Assert Yourself

Do you find it painful to stand up for you? Many people do. But only you can change that.

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What is assertiveness? It's a way to become more direct and less passive. And that doesn't mean becoming more aggressive and bullying or intimidating others. You can be assertive and still respect the rights, opinions and feelings of others.

But how do you cultivate this communication skill? Start by asking yourself these questions: Do I voice my opinions or remain silent? How do I speak with others? Do I respect people's right to disagree with me?

To practice being assertive, try these simple exercises: Practice saying no and rehearse what you want to say; use body language to get your point across (adopt a confident posture and lean forward slightly, avoid dramatic gestures, and make non-threatening eye contact); and try to keep your emotions in check.

To complete the exercise, analyze your interactions after-the-fact by asking yourself these two questions: Was I being direct? Was I being respectful? If the answer to both is yes, then you're on the right road. Ultimately, being assertive boosts your self-esteem and self-confidence while improving your relationships with others.

Can't seem to get it right? Assert yourself and get help. Assertiveness training resources are available online.

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