

**TEACHERS SHOULD BE ASSERTIVE**  
**AND SELF-CONFIDENT**  
**NOT SUBMISSIVE OR AGGRESSIVE**  
**TEACHERS SHOULD BRING UP ASSERTIVE**  
**CHILDREN.**

**SOME PRINCIPLES FOR ACTION:** \

**THE LITTLE KANGAROO**

**Intent of these notes.**

- ✓ *There are three possible attitudes, dear Teachers. in your dealings without pupils: Assertiveness, Submissiveness and Aggressiveness*
- ✓ *In order to be assertive **you have to make your rights respected and respect the rights of your pupils as well.***
- ✓ *Submissive and aggressive responses both from teachers and pupils are educationally and psychologically damaging*  
*You have both to learn and teach the language of “I” statements and forget the language of “O.K.” and “You statements”*
- ✓ *You have to teach your children to be assertive*

**The Fable.**

**Narrator:** : When for the first time, little Kangaroo, Peeped out of his mommy’s pouch full of admiration, exclaimed:

**L. Kangaroo.** “Oh! How beautiful is this world! Mum, when will you allow me to go out and enjoy these wonders?”

**Narrator:** With great concern and affection, licking him all over, Mother Kangaroo replied:

**Mother:** “There is no need for you, darling, to leave my tummy. I’ll tell you all about the world without your having to go out of my belly. I do not want you to join bad companies outside there. I will not allow you to be exposed to the dangers of that wicked world. Many little Kangaroos like you got spoiled in the outside world. I am a very loving and responsible mother

**Narrator:** Little Kangaroo sighed, closed his eyes, hid himself inside his mommy's tummy and very, very submissively said;

**L. Kangaroo:** "Yes, yes Mum! I'll never step out into the outside world,"

**Narrator:** As the days passed by, little Kangaroo kept growing. He was getting bigger and bigger. Mummy's tummy was becoming smaller and smaller. Finally, it was tearing at the seams. One day, Mother Kangaroo ordered her son:

**Mother:** "I forbid you to grow any more! By growing like this you cause me pain. You make me feel very embarrassed and uncomfortable!"

**Narrator:** And, of course, being so good and obedient, just to please his mum, Little Kangaroo said:

**L.Kangaroo:** "Yes, yes! Mum, I'll do as you please"

**Narrator:** And henceforth he stopped growing. He did not want to pain his mother. Yet, inside Mother Kangaroo's pouch, Little Kangaroo kept putting his mum lots of questions:

**L.Kangaroo:** "Mum, why do you not allow me to go out of your pouch? Mum, what are the dangers I would face, were I to go on my own out there? Mum, where do small Kangaroos come from?"

**Narrator:** One day, Mother Kangaroo, angry and annoyed, shouted:

**Mother:** "Stop questioning me! Good children do not put questions! Be a good boy and do just as I am telling you! Do not think! Do not argue!"

**Narrator:** Being very obedient and submissive, little Kangaroo said

**L Kangaroo:** "Yes, yes. Mum!" I'll not think; I'll no put any more questions.

**Narrator:** Henceforth, Little Kangaroo stopped thinking and asking questions. His mum was very pleased. Yes, her son was so such a nice obedient child! Yet, Little Kangaroo's face turned blank and stupid. Many days later, peeping out of his mother's pouch, Little Kangaroo discovered a little Kangaroo girl. She was the most attractive little female Kangaroo ever seen! Little Kangaroo exclaimed:

**L.Kangaroo:** "Oh! Mum! How beautiful she looks! How charming! I want to marry her!"

**Narrator:** With one or two tears of indignation in her eyes, Mother Kangaroo bewailed:

**Mother:** "What's this I hear? Do you want to leave me, just to marry this ordinary stray Kangaroo girl? Is this the way you repay me for all the sacrifices I made for you? How ungrateful you are! You hurt me very badly!"

**Narrator:** Then with a voice, both pleading and threatening she said:

**Motherl:** “I’ll never allow you to marry her or any other Kangaroo girl. Got that? You got to repay me all I did for you. You have to be a good boy and look after me till I die.”

**Narrator:** Being very obedient and a good boy, Little Kangaroo said:

**L. Kangaroo:** “Yes, yes, Mum! I’ll never marry any one”

**Narrator:** From now on, little Kangaroo did not talk to any Kangaroo girl, he never loved anyone, nor did he marry. He stuck to his mother’s pouch till she died!”

When Mother Kangaroo died, they removed Little Kangaroo from his mother’s tummy. He looked such strange creature! His body was as small and as weak as the one of a new born baby Kangaroo yet, his face was as old and wrinkled as the one of the oldest Kangaroos. As they put him on the ground in the outside world, he shook all over and soon died!”

*(A adaptation from the Spanish “Fabulas del Siglo XX”)*

### **QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION**

1. Did Mother Kangaroo really love her son? Was she truly caring? What was she? Explain.
2. Was Little Kangaroo really obedient and nice towards his mum by always saying ‘Yes, O.K Mum’, ‘Yes, Mum!’? Why? What was he? Explain.
3. Did Little Kangaroo really love his mother? Could he love her?
4. Could he love himself? How would you feel were you the Little Kangaroo? Why? Explain.
5. By always surrendering to his mother’s commands, what did Little Kangaroo do to himself?
6. By being so submissive to his Mum, what did he do her? Could he have helped his Mum to be a better mother?
7. Should our children and students always obey, listen to and do whatever their elders and teachers tell them ? How? When? Why?
8. God said; “Always honor your father and mother”, not necessarily “Always obey your father and mother”. Can you see any difference between honoring and obeying Father and Mother?
9. Should we teachers assert ourselves? What do we mean by assertion?
10. Should we teach our children and pupils to assert themselves? Why? How?
11. What’s the difference between disobedience and assertion?
12. Can they grow in maturity if they do not assert themselves??
13. What’s the meaning of ‘responsible freedom’?
14. Has anyone the right to demand freedom if he is irresponsible? Why?
15. Are you some times, acting like Mother Kangaroo when dealing with others, such as: your parents, your own children and your students and the members of your staff , etc.? For instance,
  - ✓ Not letting others free?

- ✓ Forcing your will on others? Threatening?
  - ✓ Resenting when being questioned and challenged?
  - ✓ Being possessive?
  - ✓ Using others to your advantage?
  - ✓ Manipulating others?
  - ✓ Black mailing?
  - ✓ Inducing guilt in them?
15. Are you are a bit like the Little Kangaroo while dealing with your pupils, staff members and Superiors? Explain.
- ✓ Feeling intimidated?
  - ✓ Surrendering to their whims and fancies?
  - ✓ Allowing them to use you
  - ✓ Scared of expressing your opinions freely but respectfully?
  - ✓ Afraid of criticism\
  - ✓ Being too defensive and apologetic?
16. Can you now tell the difference between?
- ✓ Being obedient?
  - ✓ Being disobedient?
  - ✓ Being submissive?
  - ✓ Being assertive?
  - ✓ Being aggressive

## **INPUT; SUGESTED IDEAS**

### **Basic Principles of Aggressiveness, Submissiveness and Assertiveness.**

- **The question of Aggressiveness, Submissiveness and Assertiveness is essentially connected with the question of human rights..**
- By birth, by the fact that we are Human Persons, every one of us has inborn personal rights.
- We call them Basic Human Rights”, for instance: the right to life, to freedom, to privacy, to education, to marry, etc...
- All of us have to see to it that our human rights are respected.
- Likewise, we have the strict obligation to respect without any distinctions the human rights of others.
- There are no exceptions in the keeping of this mutual obligation. Superiors and inferiors, parents and children, teachers and pupils, educated and un-educated, rich and poor, nationals or foreigners, etc. have to respect each others’ rights.
- No one can abdicate his/her fundamental rights to others even to their superiors. .
- Giving up one’s human rights away to others would be a sort of personal suicide.
- We would cease to be worthy and respectable human persons. In a way our personhood would be killed.
- **Keeping these principles in mind it will be easy to understand what are:**

### **Aggressiveness,** **Submissiveness and**

## Assertiveness are

**An aggressive person is the one who does not respect the rights of others. He/she restricts, takes away or violates other's rights.**

For instance Mother Kangaroo was an aggressive person. She violated nearly all the personal rights of the Little Kangaroo; such as, the right to be free , right to think, right to question, right to grow, right to marry, etc.

**A submissive person is the one who when his/her rights are violated or taken away submits, keeps quiet and conforms. He/she does not demand or fight - in an acceptable and a non aggressive way - for his/her rights to be respected.**

Little Kangaroo was a submissive person. He allowed her mother to take away all his rights.

**An assertive person is the one who, first of all, respects and honors everybody's rights, and at the same time demands from others to respect his/her rights. He/she is ready to fight – in a polite and non aggressive manner - to have his/her rights respected..**

### Very important notes:

1. **These three possible characteristic stances of each person - “The Aggressive, the Submissive and the Assertive” ones will shape and rule all his personal relationships.**
2. Namely, **a submissive person**, in all likelihood, **will be submissive** at home, in school, in college, in the office , at work in the seminary, in the parish, etc., likewise an aggressive and an assertive person will relate and interact consistently all over in an aggressive or an assertive way. .

### By the Way:

#### Check on your Assertiveness by Asking Yourself Two Questions:

- **First:** Do I always respect others' rights? Yes, those of my children, my family members, my students. my employees and even my servants.
- **Second:** Do I insist and demand that my rights be respected also?

**Applying the Concepts of Aggressiveness, Submissiveness and Assertiveness to “Authority & Obedience”, we shall understand what the five following terms signify:**

**1<sup>st</sup> OBEDIENCE:** If I am obeying or doing what I am told by the one who has lawful authority over me, and he/she commands me something within the limits of his/her authority, *I am right. I respect my superior.*

**2<sup>nd</sup> DISOBEDIENCE:** If I am not doing what I am told by a person who has lawful authority over me and commands me within the limits of his/her authority in a respectful manner.. *I am wrong. I violate the Superior's right to command. I am aggressive. I disobedient.*

**3<sup>rd</sup> SUBMISSIVINESS:** If I submit when someone who commands me has no authority over me, or commans me beyond the limits of his/her authority, then *I am wrong. My rights are violated. I have no duty to obey*

**4<sup>th</sup> AGGRESSIVENESS:** If I do not obey when my superior has authority to command me and he/she does it within the limits of hid/her power, then *I challenge his/her authority. I disrespect him/her. I violate my superior's rights. I am aggressive*

**5<sup>th</sup> ASSERTIVENESS:** If I firmly, forcefully and respectfully defend my rights when the superior violates them by acting unjustly, rudely or in an offensive way, or when he/she commands me beyond the limits of his/her authority, then I am assertive *I assert my rights. I am not spurning the superior's person nor denying any of my superior's rights.*

### **SOME PRACTICAL HINTS FOR ACTION:**

- Have the courage to stand for your rights before the staff members before your class and before the management.
- Live-up to your principles and convictions.
- Be true to yourself.
- Try to please your conscience, not your principal's and bosses'.
- Do not be afraid of your pupils and their parents.
- A secure teacher does not need the approval of his pupils to feel important.
- An assertive teacher "doesn't need his pupils, on the contrary his pupils need him/her.
- A loving self-confident teacher let his/her charges free.
- A mature teacher does not crave or hanker for the recognition and appreciation of his/her bosses.

### **DO NOT IDENTIFY "OBEDIECE" WITH "SUBMISSIVENESS"**

- Instill in your students a healthy habit of obedience

- Discourage all sorts of “servility” and “submissiveness”
- Form your pupils’ minds and hearts in such a way that they learn to follow their “consciences” not our orders
- The aim of education is to build up “persons” not robots, puppets, or automations.
- “Yes-persons”, “door-mats”, “nice-guys” are a discredit to our educational institutions.

### **DISCOURAGE ALL SUBMISSIVENESS AND AGGRESSIVENESS FROM THE CLASSROOM**

- Teach the students to respect each others rights.
- Help them tO solve their problems in a rational and fair way.
- All teasing, ragging, ridiculing or comparing s should be banned
- Teach them “assertive” responses towards their class mates. to their masters and teachers. to their parents and superiors. even towards their inferiors, servants, peons etc.
- Make them conscious of their rights and help them to stand for them.
- Teach them them to stand for the rights of others.

### **ASSERTIVE TEACHERS SHOULD BRING UP ASSERTIVE STUDENTS**

- Respect your pupils, their ideas, their feelings, their opinions.
- Respect and protect their freedom.
- Educate them to “responsible freedom”.
- Encourage “critical learning”, search and questioning.
- Do not impinge into the “freedom of conscience” of your students
- Respect them always and everywhere
- Allow them to do mistakes.
- Accept them as they are, forgive them their failurre
- Never hurt their feelings and self-esteem.

***Teach them . by word and by example***

- to use in the school and all over  
The "I FEEL" LANGUAGE  
and forget for ever  
the "YOU and the "O.K" LANGUAGE

## APPENDIX ONE

What is mean by the "I" - the "YOU" - the "O.K. " Languages?

### Role-playing Life Situations

Below, you will find 14 hypothetical life situations to which we may respond as submissive, aggressive or assertive persons.

For instance in situation No 1 in the list below, we read:

*"Your boy/girl friend or anyone else has not kept an appointment you agreed upon. Impatiently, you waited on the road side for one hour. At last, your friend turned up. Inside, you were boiling with anger*

#### SUBMISSIVE RESPONSES - "O. K". language - TO THAT SITUATION WOULD BE

**Supposition one:** Your friend meets you, He does not give you an apology or an explanation for his delay, He takes you for granted. You feel very angry, yet you keep mum, and do not say a thing at all to him about the incident. *Implicitly, you said to him "It's O.K. with me for you to take me for granted*

**Supposition two:** Your friend apologizes. Your response is: "Never mind", "It's alright". "Let it be!" or something similar. Again in this case., *Implicitly you said to him it's O.K. with me for you to take me for granted*

**Note:** In these responses above you did not stand for the right you have to be respected and considered. You surrender your rights. **You submitted.**

**BY ALL MEANS AVOID "O .K."statements or "O. K." language.**

#### AGGRESSIVE RESPONSES - "YOU"- language -TO THAT SITUATION WOULD BE:

**Verbal Attack Or Retaliation** Straight away - without giving him a chance to explain or excuse himself - you yell at him: “Shame on you!” “You always come late!” “You annoy me!”. “You don’t know what punctuality means!” “You cannot keep your word” “YOU always do the wrong thing!”. “YOU are hopeless”...”YOU cannot be trusted” ” etc.

**“YOU” LANGUAGE, AND “YOU” STATEMENTS” IMPLICITLY, ARE ALWAYS CONDEMNING, JUDGMENTAL, PREACHY, OFFENSIVE. AGGRESSIVE.**

**STOP USING ALL “YOU” statements” or “YOU” language.**

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**Note:** In the responses mentioned above (Verbal attacks or retaliation) we do not respect the right others have to defend themselves and explain what did really happened. Straight away we condemn them or even attack them

**ASSERTIVE RESPONSES – “I” Language - TO THAT SITUATION WOULD BE:**

Express as forcefully as we can your feelings for what it looks like being unjustly or unfairly treated.

**NOTE;** **“I” STATEMENTS”** for instance would be : “I am feeling angry”.. “I am boiling”.” I am really annoyed”.. “I do not like keep waiting like that!” etc.

**“I” STATEMENTS ARE NOT CONDEMNING, JUDGMENTAL, PREACHY INSULATING OR OFFENSIVE. THEY GIVE OTHERS A CHANCE OF EXPLAINING THEIR BEHAVIOR, AND TELL US THE REASONS WHY THEY ACTED IN THE WAY THEY DID.**

**USE ALWAYS “I” statements” or ‘I’ language.**

Assertive responses open the way to settle differences by way of dialogue and civil exchanges. In this way, arguments, misunderstandings, and squabbles are averted. Since feelings are very personal, by respecting and accepting each others feelings we learn how to respect and accept others as persons and individuals.

## **PRACTICAL EXERCISES**

### **14 HYPOTHETICAL LIFE SITUATIONS WHERE YOU COULD RESPOND**

**Submissively, Aggressively, or Assertively.**

#### **INSTRUCTIONS:**

- We offer here below, twenty life situations wherein your rights are disrespected.
- You could respond to them Submissively, Aggressively or Assertively.
- Imagine you find yourself in one of those situations

➤ **Then, role-play what would do or say in such situation.**

**1<sup>st</sup> Submissively.**

**2<sup>nd</sup> Aggressively.**

**3<sup>rd</sup> Assertively.**

### **SITUATIONS:**

1. Your boy/girl friend or anyone else has not kept an appointment you made. Impatiently, you waited on the road side for one hour. At last, your friend turned up. Inside, you were boiling with anger.
2. You have been accused falsely. Your name has been spoiled. The accuser asks you for pardon. How to react?
3. In School, your teacher, or in your office, your superior or supervisor is asking you to run personal errands for him when you go home.
4. Your Parents or Superiors expect too much from you. You cannot cope with their expectations. You feel discouraged and frustrated.
5. Since you are good at it, you oblige to organize socials, picnics, etc. At the end no one helps you. finally, everybody expects you alone to run all these activities for the school. You feel taken for granted by your companions and superiors
6. , You are truly dutiful in your school work, but some of your colleagues neglect their duties, yet, he Principal blames and penalizes all the staff – you included - for neglect of duty. How should you take it?
7. Your colleagues and assistants expect you to do much of the work allotted to them
8. In your place of work, a 'bonus' was promised to those who at the end of the year could boast of a 100% attendance. You did show a 100% attendance, yet now the boss says that the management cannot afford giving the bonus due to financial difficulties.
9. In your school a blatant injustice has been done to one of your colleagues. All the rest keep mum. . You feel very bad about it and want to do something for him or her. How can you be assertive in this situation?
10. In the office, a promotion due to you was given to a less deserving person. How would you assert your rights?\
11. Someone teases you in a way that hurts your feelings .How to react?
12. A good friend of your Parents or a family relation, or your boss tries to act fresh with you. You feel afraid to oppose or to expose him.. How would you respond to this situation?
13. There is a lot of filthy language and smutty talk at your place of work, a thing you dislike. What would you do?
14. Quite often in the staff room, others criticize and run down people very badly in your presence. You feel bad. How to react?
15. The boss in your office, oar school very often, gives you extra non-paid work to be done at home. You resent it. How to react?

### **PERSONAL EXAMINATION.**

#### **Instructions:**

- ✓ Slowly, go over the role-playing situations above.

- ✓ After imagining that you are the persons mentioned therein, In all honesty ask yourself the following questions::

**One: In such a situation, in all likelihood, what would have I done?**

**Two: What should have I done?**

**Three: What do I learn about myself?**

*Am I, rather a submissive person?*

*Or an aggressive person?*

*Or an assertive person?*

## **APPENDIX TWO**

### **CHECK YOUR RESPONSES:**

#### **Feelings and stances surfacing from your Behavioral Responses of Submissive (1) – Aggressive (2) – Assertive(3) Nature**

**What are your customary or habitual responses to difficult life situations, problems, opposition, demands and criticisms?**

**Tick after each item what your responses would likely be**

I give up	I act “non-cooperative”
I submit easily	I pretend to be unconcerned
I leap into action	I grumble
I feel shy	I curse and swear
I yield to opportunism	I stand up for my rights
I become spiteful	I shout
I turn violent	I take responsibility for my actions.
I become angry and agitated	I try to be true to myself.
I take a firm stand	I lose my cool
I adopt devious means	I go with the crowd
I keep mum	I threaten vengeance
I take the line of least resistance	I act the coward
I adopt a critical stance	I resist
I try to avoid the issue	I hesitate
I do not feel guilty for refusing.	I can freely express my feelings. .
I indulge in self-pity	I play the crook
I day-dream	I stick to my principles.
I do not blame others.	I shirk
I have a feeling of defeatism	I take to drinks, drugs, smoke`
I dilly-dally	I dialogue with those concerned
I weigh the pros and cons	I become vindictive
I blame others	I wait and see

- |                                 |                                |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| I lie                           | I blame myself                 |
| I retaliate                     | I look for the easiest way out |
| I hide                          | I try to forget the problem    |
| I pass the buck to others       | I pooh-pooh the whole things   |
| I take risks                    | I joke about it.               |
| Easily can say "no"             | I accept my faults.            |
| I try to find the best solution | I keep my cool.                |

**What do your markings tell of you?**

Are you rather submissive, or Aggressive or Assertive?

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.....

**What would you like to you do with what you have discovered?**

Fill in the blanks: is there anything you want to change or improve in your behavior?

What is it?.....

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.....

**What steps will you take in that direction from now on?**

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**Stay for a while alone with God in prayer.**

- Tell God the discoveries you have made about behavior.
- The things you wish to change and improve
- How do you intend doing it?
- Ask God's help to accomplish the changes intended.