

# Be Direct with Respect®

## What to Do When Others Get Defensive

1. Accept people's defensiveness.
2. Never tell defenders not to be defensive.
3. After accepting the defense, bring the discussion back to the issue.



Sue: "When will the project I gave you be finished?"

Ed: "I've been too busy to get it done when I said I would."

Sue: "I realize you've been busy. I need to have that project completed by Tuesday. What help do you need to make that deadline?"

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George: "If your explanation had been better I wouldn't have made those mistakes."

Betty: "That's probably true. Now that you realize what has to be done, would you please make the corrections?"

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### How to Avoid Others Reacting Defensively

Stop if you get defensive.

Ask yourself, "Will I get what I want if I push back?" "What will I gain if I get defensive?"

"You're entitled to your opinion, and the way I see it, \_\_\_\_\_."

"Based on my experience I have a different perspective. I'd like your interpretation."

*(These statements encourage discussion and open up opportunities for learning.)*



People get defensive with accusatory questions. The following questions undermine the person to whom the question is directed:

"Why do you feel that you are better than the rest of us?"

"Why do you have such a bad attitude?"

"Where were you when I made the announcement?"

"How can you be so thoughtless?"

"Do you know you did this wrong?"