



## FaithWorks Counseling

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## DEARMAN

*DEARMAN* is a communication tool from Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT) that helps you ask for what you need, say no when necessary, and communicate clearly while maintaining self-respect and healthy relationships.

When emotions are high, many people either:

- Say nothing and become resentful
- Become overly emotional or aggressive
- Give in to avoid conflict
- Struggle to express their needs clearly

*DEARMAN* provides a step-by-step guide for effective communication.

### What Does *DEARMAN* Stand For?

**D – Describe** - State the facts of the situation without judgment, blame, or assumptions.

Examples:

- "We agreed to meet at 6:00, and you arrived at 7:00."
- "I noticed that the dishes have been left in the sink for three days."

Avoid:

- "You're always late."
- "You never help around here."

**E – Express** - Share your feelings using "I" statements.

Examples:

- "I felt disappointed when our plans changed."
- "I feel overwhelmed when the chores pile up."

Avoid:

- "You make me angry."
- "You don't care about me."

**A – Assert** - Clearly ask for what you need or say no directly.

Examples:

- "I would like you to text me if you're running late."
- "I need some time to myself tonight."
- "No, I am not able to do that."

Remember: People cannot read your mind.

**R – Reinforce** - Explain the positive outcome if your request is honored.

Examples:

- "If you let me know ahead of time, I can plan my evening better."
- "It would help me feel more relaxed and connected to you."

People are often more willing to cooperate when they understand why something matters.

**M – Mindful** - Stay focused on your goal.

When the conversation gets off track:

- Don't get pulled into unrelated arguments.
- Don't defend yourself excessively.
- Gently repeat your message if necessary.

Broken Record Technique:

- "I understand your point, but I still need..."
- "I hear what you're saying, and my request remains..."

**A – Appear Confident** - Even if you feel nervous, try to:

- Maintain eye contact
- Speak clearly
- Sit or stand upright
- Use a calm voice

Confidence helps others take your request seriously.

**N – Negotiate** - Be willing to find a reasonable compromise.

Examples:

- "If tonight doesn't work, would tomorrow be possible?"
- "What solution would work for both of us?"

Negotiation shows flexibility while still honoring your needs.

### **DEARMAN Formula**

**Describe:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Express:** I feel \_\_\_\_\_

**Assert:** I would like \_\_\_\_\_

**Reinforce:** The benefit would be \_\_\_\_\_

**Mindful:** Stay focused on your goal.

**Appear:** Confident. Use a calm, respectful tone.

**Negotiate:** Be willing to discuss alternatives.

**Example: Setting a Boundary** - Situation: A friend repeatedly calls late at night.

**Describe:** You have called me after 10:00 p.m. several times this week.

**Express:** I feel frustrated because those calls wake me up.

**Assert:** I need you to call before 9:00 p.m. unless it is an emergency.

**Reinforce:** If you call earlier, I'll be able to give you my full attention.

**Mindful:** Stay focused if the friend changes the subject.

**Appear:** Confident. Speak calmly and clearly.

**Negotiate:** If evenings don't work, we could schedule a time to talk on weekends.

### Practice Exercise

Think of a situation where you need to make a request or set a boundary.

**Describe** the situation: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Express your feelings:** I feel \_\_\_\_\_

**Assert what you need:** I would like \_\_\_\_\_

**Reinforce:** The benefit would be \_\_\_\_\_

**Mindful:** Stay focused if the individual tries to changes the subject.

**Appear:** Confident. Speak calmly and clearly.

**Negotiate:** Possible compromise: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

### Remember:

Healthy communication is not about controlling others.

It is about expressing your needs clearly, respectfully, and confidently while remaining open to compromise when appropriate.

### Scripture Connection

*Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.*

---- Colossians 4:6 (NIV)

*DEARMAN* helps us communicate with both truth and grace—speaking honestly while treating others with respect.