

## **DEVELOPING AN ASSERTIVE BELIEF SYSTEM**

By standing up for ourselves and letting ourselves be known to others, we gain self respect and respect from other people.

By trying to live our lives in such a way that we never hurt anyone under any circumstances, we end up hurting ourselves and other people.

When we stand up for ourselves and express our honest feelings and thoughts in direct and appropriate ways, everyone usually benefits in the long run. Likewise, when we demean other people, we also demean ourselves and everyone involved usually loses in the process.

By sacrificing our integrity and denying our personal feelings, relationships are usually damaged or prevented from developing. Likewise, personal relationships are hurt when we try to control others through hostility, intimidation, or guilt.

Personal relationships become more authentic and satisfying when we share our honest reactions with other people and do not block others' sharing their reactions with us.

Not letting others know what we think and feel is just as selfish as not attending to other people's thoughts and feelings.

When we frequently sacrifice our rights, we teach other people to take advantage of us.

By being assertive and telling other people how their behavior affects us, we are giving them an opportunity to change their behavior, and we are showing respect for their right to know where they stand with us.

We all have the right to respect from other people.

We all have the right to have needs and to have these needs be as important as other people's needs. Moreover, we have the right to ask (not demand) that other people respond to our needs and to decide whether we will take care of other people's needs.

We all have the right to have feelings—and to express these feelings in ways which do not violate the dignity of other people (e.g., the right to feel tired, happy, depressed, sexy, angry, lonesome, silly).

We all have the right to decide whether we will meet other people's expectations or whether we will act in ways which fit us, as long as we act in ways which do not violate other people's rights.

We all have the right to form our own opinions and to express these opinions.

