

Speak My Mind and Be Kind (Elementary)

Have you ever needed help with something but were afraid to ask? Or maybe you wanted something, but you weren't respectful and hurt the other person's feelings.

You can use the strategy ***speak my mind and be kind*** to help you communicate your wants and needs respectfully. Speaking your mind means sharing your thoughts and opinions while being kind to the other person. It takes courage to speak up, especially if you think others won't agree with what you have to say or if you don't know if you are correct. With practice, we can learn to share our thoughts while respecting others.

When I need to share my ideas or thoughts, I use an assertive statement. An assertive statement has three parts. First, ***show empathy*** and let the other person know you have thought about how they feel in the situation. Second, use the strategy ***voice my feelings*** to describe your feelings and the reason you are feeling that way. Then ***speak your mind and be kind*** by clearly explaining what you want to happen.

I used an assertive statement when I needed to tell my friend how I felt about being left out of the soccer game. It was my friend's turn to be captain of the soccer team during recess. He had already grabbed the soccer ball and decided who was on his team. I asked if I could be on his team, and he said, "We already have enough players. You can't play soccer today." I wanted to yell at him for leaving me out, but I knew it would just make things worse. I decided to use an assertive statement to ***speak my mind and be kind***. I started by ***showing empathy*** for my friend and thinking about why he may have left me off the team. I decided that he was probably really excited to play and wanted to start the game quickly.

Next, I needed to ***voice my feelings***. I thought about how watching the game and not playing made me feel sad and left out. I wondered if people thought I was bad at soccer or didn't like me, and I felt insecure. Then, I knew I needed to have courage and ***speak my mind and be kind*** by talking to my friend. I said, "I bet you were excited and in a hurry to start the soccer game. I felt left out and sad when I couldn't play in the game. Next time, I will try to get outside earlier, but can you also save me a place on your team?"

I also used an assertive statement with my sister. I knew she used my bike because hers had a flat tire, but I needed it. I first ***showed empathy*** and thought about why she might have taken my bike. Then I ***voiced my feelings*** about what had happened. Finally, I shared what I wanted to happen. I put the three parts together and said to her, "I understand that your bike had a flat tire and you wanted to go somewhere, but I had planned to ride bikes with my friends and was really looking forward to it. Please ask me next time you want to borrow my bike." My sister said she was sorry, and an argument was avoided.

The next time you need to ask for something or share your thoughts and ideas, use the strategy ***speak my mind and be kind*** as part of an assertive statement. By doing so, you communicate respectfully and are more likely to get along with others and get what you are asking for!