

How To Be More Assertive

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A Perspective 101 Series



How To Be More Assertive



One definition of assertiveness is being confident and direct in dealing with others.

Assertive people know what they want and aren't afraid to ask for it.

They also respect the feelings and needs of others and are prepared to negotiate solutions that are acceptable to both sides.

Aggressive people want to win at all costs.

Passive people give in and are prepared to lose in order to keep the other person happy.

Here are some tips on becoming more assertive:

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1. Work on your appearance.

How you look tells a lot about you. 55% of the message you send out when you meet people is through your body language.

Dress appropriately, make eye contact.

Try to look and sound confident.

2. Use a clear, calm voice.

You don't need to be loud, but you do need to make yourself heard.

If people aren't noticing you and you need service, say clearly "*Excuse me?*".

Also, whatever you are trying to say, try to be concise.

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3. Know what you want.

People can tell if you already know what you want out of them, and it's much easier for them to do what you ask them if you can tell them clearly what that is.

Whether you're speaking to an insurance agent or a waiter, their job is to serve you and you'll make their job about ten times easier if you know what you want.

4. Be realistic about your aims.

Have a clear objective of what you want.

Assertive people are not afraid to ask, but they also pick their battles.

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5. Don't misdirect your frustration. If the airline counter agent tells you that you must pay extra for your heavy bag, don't get angry at the agent!

Your beef is with the airline's policy (and possibly your failure to read the fine print). Instead, treat the agent like an ally.

If the policy was made

6. available to you, apologize and ask for an exception.

If you were never informed of the policy, say so, and ask for an exception. Either way, the agent herself did you no harm, so do not direct your frustration at her!

She is not the aggressor; she's your potential ally. So treat her well and negotiate respectfully...then take the matter up with the airline's customer service agents.

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7. Practice.

If you're about to engage in an important encounter, like asking for a raise or getting out of an unhealthy relationship, ask a friend to role-play with you.

Practice what you are going to say, and have your friend give you feedback. If you aren't assertive enough, try it again.

8. Be respectful.

Being assertive does not mean that you should be rude.

People are more willing to help someone who is both direct polite and respectful

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9. Do not be afraid to ask questions.

Asking questions will help you determine what you want and give you an idea of potential solutions.

Don't be afraid to tell someone exactly what you think, but do so in a polite way. Speak your mind.

10. If you have to deliver bad news, don't offer unnecessary details.

If you explain every single reason for your decision, the other person can use those reasons as negotiation points.

Your decision is firm, and this will come across most clearly if you are short and to the point.

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11. Don't get angry.

It doesn't promote a problem solving atmosphere.

12. Remember the big picture.

True assertiveness, as opposed to pushiness, allows you to come away from any situation respectably.

Pushy people may win battles, but only assertive people win wars

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13. In confrontations especially, emotions can run high.

Remember to be respectful and keep a cool head. The key to success in confrontations is to use an appropriate tone of voice and the correct words.

Speak to someone like you would like to be spoken to!

14. Try asking first; don't demand things straight away.

Gather information and make the other person an ally. If that approach doesn't work, then you may put your foot down.

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15. Be friendly.

If you are not, you won't be assertive.

16. Perspective.

Keep a sense of perspective as well as a sense of humor.

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