

The Art of Assertiveness

Outline of the Program

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1. Understanding what Assertiveness is.
2. Importance of being assertive in your personal and professional life.
3. Adapting different communication styles.
4. The thought process behind being non-assertive – factors influencing men and women.
5. Simple techniques to develop the assertive self.

1. Understanding what Assertiveness is

Very simply put, it's learning to be firm, sounding confident in getting what you want, yet not hurting the other person's feelings.

We often misunderstand assertive behavior to be aggressive behavior.

2. Importance of being assertive:

Belonging to a society, we are in constant interaction with people. There is no escape from communicating with another. At the same time, in every phase of our life, we will inevitably experience a situation where we are required to express ourselves, our true feelings towards a person or situation so that the chances of miscommunication can be avoided.

In such situations, the way we phrase our words, and the tone that we use to express ourselves makes a world of a difference.

Examples related to one's personal and professional life will be discussed.

3. Different communication styles

There are 3 forms of communication styles.

Passive, Aggressive, Assertive

1) *Passive* –

Individuals with a passive style of speaking, hesitate to speak confidently and fluently, avoid eye contact, low tone of voice.

2) *Aggressive* –

An individual shows dominating behavior, has a loud tone of voice, disrespecting behavior is displayed towards his/her listener.

3) *Assertive* –

An individual shows respect for the other, expresses oneself confidently, tries to form some sort of a negotiation or a win-win situation between both parties, maintains a good posture, has a firm tone of voice and maintains eye contact.

4. Thought process that results in non-assertive behavior for

a) *Low self confidence/self esteem* – feeling low in confidence or self esteem prevents a person from expressing himself. Such persons feel that they are incapable to handle situations and hence they rather remain silent.

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b) *Fear of being accepted*—

Individuals who might have been constantly criticized earlier, develop a fear of being accepted by people they meet. They tend to do ‘nice’ things for people to gain their acceptance.

c) *Need to feel belonged to a group*—

People who have stepped into a new environment, like to be accepted and feel belonged to the existing group, so their behavior is more passive than assertive. They tend to go out of their way to be nice to others.

d) *The inability to acknowledge or say positive things about oneself*

Individuals who have not been given enough appreciation find it very difficult to pin-point positive aspects about oneself. They might be excellent performers, but will not readily acknowledge that fact. They often regard themselves as ‘being lucky’ when they have a good opportunity coming their way or if they have done well at a task.

e) *Feeling of always being ‘nice’ to others*

The upbringing of an individual has a strong influence in his daily behavior pattern.

Women especially are constantly told that they need to be soft spoken, be nice to others, to develop a nature of ‘giving and giving’. This factor tends to overcome them so strongly that they fail to distinguish the situations they need to assert themselves in.

5. Simple techniques to develop the assertive self

- a) *Pick a model* – think of someone who you think is assertive and who you like. Try to imagine what he/she would say if stuck in a situation.
- b) *Allow yourself to make mistakes* – only then will you think about the situation to know how to tackle it the next time.
- c) My life is my own and I can turn down requests from others if I wish, even if I have committed to something earlier, I can change my mind.
- d) Am I afraid of facing the consequences?
- e) So what if the other person doesn’t like you?

Reference

Dr. Krutz - *The Assertiveness Book* —●

Set and communicate clear boundaries and expectations. Managers who fail to clearly define and consistently enforce boundaries are just asking for trouble from their employees. “Your employees are not mind readers,” Shepard emphasized. “You have got to clearly, clearly, clearly define what you expect and what you will not tolerate.” The good news, he pointed out, is that “the firmer you are and the more people realize you don’t budge, the less they will test the boundaries.”

Choose your battles carefully. “A smart manager knows that it’s better to lose the battle, sometimes, in order to win the war,” Shepard observed. Choosing not to fight a battle you know you can’t win is a sign of wisdom, not weakness.

Explore. Dream. Discover

Twenty years from now you will be more disappointed by the things that you didn’t do than by the ones you did do. So throw off the bowlines. Sail away from the safe harbour. Catch the trade winds in your sails. Explore. Dream. Discover

—Mark Twain

They always say that time changes things, but you actually have to change them yourself

—Andy Warhol

I have always been driven to buck the system, to innovate, to take things beyond where they have been

—Sam Walton

If you build a great experience, customers tell each other about that. Word of mouth is very powerful.

—Jeff Bezos

A man’s reach should exceed his grasp, or what is a heaven for?

—Robert Browning

There is nothing in a caterpillar that tells you it’s going to be a butterfly

—Richard Buckminster Fuller

Source: Internet