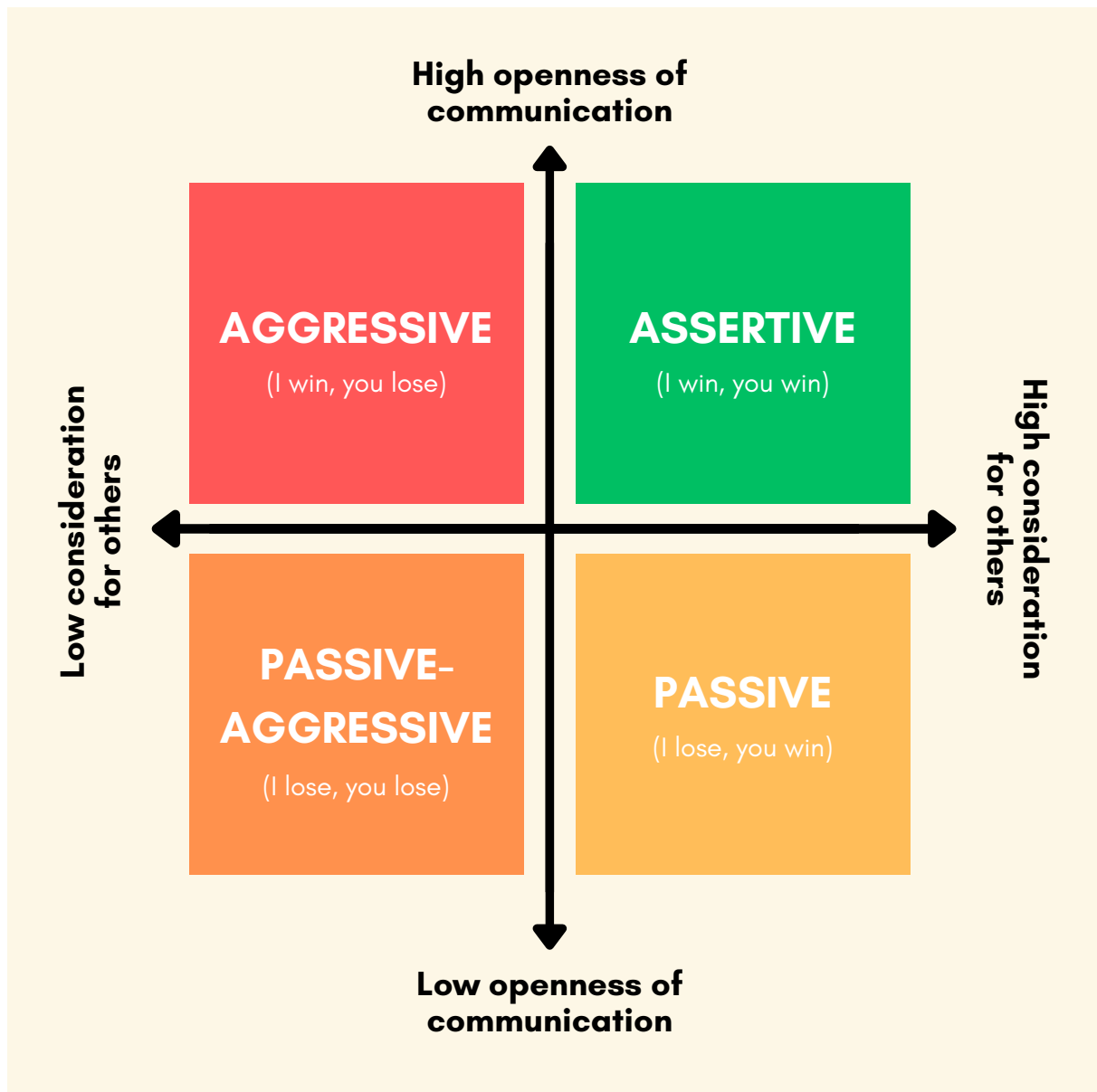


ASSERTIVE

The assertive style is typically the most respectful and productive type of communication. Assertive communicators share their thoughts and ideas confidently, but they're always respectful and polite. They are always prepared to take on challenges but know how to say "no" when it's required. These individuals understand their own limits and protect their boundaries without acting overly aggressive or defensive. This person normally has a clear voice when speaking, is collaborative, has friendly eye contact, and open hand gestures.

Who Wins & Who Loses?

Let's look at the four communication styles in a different way: by thinking about who wins and who might lose. The diagram below shows how each communication style varies in how much they prioritise talking openly versus taking others into account.



The win-lose model simplifies communication styles by showing who benefits and who might lose. This helps us understand the impacts of different styles, leading to better relationships, conflict resolution, and personal growth.