

## **Assertiveness and Active Listening Skills**

“It takes two to speak the truth...one to speak and another to hear.”

- Henry David Thoreau

### **Assertiveness:**

*Assertiveness is the ability to ask for what you want and need.*

Assertiveness is a valuable communication skill. In successful couples, both individuals tend to be quite assertive. Rather than assuming their partner can read their minds, they ask clearly and directly for what they want.

Assertive individuals take responsibility for their messages by using “I” statements. They avoid statements beginning with “you”. In making constructive requests, they are positive and respectful in their communication. They use polite phrases such as please and thank you.

When each person knows what the other person wants – when each knows they have been heard and understood - intimacy is increased. Assertiveness also helps people to feel good about themselves and increases the likelihood that they will achieve their personal goals.

### **Examples of Assertive Statements:**

“I enjoy spending time with you, but I also want to spend more time with my friends. I would like us to find some time to talk about this.”

“I want to take a ski vacation next winter but I know you like to go to the beach.”

### **Active Listening:**

Good communication depends on you carefully listening to another person. Active listening involves listening attentively without interruption and then restating what was heard. The active listening process lets the sender know whether or not the message sent was clearly understood by restating what they heard.

### **Examples of Active Listening:**

“I heard you say that you enjoy the time we spend together but that you need more time to be with your friends. You want to plan a time to talk about this.”

“If I understand what you said, you want to go skiing next winter. But I would like to go to the beach. Is that correct?”

