

Using the Repeat Technique to Make Communication More Effective

Objective

To help you lower your reactivity and assert yourself calmly with the Repeat Technique.

What to Do

Do you find it difficult to get what you want and need from other people? Do you expend a lot of energy blaming others or trying to get them to change? Do you frequently get into arguments and feel frustrated when you are not being heard?

The Repeat Technique is a simple strategy you can use when another person is not responding to what you are saying. You can use this technique to lower your “reactivity,” or tendency to argue or debate. Instead of engaging in the conversation, you simply pick a short phrase that makes your point, then repeat that phrase over and over in response to the other person.

Instead of getting pulled into an argument or becoming angry or accusatory, you can use this technique to acknowledge the other person’s needs and wants and then state what you want in a calm, strong, clear voice.

Example #1: *Your mother insists that you attend a holiday dinner with the family. But you need emotional space from them right now and have made other plans. Your Repeat Technique phrase might go something like this:*

“Thanks, Mom, for the invitation. I know you’d like me to attend but I have made other plans this year.”

Then, when Mom attempts to argue or make you feel guilty or ashamed, you just calmly return to that phrase and repeat it. There is no benefit to getting into an argument or discussion. Just say the same phrase over and over again.

Example #2: *Your child is whining and about to throw a tantrum because you have told him to stop playing a video game and start his homework. Rather than getting engaged in a battle, try the Repeat Technique with a statement like this:*

“I know you want to keep playing your game, but playtime is over for today. Turn off the game now and get out your homework.” No matter what your child says or does, just repeat this phrase until your child performs the requested behavior.

Now, write down five examples of conflicts that you have had where the Repeat Technique might be appropriate.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

In the next week or so, keep track of any situations when you used the Repeat Technique.

Situation/ With whom?	What was the conflict about?	What Repeat Technique phrase(s) did you use?	What was the outcome?

Reflections on This Exercise

1. What parts of the Repeat Technique worked well for you?

2. What was the main obstacle you encountered practicing this exercise?

3. If you struggled with a certain aspect of the Repeat Technique, whom can you talk with to review what went well and what did not go well? How would you like to go about asking them for help?

How helpful was this exercise? _____
(1 = not very helpful, 5 = moderately helpful, 10 = extremely helpful)

What could you do differently to make progress in this area?
