BECOMING ASSERTIVE

Step 1: Observe your own behavior. Are you asserting yourself adequately and appropriately? Are you satisfied with your effectiveness in interpersonal relationships?

Step 2: Concentrate on a specific situation. Pick a situation, perhaps one which is not too threatening. Spend a few moments thinking about how you have typically handled the situation in the past. Imagine the actual details, including your feelings at the time and afterwards.

Step 3: Review your past responses. Pay attention to eye contact, body posture, gestures, facial expression, voice, message content. Note your strengths. Be aware of components that were passive or aggressive.

Step 4: Observe an effective model. If possible, watch other people handle the situation, noting the above components in their behavior. If possible, discuss their approach with them.

Step 5: Consider alternate ways of handling the situation. Choose the one that seems to be the most advantageous and least offensive.

Step 6: Imagine yourself handling the situation. Do an assertive role play in your head.

Step 7: Review any irrational self-statements about the situation and possible consequences of your assertion. Replace destructive thoughts with enhancing ones.

Step 8: Practice with a friend, teacher, therapist, tape recorder. Try out different strategies.

Step 9: Get feedback on strengths and weaknesses.

Step 10: Go out and try it! Remember that being direct, honest, and open is the important thing, not getting your way all the time.

Step 11: Self-reinforcement. Whether or not you achieve your goal, remember to pat
yourself on the back for having tried.