

DEAR MAN

DEAR MAN is a skill that teaches you how to ask for something from someone while still maintaining a good relationship with that person. It also can help you resolve conflicts and effectively say no when you need to.

D

Describe

Describe the current situation (if needed). Don't ask for, reject, or give an opinion at this point. Just focus on the FACTS. Clearly state what you are responding to.

E

Express



Express your FEELINGS and OPINIONS about the situation. Don't assume that the other person knows how you feel. Use phrases such as "I want" instead of "You should," "I don't want" instead of "You shouldn't."

A

Assert

Assert yourself by ASKING for what you want or SAYING NO clearly. Do not assume that others will figure out what you want. Remember that others cannot read your mind.

R

Reinforce

Reinforce (reward) the person by explaining positive effects of getting what you want or need. If necessary, also clarify the negative consequences of not getting what you want or need. Remember also to reward desired behavior after the fact.

(Stay)

M

Mindful



Stay MINDFUL. Keep your focus ON YOUR GOALS. Maintain your position. Don't be distracted. Don't get off the topic.

- "Broken Record": Keep asking, saying no, or expressing your opinion over and over and over. Just keep replaying the same thing again and again.
- Ignore Attacks: If another person attacks, threatens, or tries to change the subject, ignore the threats, comments, or attempts to divert you. Do not respond. Just keep making your point.

A

Appear Confident

Appear EFFECTIVE. Use a CONFIDENT voice tone and physical manner.



N

Negotiate



Be willing to GIVE TO GET. Offer and ask for other solutions to the problem. Reduce your request. Say no, but offer to do something else or to solve the problem another way. Focus on what will work. Turn the problem over to the other person. Ask for other solutions.

APPLYING DEAR MAN SKILLS

Describe

Example: "It is hard to keep asking you to take out the trash when it is your week to do it."

Not: "You know what you did wrong", "You obviously don't want to hear what I am saying," "You obviously don't care about me."

Express



Example: "It's becoming very uncomfortable for me to keep talking about this," or "I am starting to feel angry/anxious about it,"

Not: "I hate you!", "Every time we talk about this, you get defensive," or "You always make me feel terrible!"

Assert

Example: "Please don't ask me again. My answer won't change."

Not: "Shut up!" or "You should do this!"

Reinforce

Example: "OK, I can see you don't want to do this, so let's see if we can come up with something that will make you more willing to do it."

Not: "If you don't do this for me, I'll never do anything for you ever again," "Gosh, you must be a terrible person for not doing this/for asking me to do this."

(Stay)

Mindful

Dos: Try to be fully present and focus on the issue you are both resolving. Stay on topic.

Don'ts: Fall into the trap of bringing up past events or overpromising the future or going off into a rant



Appear Confident



Dos: Make good eye contact.

Don'ts: Stuttering, whispering, staring at the floor, retreating, saying "I'm not sure", or being overly arrogant.

Negotiate

Example: "What do you think we should do?", "How about if you text me when you think you might be late?"

Not: "It's my way or the highway."

