

Understanding the Difference Between a Command and a Request

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SUMMARY

Understanding the distinction between commands and requests is crucial for adult assertiveness. Commands are non-negotiable expectations, while requests allow for choice. This clarity helps in effective communication, particularly in settings like parenting or teaching.

- *Commands are framed as "have to" situations, while requests are "choose to."*
- *Example: Instead of asking if a child is ready to clean their room, assertively state, "It's time to clean your room."*
- *Avoid using "please" when giving commands, as it implies choice and turns them into requests.*
- *Questions like "Could you please line up?" are not assertive; they suggest compliance is optional.*
- *Phrasing matters: commands should be direct and clear to ensure understanding and compliance.*
- *Practice differentiating between requests and commands to enhance assertiveness in communication.*

The second step to success with adult assertiveness is understanding the difference between when is the time to offer a command versus a request. A command is a non-negotiable expectation. A request is a choice. I'm okay if you do it or if you don't. When I was in the classroom and I worked with younger children, I would uh understand the difference in this way and I would say this to the kids. A command is a have to. A request is a choose to. So, let's take an example. Let's say that this is a picture of your daughter's very, very messy room. You have wanted her to clip it, clean it up over and over again, and finally, you're at a point where you have to spring into action. You realize that it's not clean because you've been requesting, right? or you've been nebulous in the way that you've requested that clean room. It sounded like this. Julia, don't you think that it's time for you to clean your room? Are you ready to clean your room? Are you willing to clean your room? And finally, you get to a point where you realize that it no longer can be a choose to. It now is a have to. A command is going to sound like this.

Julia, it's time to clean your room. When you clean your room, then you can go outside. Look at the picture by the light switch. Make sure your room is as clean as that picture. Come and let me know that it's clean and then you can go outside. The message is you can go outside once you clean your room. Julia, it's time to clean your room. We offer a request when there is a choice. If there's no choice, don't offer one. The other huge aha that I learned with conscious discipline is to get rid of my please language when I am issuing a command. When the brain hears please, it thinks it has a choice because it makes it a request. See if you can feel the difference. Please wash your hands. Wash your hands. Could you feel the difference?

Another aha I had as I was on my journey with adult assertiveness is that when we ask questions that is not

assertive. Right? When we say to students when we're looking for compliance with lining up and we say could you please line up? Do you want to line up? Are you ready to line up? They think they have a choice. That is not an assertive command. It is a request. when we say something like what should you be doing or didn't I just tell you what to do or I add okay to the end of the sentence also not assertive. So let's do a little practicing. I'm going to read a sentence and you're going to state out loud if you think that it is a request or a command. Malik, walk behind Jada in line. Malik, please pass this over to Jada.

Jada, please come to circle. Malik, will you take this down to the office for me and give it to Mrs. Carter? Buckle your seat belt so you are safe. It's time to line up. Come to the door. How did you