

Ten Top Assertiveness Tips from Wildfire



Easy ways for becoming more assertive

1. Be clear about how you want to come across. Imagine the stance you will have, tone to adopt, plus the image and reputation you want to create.

2. Plan statements for your argument as if you were supremely confident. Don't resort to the subservient or tantrum "child" or finger pointing "right" "parent" but a balanced adult.

3. Say very little. Allow yourself pauses to let your mind have time to think. Whoever breaks the calm, powerful silence often gives the control to the other party. Practice holding silence in a conversation.

4. Remember that you want a win-win: Being assertive is not subservient, aggressive nor bullying. Your aim is to maintain your integrity by being true to your views and respectful of others, in order that you get the best results through honest dialogue.



5. Practice saying "no" in the mirror – looking directly as you would at someone else. Then practice saying "no" to others, ensuring that you say "no" and leave it there, without justifying yourself or offering any excuse. Then take a pause. If you want to explain then only about how you would like to help but can't or won't. Don't follow up with false promises such as "next time" and don't feel guilty. If you allow people to think you feel bad about refusing them, then they will return with something else.

6. Use phrases that buy time, such as "can I come back to you?" rather than being rushed for a response in a situation you're unsure about or what to mull over.

7. Learn assertive body language. Notice your body and stance – stand firm, feet comfortably apart, hands relaxed and not fidgeting, shoulders square towards the person.

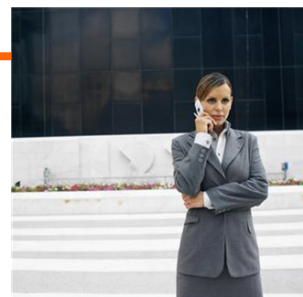
8. Keep repeating what you said. If someone is being persistent in trying to get you to do something you don't want to do then you don't have to be creative nor engineer another way around the topic. It is far more effective to sound like a "broken record" by repeating yourself, in the same tone, using the same language. It reinforces that you meant what you said the first time.

9. Be non-stick. Sometimes we feel we lack assertiveness when we're under attack. The easiest way to deflect the impact of the attack can be to agree with the attacker, but not subserviently. To use phrases that steal your critic's power such as "you are probably right" "I agree" "you have a point" and "that could be true" will imply (but will never use) the phrase "So what?" You do not have to adopt the criticism, but recognise that they may have a point. This deflates any aggression and gives you more power.

10. Smile. You will appear to ooze confidence if you smile, whether you feel confident or not. People often go rigid at the jaw or can't hide their fear or frustration. A smile helps the facial muscles to relax and releases happy hormones to help you.

When you're in a situation in which you want to more assertive, remember that it's fundamentally about being true to yourself! We often see others who we think are assertive but they may be aggressive. We should aim to behave in a way that helps people to respect, hear and appreciate us, whether or not they agree with or like us.

Confidence plays a large role in being assertive and confidence comes with practice. Those who are confident seem to have more control and composure. Anyone can learn to be more assertive, often starting with caring less about what people think (it's not a popularity competition) and doing more of what's right. Small, simple steps can speedily allow you to adopt an assertive approach.



For further ideas to whet your appetite and solve workplace problems,

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