

# KEY POINTS OF ASSERTIVENESS



## **What is it?**

It means being able to say what you want to say when it is time to say it, and feeling fine about doing so. It is about respecting your own needs and wishes as much as someone else's and is not the same as aggressiveness. You can be assertive without being rude or forceful. Instead, it is stating clearly what you expect and insisting that your rights are considered.

### **#1 Assertiveness is a skill, not a personality type.**

Some people feel they can't be assertive because it's not their style. But assertiveness is a skill, not a personality trait. Like any new skill it feels awkward at first but becomes more comfortable as you get better at it.

### **#2 Assertiveness is about controlling your own behaviour, not that of others.**

Many people think that assertiveness is all about controlling others. But more often it is about letting others behave as they like and controlling ourselves instead. You make clear what your position is and then let the other person do as they please once they have that information.

### **#3 It's not necessary to be assertive all the time.**

Some situations call for more assertiveness than others. When you are at a kindly relative's home you might accept a poured cup of tea even after you have said you don't wish one. And when you are alone with someone you know to be violent it may not be safe for you to be assertive. But when you are safe and when the issue is important to you, assertiveness generally leads to better results than the alternatives.

### **#4 Ask for time.**

Some people think of the right thing to say after the discussion is over. They get talked into things and then kick themselves later. You have the right to delay your answers. If you realize during a discussion that you would like to be more assertive but can't think of what to say, ask for time. Use phrases like "I can't answer that right now," or "I'll let you know next Tuesday." This will give you the time you need to think the situation through. As assertiveness becomes a habit, you will come up with the right responses for you much quicker.

### **#5 Assertiveness equals openness.**

Assertiveness is not just for conflict situations. Being assertive means being more open and genuine, and being willing and able to share and express your inner feelings and ideas. The more you feel free to be yourself, the less tension there will be in your ongoing relationships. Being assertive in close or intimate relationships opens communication channels.