



Speak Up! Basic Verbal Self Defense Guidelines

- Use your voice, facial expression, and body language.**
All three channels of communication should be in synch. Avoid giving mixed messages.
- Project confidence and calm.**
Don't plead or apologize. You can act calm, serious, and confident even when you don't feel that way.
- Tell them what you want.**
Say, for example, "Stand over there" or "Stop touching me."
- Repeat yourself.**
Repetition often gets them to stop what they're doing. And if they don't hear you, or respect your request, that gives you important information about them and their intentions.
- Peg your response to level of the threat.**
"Match" their intensity, and get more intense if you need to.
- Stay on your own agenda.**
You don't need to respond to diversions, threats, questions, blaming, guilt-tripping, and so on. Just stick to *your* point.
- Make no excuses.**
Being polite is fine at first, but if they don't respond, drop the niceties. You don't need to apologize for how you feel or what you want. You also don't have to wait for your "turn" in the conversation.
- Use statements.**
"Leave me alone," not "Would you please leave me alone?"
- Attack the behavior, not the person.**
Tell them what they are doing that you don't like ("You're standing too close") rather than blaming them as a person ("You are such a jerk"). Avoid cursing, name-calling, put downs, and other things that could escalate the situation unnecessarily.