

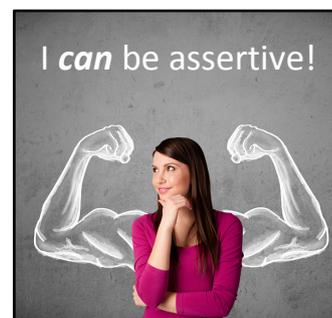
3 Ways To Build Your Assertiveness Muscle



Assertiveness lies between passive and aggressive behaviour.

It can often be avoided because people aren't sure what assertive behaviour looks like, or they're concerned they'll come across aggressively when they try to be assertive.

By adopting an assertive mindset, behaviour & conversation style, you will feel as if you can deal with any kind of situation that presents itself. Here are those **3 key areas** in more detail. Use the information below to tweak or develop further your 'assertiveness muscle'.



#1 Master Your Assertive Mindset

Assertiveness comes from a certain level of confidence & self-belief. To improve your assertiveness skills, aim to be as **optimistic**, **warm** and **positive** as you can be. Be **secure** in who you are, and **supportive** of your colleagues. Plus, be **open** and **flexible**, whilst still being **decisive** - *be true to yourself*, as the saying goes! Avoid a default position of deferring to others' wishes (i.e. passive behaviour).

#2 Broaden Your Assertive Behaviour

When behaving assertively, you can **give and receive compliments & criticism**, with relative ease! You accept compliments without dismissing them, and you don't take criticism too personally. This is because you're able to get the situation into perspective. Assertive behaviour also includes adopting a **solution-focused** approach, **listening** well, and **expressing the way you feel** whilst also being **considerate** of the other person's feelings.

#3 Create Your Assertive Conversation

This is about getting the language right ... both the verbal and the non-verbal.

a) Non-verbal Starting with the right body language can give you a confident foundation for a range of situations. So **stand** (or sit) **straight** and **tall** (but be comfortable). If standing, **spread your weight evenly** between your feet. Use **balanced**, **open** gestures, and maintain **good eye contact**. And don't forget to **smile** if appropriate for the situation!

b) Verbal Aim to use more "I ..." and "we ..." language, as opposed to "you ..." and "you're ...", which can get people on the defensive.

For example: "I appreciate what you're saying here. I'm sure we can come to some kind of agreement that we're both happy with" ... rather than: "You don't get what I'm saying. You're not listening to me!"

Of course, it also depends on **how** what you say is delivered. So ensure an assertive conversation by having a **calm** and **steady** voice (regardless of how you might be feeling!), and be **sincere** and **encouraging**: *"I'm sure we can make this work; let's look at some options together."*

Which of the 3 areas above are you strongest in? Which could you develop further?