

ASSERTIVENESS SKILLS

What is assertiveness.

Assertiveness is being able to stand up for yourself, making sure your opinions and feelings are considered and not letting other people always get their way. It is not the same as aggressiveness. You can be assertive without being forceful or rude. Instead, it is stating clearly what you expect and insisting that your rights are considered.

Assertion is a skill that can be learnt. It is a way of communicating and behaving with others that helps the person to become more confident and aware of themselves.

At some time in each of our lives, however confident we are, we will find it difficult to deal with certain situations we encounter. Examples of these could be:

- . Speaking to a tutor at University
- Asking someone to return something they have borrowed.
- Dealing with difficult housemates.

Often in life we deal with these situations by losing our temper, by saying nothing or by giving in. This may leave us feeling unhappy, angry, out of control and still may not actually solve the problem. This tendency that many people have to react in either an unassertive or an aggressive way may become even more of a problem if they become depressed. The loss of confidence and self-worth that is common in depression may make the person more likely to give in to everyone around them, or in contrast become very irritable towards those around them. Both responses are unhelpful because they are likely to worsen how you feel (by being frustrated at yourself and others), and add to your problems.

Define Assertiveness

Assertive behaviour means being honest with yourself and others. It means being able to say what you want but not at the expense of the other person. It is about being able to negotiate and reach workable compromises. Assertion is based on the belief that the needs, wants and opinions of both people matter.

Some of the characteristics and behaviours that are associated with assertion include:

- Steady, medium pitched voice
- Being prepared to compromise and look for common ground
- Regular eye contact but without staring
- Relaxed posture
- Treating people with respect
- Using open questions
- Smiling when appropriate
- Active listening
- Taking responsibility for ourselves and our actions
- Being trustworthy
- Behaving consistently
- Matching words, tone and body language

List of benefits of being assertive.

Assertiveness is an excellent skill both for managing your relationships with others and managing your relationship with yourself. It takes a great deal of effort to **become assertive** and it does not happen overnight. In a sense, when you decide to be assertive, you choose to make it a way of life for you. If you have not, up to that point, been assertive, you may make a lot of people feel uncomfortable. The dynamic of your relationships will change. Most people will, in time, adapt to your new approach but there may be a small number of people who do not. The people who do not adapt will end up playing a smaller role, if any, in your life.

1. Improved self-image

Your **self-image** refers to the way you view yourself. How you view yourself affects the way you view the world e.g. with a negative self-image you may adopt a pessimistic view of the world and fail to see any opportunities for you to succeed. When you choose to be assertive you adopt a realistic self-image. You do not see yourself as superior to

others (aggressive) but you also do not see others as being superior to you (passive). As my mother taught us from an early age:

2. Improved understanding of others

Assertive people also understand that people choose their own feelings. If somebody is upset because you did not agree to their request, you realise that they chose to feel upset and it was not you who made them feel that way.

3. Improved self-awareness and self-confidence

The more assertive you become, the clearer you become about who you really are. You gain a better awareness of your identity, **your values**, your beliefs, your likes and your dislikes. You are comfortable expressing your views and where others disagree, you are happy to agree to disagree. You do not feel any sense of loss when you agree to disagree, nor do you feel that you have upset anybody.

Describe the various behavior patterns.

If you are making a list of words that describe behavior, you might sort them according to the different kinds of behavior. People behave differently at home than at work, and in the company of certain people. Let's look at different types of behavior and some words that describe them.

Many things can affect behavior:

- Your mood
- The people that you are around
- Things that happen to you

Stress and your physical condition also have a bearing on your behavior. We are going to look at good, socially accepted behavior and bad or out of control behavior.

Here is a list of words that describe behavior that is good in social situations:

- Caring: desire to help people
- Charming: pleasant, delightful
- Considerate: thinking of others
- Enthusiastic: has strong feelings; ardent

- Excitable: gets excited easily
- Faithful: being loyal
- Funny: causing people to laugh
- Kind: thoughtful, caring
- Pleasant: polite
- Polite: exhibiting good manners
- Sincere: being totally honest
- Thoughtful: thinking things over

For the opposite kind of behavior, here is a list of words that refer to bad social behavior:

- Aggressive: verbally or physically threatening
- Argumentative: often arguing with people
- Bossy: always telling people what to do
- Deceitful: doing or saying anything to get people to do what you want or to get what you want
- Domineering: constantly trying to control others
- Inconsiderate: not caring about others or their feelings
- Irritating: bothering people
- Manic: acting just a little crazy
- Manipulative: always trying to influence other people
- Moody: being unpredictable; changing moods often
- Rude: treating people badly; breaking social rules
- Spiteful: seeking revenge; hurting others because you didn't get what you want
- Thoughtless: not thinking about the effects of your actions or words

Here is a list of words that describe behavior in general. Following are some words that refer to good behavior: adaptable, brave, confident, cooperative, courageous, debonair, decisive, determined, generous, hilarious, honorable, kind, lively, pleasant, productive, protective, receptive, reflective, responsible, romantic, self-assured, sensitive, shrewd, unusual, witty, wonderful, zany, and zealous.

The next list of words represents unruly or unacceptable behavior. They are: abrasive, abusive, angry, anxious, belligerent, boorish, cowardly, crazy, creepy, cruel, dangerous, defiant, erratic, finicky, flashy, flippant, foolish, furtive, guarded, jittery, malicious, mysterious, obnoxious, outrageous, panicky, secretive, strange, threatening, unsuitable, vengeful, and wary.

Compare Passive, assertive and aggressive behavior.

The Passive Person	The Aggressive Person	The Assertive Person
Is afraid to speak up	Interrupts and 'talks over' others	Speaks openly
Speaks softly	Speaks loudly	Uses a conversational tone
Avoids looking at people	Glares and stares at others	Makes good eye contact
Shows little or no expression	Intimidates by using expressions	Shows expression which matches the message
Slouches and withdraws	Stands rigidly, crosses arms, invades the personal space of others	Relaxes and adopts an open stance and expressions
Isolates self from groups	Controls groups	Participates in Groups
Agrees with others despite personal feelings	Only considers own feelings and/or makes demands of others	Keeps to the point
Values self less than others	Values self more than others	Values self equal to others
Hurts self to avoid hurting others	Hurts others to avoid being hurt	Tries to hurt no one [including self]
Does not reach goals and may not even know goals	Reaches goals but hurts others in the process	Usually reaches goals without hurting others
You're okay, I'm not	I'm okay, you're not	I'm okay, you're okay

Compare The power affirmation.

Affirmations (meaning a statement said with confidence about a perceived truth) have helped thousands of people make significant changes in their

lives. But they don't always work for everyone. Why can one person have great success using this tool while another see's no results at all?

An affirmation can work because it has the ability to program your mind into believing the stated concept. This is because the mind doesn't know the difference between what is real or fantasy. When you watch a movie and you start to laugh or cry your mind is empathizing with the characters on the screen even though it is only Hollywood magic.

There are both positive and negative types of affirmations. I'm sure many of us can remember as a child being told by a teacher, parent or coach that we didn't have the ability to do something, or we were too fat, clumsy, etc. These unwholesome statements can stay with us in the conscious or unconscious mind, and we then reinforce them throughout our lives.

Five Steps to Make Affirmations More Effective & Powerful

Step 1: Make a list of what you've always thought of as your negative qualities. Include any criticisms others have made of you that you've been holding onto; whether it's something your siblings, parents and peers used to say about you when you were a child, or what your boss told you in your last annual review. Don't judge if they're accurate and remember we all have flaws. This is one of the beauties of being human. Simply make a note of them and look for a common theme, such as "I'm unworthy." This will be a great place to start making a shift in your life.

When you write out the recurring belief, notice if you are holding on to it anywhere in your body? For example, do you feel tightness or dread in your heart or stomach? In my book, ["Wise Mind, Open Mind"](#) I discuss in detail how to let go of negative self-judgments, but for now ask yourself if this unwholesome concept is helpful or productive in your life and if not, what would be.

Step 2: Now write out an affirmation on the positive aspect of your self-judgment. You may want to use a thesaurus to find more powerful words to beef up your statement. For example instead of saying, "I'm worthy," you could say, "I'm remarkable and cherished." After you have written your

affirmation, ask a close friend to read it to see if they have any suggestions to make it stronger.

Step 3: Speak the affirmation out loud for about five minutes, three times a day — morning, mid day and evening. An ideal time to do this is when you're putting on your make up or shaving, so that you can look at yourself in the mirror as you repeat the positive statement. Another option that helps to reinforce the new belief and would be easy to do at work is to write out the affirmation several times in a notebook. Notice over time as you write it if your style of writing changes. This could be a clue as to how your mind perceives the new concept. I call this exercise using the mindfulness journal to forward the agenda of the positive affirmation.

Step 4: Anchor the affirmation in your body as you are repeating it by placing your hand on the area that felt uncomfortable when you wrote out the negative belief in step one. Also “breathe” into the affirmation while you are saying or writing it. As you reprogram your mind, you want to move from the concept of the affirmation to a real, positive embodiment of the quality you seek.

Step 5: Get a friend or coach to repeat your affirmation to you. As they are saying for example, “you are remarkable and cherished” identify this statement as ‘good mothering or good fathering messages. If you don't have someone who you feel comfortable asking then use your reflection in the mirror as the person who is reinforcing the healthy message.

Describe the various skills of assertiveness.

Assertiveness is one of the key qualities that any person aspiring to succeed in his career must acquire. Assertive skills pertain to a person's ability to communicate effectively, in such a way that opinions, feelings, and needs are expressed well to one or more people. Assertiveness involves being able to speak up your mind, being able to say ‘No’ when needed, and being able to utilize body language as a supplemental form of communication.

Assertiveness is an important soft skill that can very well take you to the top of the echelons of success. People who are assertive are confident and firm in their decisions, in the way they deal with others, and even in their own goals and aspirations thereby making them more equipped for success.

Training Objectives

By the end of this self-paced training, you will be able to:

Understand the importance of assertive skills in building your career

Know the different ways to develop and enhance assertive skills

Learn the difference between assertiveness, aggressiveness, and passiveness

Know how to use your assertive skills in communication

Know how to use your assertive skills in managing people

Target Audience

In almost every career path, there is always a need to be assertive.

However, the truth is that some professions need it more than others.

Managers and those holding a leadership role can very well benefit from this training. This is also an excellent resource for those who belong to the fields of Information Technology, Customer Service, Politics, Journalism, and Sales. Lastly, individuals who have difficulty in being firm and those who simply cannot say 'No' to others will find this training course helpful and beneficial.

5 Ways to Become More Assertive

5 Ways to Become More Assertive The role of time in being assertive
There are many things that you can get back after you lose it, time is not one of them. The reason why the issue of time is important is because as you journey through life, people will make many demands on you. While some of these people will be members of your family or close friends, others will be co-workers or your employers. When you take up your time in order to give in to their demands, you are using up a valuable commodity that you will...

Importance of Being Firm Without Being Rude

Controlling Your Emotions is Key Humans are emotional creatures, and this emotion often gets them into trouble. When you are dealing with people on a personal level, and especially a business level, it is always critical to keep your emotions in check. Assertive people tend to be the masters of this art. When they feel someone is treating them poorly, they can let this be known without resorting to aggression. Being too emotional in business is always a bad thing. You must be able to state your terms in a manner which is professional and clear. Another mistake that people...

Learn How to Say "No"

While there are many ways to define the term "assertiveness," some simply describe it as "the ability to say no." This definition is a bit deceptive, and does not give a truly accurate definition of what assertiveness actually mean. The reason is because the manner in which you say "no" can mean the difference between coming across as being assertive, and coming across as being aggressive. There are a lot of ways in which you can tell a person "no" but you want to do it in a manner which is assertive as opposed to aggressive. If you are like...

Non-Verbal Assertive Communication

What is Assertive Non-Verbal Communication? Assertiveness is defined as the ability to stand up for yourself without being overly rude or aggressive at the same time. A person who is non-assertive will often be either one of two things, and this is aggressive or passive. In today's world, falling under either one of these extremes is negative, and will often block you from getting the things you want in life. A person that is passive is an individual who people will be quick to walk on. If people think you're weak, or that you're easy to use or abuse, then...

How to Handle Bullying at Workplace

Bullying does not just occur among school age children, and you must know how to handle it. When most people think of bullying, they think of their childhood, or they imagine school aged children fighting on the playground. In reality, bullying occurs even among adults as well. Just as

children bully each other in school, adults will often bully each other in the work place. To understand why you must be assertive, you must first develop an understanding of the mind of the bully. In most cases, bullies are individuals who are very aggressive. They like to get others to...

Know When to be Assertive

There are many scenarios in which being assertive helps. As you go throughout life, there will be many situations in which you will be required to be assertive. In many cases, being assertive will require you to say "no" to the demands of others. At the same time, while there is nothing wrong with telling others "no," you will want to do so in a manner that does not offend them. There are often times when we find ourselves in tough situations, situations where we should say no, but we often do not. There are a number of reasons for...

Traits of an Assertive Manager

Being assertive will earn you respect, but only few know how and when to become assertive. High level executives and managers are generally very assertive. However, if they use their positions of power and authority in order to belittle, intimidate, and control those beneath them, it will cause a lot of trouble and loss of respect over the long term. Employees will begin to resent such executives and managers. Their productivity will eventually begin to fall, and if the dictatorial behavior of the executives and managers continues, it will not be long before the organization begins experiencing a high employee...

How to Use Your Body Language

Your body language communicates a lot more than your words. A number of studies have proven that your body language plays the biggest role in the way you communicate with people. Since communication plays an important role in the art of being assertive, you must learn how to use your body in a manner which shows others you are an assertive individual. There are certain forms of body language which may convey that you are either aggressive or passive, and these are not the signals that you want to send to others. Using your body as a tool of communication...

How to Avoid Conflict

Conflict is something that causes a lot of stress, and it occurs on many scales: it can range from small conflicts between family members or friends to large conflicts between countries. Regardless, conflict is a source of stress, and while small amounts of stress can be good, too much stress can become deadly. Having said that, it is important to avoid conflict in your life, and the best way to avoid conflict is to expect and embrace it. Let us find how can you avoid conflict by embracing it. It is first important to realize that you cannot really avoid conflict with...

How to Become More Assertive

Becoming more assertive takes time, but there are a number of things you can do to start today. Being assertive is a skill that most people do not have. Generally, most of them commit the mistake of being either too aggressive or too passive. Being assertive requires you to be a nice mixture of the two. While developing this critical skill will take time and patience, there are a number of things you can do to start becoming more assertive today. The first step in becoming more assertive is to be clear and concise when it comes to communicating with...

Assertive Communication

Communication is directly connected to being assertive. People are the essence of business, whether they are managers or employees. Working as a business owner or employee requires you to be an effective communicator, and you must learn how to present yourself in the right manner. Many people tend to think that success in business requires them to be rational and logical, they must always remember is that the human element is also critically important. This is one reason why it is important to develop soft skills, and one of the best soft skills you can develop is assertiveness. Communicating Assertively...

How to Speak Your Mind

There are times when you need to make a point, but you have to do it right. When it comes to speaking their minds, the vast majority of people in this world fall under either one of two categories: they either speak their minds without considering the feelings of others, or they do not speak their minds at all. To become successful, you must be different from these people. You must know how to speak your mind without offending a lot of people at the same time. However, one thing that you have to accept is that you will sometimes...

Role of Assertiveness in Career Building

Being assertive is a critical skill for building one's career. In the workplace environment, being assertive is incredibly important. When it all comes down to it, your superiors will care little about your attendance record, or how nice of a person you are. In most cases, your employers will remember you if you are an individual who is capable of working towards your own goals and ideas. While being assertive is important in your work environment, this is not the only place where it should be used. Having an assertive attitude is necessary in most situations, whether you are at...

How to Manage Stress

Stress Management People who are assertive tend to be those who have much lower levels of stress. One reason for this is because they are able to express their feelings to others in a manner which is not offensive, but in a way that gets their point across. Someone who uses assertive communication tends to be someone who is honest, and they will make sure that they express themselves in a manner that virtually anyone can understand. While assertiveness is a skill that some people naturally have, for others it is something that must be learned.

Explain the Elements of assertive communication

Communication is so important that it can make or break a relationship, is critical to success, and instantly reflects your self-

esteem to listeners – for better or for worse. Assertive communication commands respect, projects confidence, and inspires influence. It's respectful, direct, honest, open, non-threatening and non-defensive. It's not demanding, aggressive, or manipulative.

Communication is learned. With practice you can learn to communicate assertively, which will raise your self-esteem and self-assurance and improve your relationships and professional performance. Research has established that even fetuses can learn to communicate with their mothers. To learn the keys to assertiveness discussed below, remember the 6 C's:

1. Congruency
2. Courtesy
3. Conciseness
4. Clarity
5. Cognizance
6. Claim yourself

Communication has many elements. You communicate with more than your words. You relay information with your entire body through:

1. Gesture
2. Eye contact, movement, moisture, expression, and focus
3. Posture
4. Physical appearance
5. Voluntary and involuntary bodily movement, including muscular tension
6. Facial expression
7. Skin color (e.g. blushing) and perspiration
8. Body smell

List the role of assertive word in assertiveness

The best way to learn assertive behavior is through practice. But not everyone is ready to practice in real life.

Below are a number of experiences people may run into that require assertiveness. Try practicing your responses to the situations below with a relative, friend, or advisor who you feel is assertive. Or, **call your local**

Mountain State Center for Independent Living. Counselors there will help you practice your assertiveness skills.

Asserting Yourself With Friends and Family

- You lend a friend one of your books. She returns it with pages missing.
- Your friend always asks to borrow a few dollars when you go out, but he never repays you. You begin to resent that he does this all the time.
- A relative calls you late at night just to talk. You are tired and have to get up early in the morning.
- Your friend comes to you with a problem you don't know how to handle. You know your friend has a counselor that she likes and you recommend that she talk to them, but your friend keeps asking you what she should do.

Asserting Yourself in Medical and Personal Safety Situations

- Your doctor prescribes a medicine but doesn't tell you what it is for or if there are any side effects.
- You are eating lunch and the person next to you smokes throughout the meal; this really bothers you.
- You went to a party with some people but the person who was driving had too much to drink and refuses to let anyone else drive.
- You are walking home with a friend and realize it is getting late. A car pulls up and asks if you want a ride. Your friend is tired and wants to take the ride but you think it's too risky.

Asserting Yourself in Social and Everyday Situations

- Someone in the van you are riding in decides to sing and does so for 15 minutes. It begins to get on your nerves and you politely ask her to stop, but she doesn't.
- The new shoes you bought three weeks ago are already starting to fall apart. You take them back to the store where you bought them.
- You bring your car to a garage for service. You ask the mechanic to call and let you know how much it will cost before doing the work. He doesn't call and when you call him he tells you he has already done the work and your bill is \$250.

Asserting Yourself in Work and School Situations

- A counselor at the school you want to attend is interviewing you. The counselor notices that you haven't worked or taken any special courses for the last two summers and asks why.
- Someone in your class asks you to work with him on his homework after the teacher has specifically told the class that the assignment should be done without any help.
- You are being interviewed for a job in a new field and the director asks, "Why should I hire you when you have no experience?"

Describe the Non – Verbal aspects of assertiveness

How you say what you say is just as important as what you say—that is, the body language you display has a profound effect on how your words will be interpreted and on the responses you will get. No matter how well-crafted your assertive response may be or how appropriate your words, if your nonverbal behaviors are not congruent with your verbal communication you can totally sabotage your message and greatly reduce the likelihood of getting the reaction you seek. If your nonverbal behaviors reflect passivity, deference, self-effacement, timidity, or lack of confidence, you will undermine your message and invite others to discount your words. On the other hand, if your words are assertive and appropriate but your demeanor is intimidating or aggressive it will also detract from your message. Other people will respond with fear or resentment rather than accommodation

Basically, you want to present a demeanor that is consistent with assertiveness. It is neither timid nor aggressive, but rather forthright, confident, and matter-of-fact. One of the most effective ways to present a confident demeanor is to maintain eye contact. When you look directly at someone's eyes while talking to him or her it conveys confidence, self-assurance, and that you mean what you say. A passive stance usually involves minimal eye contact or looking down, which conveys lack of

confidence or uncertainty about your position. An aggressive stance often involves staring a person down, which is not what we mean when we suggest making eye contact. Sometimes it is hard to maintain eye contact, particularly if you have trouble being assertive, because it may make you uncomfortable. Despite this, we encourage you to force yourself to do so for several reasons: (1) it will make your assertive responses more effective, and (2) keeping eye contact gets a lot easier once you practice doing it.

Perhaps the most important nonverbal aspect of assertiveness is tone of voice. So much is conveyed by the volume, pitch, and rhythm of your voice. Avoid shouting, which is perceived as aggressive. Also avoid being so soft-spoken that you come off as timid. It is best to speak in a firm, consistent voice tone where you pause for emphasis, and also emphasize key words by slowing down your voice tempo and increasing your volume slightly. Do not talk fast or swallow your words when asserting yourself. It may be useful to talk a little slower, particularly if you are a fast talker, and a little louder than usual for emphasis. Table 1 summarizes the differences between passive, assertive, and aggressive communication styles.

Action Plan for assertiveness

Assertiveness is a way of thinking and behaving that allows a person to stand up for his or her rights while respecting the rights of others. Nonassertive people may be passive or aggressive. Passive individuals are not committed to their own rights and are more likely to allow others to infringe on their rights than to stand up and speak out. On the other hand, aggressive persons are very likely to defend their own rights and work to achieve their own goals but are also likely to disregard the rights of others. Additionally, aggressive individuals insist that their feelings and needs take precedence over other people's. They also tend to blame others for problems instead of offering solutions.

Assertive attitudes and behaviors are at the heart of effective advocacy. A person with an assertive attitude recognizes that each individual has rights. These rights include not only legal rights but also rights to individuality, to have and express personal preferences, feelings and opinions. The assertive individual not only believes in his or her rights but is

committed to preserving those rights. An assertive attitude is important in recognizing that rights are being violated. The passive person is so concerned with being liked and accepted that he or she may never recognize the need to advocate. The assertive person clearly expresses his or her rights or needs. They tend to face problems promptly and they focus on solutions rather than problems.

☑ Relationship Between Self and Others

The passive person is preoccupied with being liked and accepted. However, because the passive person usually does not accept him or herself, this person is afraid to speak up for fear of rejection. Because the passive person gives the power over self acceptance to others, he or she feels powerless. The aggressive person focuses on his or her own desires and how others may be used to achieve them. While the aggressive person usually appears to value him or herself highly, little regard is given to others, their feelings or rights.

The assertive person values him or herself but also values others. The assertive person does not necessarily like everyone nor desire to be liked by everyone, but she or he does respect others and their rights.

The assertive person is more likely to be a good listener than either the passive or aggressive person. The assertive person is able to be more open to information and to be more effective in analyzing and evaluating the value of what he or she hears and sees. The ability to listen, and to gather and analyze information is important in the advocacy process.

☑ Listening Behaviors

A person who is passive listens to others but does not always hear accurately because he or she often feels too anxious to concentrate. Furthermore, a passive person is unlikely to analyze information in terms of his or her own values because those values become lost in the attempt to win acceptance from others. Desensitization exercises can alleviate feelings of anxiousness. If anxiousness is problematic for you — see your doctor or community center for training in such techniques.

The aggressive person may allow others time to speak but usually does not listen well. He or she is too preoccupied with his or her own

perspective. The aggressive person may also be a poor listener because he or she feels very angry and defensive.

Hearing Impairments

Brain injury can add additional levels of complexity to listening behaviors. Hearing impairments caused by brain injury can interfere with the ability to "listen" or process information in the brain. If you suspect that you are having difficulties processing information, you should seek a neurological assessment, you might also want to consider an otolaryngological assessment.

Motivations

The passive person is motivated mainly by a desire for acceptance and security. Although he or she frequently feels anxious, this person is not likely to take risks. The aggressive person is motivated by a desire to control and dominate others. He or she frequently feels angry, insecure and defensive. The assertive person has a wider range of motivations and emotional states. He or she may be concerned with self-understanding and growth, with development of his or her abilities and with relating to other persons. He or she usually is able to exert more control over emotions and to work for solutions that benefit all parties. Which type are you.

Behaviors

The behaviors of a passive person are usually designed to hide individuality. The individual may actually look and act passively but could also look and act conventionally - so conventionally he or she is never noticed. The behaviors of the aggressive person are designed to intimidate and overpower. There is little chance that this person will go unnoticed "Pushy" is a good description of this person's loud and insistent voice and large, sometimes grandiose, gestures.

The assertive person's behaviors are designed to promote communication and problem solving. This person uses a variety of behaviors depending on the situation. In general, the assertive person appears energetic yet relaxed. The Assertiveness Quiz, is a short quiz designed to help you gain an idea of how assertive you are at this time.

