

10 Ways to be Assertive

Assertiveness is a skill you can acquire – it is not a personality trait.

1. **Say what you mean.** State clearly what you feel and what you want to happen. Begin sentences with the word "I" and make concise, focused statements.
2. **Be direct.** Avoid using hints, flattery or manipulation to get what you want. Don't speak apologetically or aggressively.
3. **Stand your ground.** If you believe that what you're saying or doing is valid, don't be put off by other people's aggression or apparent certainty.
4. **Keep calm.** Giving in to anger will mean you lose control of the situation. Aim to deal with problems clearly and in good time rather than bottling feelings up until you explode.
5. **Be prepared to say "No".** If you're faced with an unreasonable request, explain why you can't go along with it and suggest an alternative course of action.
6. **Control your body language.** Avoid aggressive gestures such as pointing at people, raising your voice or banging the table.
7. **Accept feedback positively.** Focus on the validity of the points being made and don't make excuses that won't stand up. Ask for specific examples of any general criticisms.
8. **Offer and accept apologies gracefully.** Try to avoid lingering feelings of ill-will when there has been a problem and identify a positive way forward.
9. **Deal carefully with angry people.** Identify the cause of their anger and take steps to deal with it. But if they are clearly out of control, tell them firmly that you will discuss the problem later.
10. **Recognise the rights of others.** Avoid pushing your own interests at the expense of other people's needs. Remember that other people are entitled to be assertive, too.

More tips on assertiveness in [A Useful Guide to Assertiveness](#)

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