

Master the
DEARMAN
technique



“All the world’s a stage...”

Which role do you play?

Did you know that there are 4 main types of behaviour that we can take on - at different times and in different ways - within relationships.

A helpful way to understand them is through this quote:

“All the world’s a stage, and all the men and women merely players...”

- William Shakespeare

Let’s take a look at four roles or behaviours that we can take on as “players” on the stage of life:



“I’ll be however I want.
I don’t care if it hurts you!”



“Sure I’ll be how you want me to be.
That’s fine. That’s totally fine.
Toooooootally fine.
I’ll break all your dishes.”



“I’ll be whatever you want me to be.
I don’t care about what I want.”



“You be you, and I’ll be me.
And that’s awesome.”

Do you know which player you are, or rather, which role you most commonly take on? Have a look at the table below to help guide you:

Behaviour	Acts like...	Says things like...	Health
Aggressive	You're the only one allowed on stage and you push others off.	"I can't believe you didn't get the report to me on time, it's so typical - what have you got to say about it?"	Unhealthy
Passive	All the world is allowed on stage, except you. You're just an audience member.	"It's fine that the report's not done, really I can wait." (But now you can't meet your deadline and are footing the consequences)	Unhealthy
Passive aggressive	The other actors are the audience you are performing for. You'll play the part, but you don't like it. Voicing your lines through clenched teeth, your role says, "read between the lines... I'm not happy."	"It's fine that the report's not done, really I can wait." (Hands are clenched, drops comments about unreliability while in hearing distance)	Unhealthy
Assertive	Everyone is welcome on stage. Everyone's unique experience is valued, no one gets pushed off stage, everyone flourishes.	"I see that you haven't been able to get the report done on time. I feel pressurised as a result. Let's talk through how we can handle this best together."	Healthy

It may seem well and good to label “Assertiveness” as being healthy, but let’s take a look at why it’s so good for you and for your relationships...

Assertiveness helps you:

- Solve conflicts
- Respond to criticism/unfair treatment
- Offer constructive criticism
- Express your opinion, and defend it
- Say no, without feeling guilty
- Request that someone changes their behaviour
- Stand up for your own and others’ rights
- Ask for help, favours or apologise
- Say thank you
- Ask questions
- Express both positive and negative feelings

Assertiveness opens up a whole treasure trove of possibilities...

But, like any grand expedition in search of gold, diamonds and perhaps a Kitchen-aid mixer or a new Ryobi drill, there is a journey involved!

DEARMAN Technique

Example: Michelle is feeling frustrated as she has noticed that her flatmate frequently doesn’t help with the dishes. She applies the DEARMAN technique.

D - Describe the facts

What happened?

Top tips:

- Describe the situation simply.
- Don’t include bias or judgement.
- Use clear language.
- State the facts.
- Be direct (as if you are having a conversation with the person right now).

Why not start with one of these prompts:

- "I've noticed ..."
- "I've observed ..."
- "I've seen ..."

Do say:

"I've noticed you don't help wash the dishes at night."

Don't say:

"You never clean. I can't stand having to deal with your mess."

E - Express

How this makes you feel.

Top tips:

- Focus only on how you are affected.
- Clearly express how you feel (link back to emotional language).
- Use "I statements".
- Be specific.

Why not start with one of these prompts:

- "I feel..."
- "I am feeling..."

Do say:

"I feel used and taken for granted."

Don't say:

"I don't feel good."

A - Assert

Share your thoughts and expectations going forward.

Top tips:

- Be direct, clear and specific.
- Ask for what you do or don't want.
- Remember: the other person can't read your mind (state clearly).

Do say:

"In future, could you please help me do the dishes before going to sleep."

Don't say:

"In future, please clean." or "It'd be great if you actually did the dishes for a change."

R - Reinforce

Share why you think, feel and want what you do.

Top tips:

- Reinforce the relationship.
- Specify why what you are sharing/requesting matters to you.
- Acknowledge that the relationship is important to you.

Do say:

"I appreciate our friendship, and I think cleaning is a task that we should share."

Don't say:

"Because I am sick and tired of asking."

M - Mindful

Consider how your own emotions affect the conversation.

Top tips:

- Be reflective and insightful.
- Try to be fully present during the conversation.
- Focus on the current issue you are resolving.
- Don't bring up past events or pre-empt the future.
- Ignore distractions (phone or environment).

Do say:

"I realise I'm feeling hurt and angry, which may be affecting my perspective of the situation."

Don't say:

"Wow,
I am super angry."

A - Appear confident

How am I coming across?

Top tips:

- Look the part
- Make sure they know you take the conversation seriously.
- Don't appear passive, aggressive or passive aggressive.
- Be aware of what you usually do with your body/expression/tone in confrontations.
- Consider other facial expressions etc. which may be more neutral.

Facial expression

- Try not to frown or scowl.
- Be aware of what your face is saying.
- Make your face match your point.
- Use neutral, calm facial expressions.

Gesture

- Use your hands to illustrate your point.
- Make sure your arms and hands are visible, relaxed and uncrossed.

Voice and words

- Focus on how your voice sounds.
- Use a strong, firm tone.
- Potentially lower your voice.
- Notice how quickly you are speaking.

Body language & posture

- Stop making yourself smaller.
- Open up.
- Stand up/sit up straight.
- Stand with your weight evenly balanced, feet solidly on the floor.

Eye contact

- Maintain eye contact.
- Don't avoid looking at the person.

What not to do:

- Cross your arms like you want to protect yourself.
- Body rock.
- Roll your eyes.
- Hunch forward.
- Act like you want to leave the conversation.
- Feel afraid to take up space.
- Sit or stand in a stiff position.
- Start fiddling with your phone.

N - Negotiate

How can you compromise so you both benefit?

Top tips:

- We can't get everything we want all the time. It's about compromise, give and take.
- Remember to aim for "win-win" situations.

Negotiation strategies:

- Be willing to give to get.
- Offer and ask for alternate solutions.
- Reduce your request.
- Maintain your no, but offer to do something else or solve the problem another way.
- A helpful skill here is **"turning the tables."**
 - Turn the problem over to the other person, ask for alternative solutions.
 - "What do you think we can do?"
 - "I am not able to say yes, but you really seem to want me to. What can we do here?"
 - "How can we solve this problem?"

Do say:

"If you wash the dishes, I will dry."

Don't say:

"I refuse to help, I have washed the dishes every night this week!"

Let's take a look at an example...

Describe

Describe the facts of the situation objectively (without bias or judgement). "I noticed..."

I noticed that you spoke over me today when I was sharing my perspective on the last interaction with our client.

Express

How does this make you feel? Focus only on how you are affected. "So I feel..."

So I felt overlooked and as though my opinion did not matter.

Assert

Share your thoughts and expectations about the situation. "In future..."

In future, I would appreciate it if you would please wait until I have finished sharing before you begin to speak, that way I know you have heard my point of view and can acknowledge it.

Reinforce

Share why you think, feel and want what you do. "Because I..."

I think respecting one another's voice and opinion is an important value and key to being able to work together successfully.

Mindful

Consider how your own emotions might be impacting on the interaction.

I'm aware that this has been an area where I have felt overlooked before and so I want to try not to add to my irritation when I share about it with my colleague.

Appear confident

How can your non-verbal approach be confident but not passive or aggressive?

I plan to try and not fold my arms as a way of remaining open. I also commit to not turning everything into a big joke as an attempt to resolve the potential awkwardness of the conversation.

Negotiate

In what ways could you compromise on terms so that both parties benefit?

I understand that at times people speak over one another when they are excited or share the same view and so I should be willing to acknowledge that this may happen and become more comfortable with it at times.

Being assertive can be tricky, but if you follow these tips, you'll be sure to start welcoming others onto the stage and enjoy your time in the limelight too!

Come on, everybody's welcome...