

Keeping the Relationship

One way to remember these skills is the word **GIVE**

Gentle (Be)

Interested (Act)

Validate

Easy Manner (Use an)

1. BE GENTLE

People tend to respond to gentleness more than they do to harshness. Avoid attacks, threats, and judgmental statements. No attacks. This one is pretty clear. People won't like you if you threaten them, attack them or express much anger directly. No threats. Don't make statements like *"I'll kill myself if you ..."* Tolerate a no to requests. Stay in the discussion even if it gets painful, then exit gracefully. No judging statements. No name calling, shoulds or implied put downs in voice or manner. No guilt trips.

2. Act Interested

This involves being interested in the other person. People tend to feel better if you are interested in them, and if you give them time and space to respond to you. Listen to what they have to say (i.e. share the air time) Don't interrupt, talk over to the other person

3. Validate

Be nonjudgmental, out loud. Validate the other person's feelings, wants, difficulties and opinions about the situation. Find the "grain of truth" in what the other person is saying. Try to figure out what problems the other person might be having with your request, then acknowledge their feelings or problems.

"I know that you are very busy, but ..."

"I can see that this is very important to you ..."

"I know that this will take you out of your way a bit ..."

This is a good skill to practice even if no conflict situation arises. More than any other skill, this one has the potential to affect the quality of relationships.

4. Use an Easy manner

Try to be lighthearted. Use a little humor. Smile. Ease the other person along. This is the difference between soft sell and hard sell. People don't like to be bullied, pushed around or made to feel guilty.