A Lack of Assertiveness: Safety or Self Sabotage?

6 WAYS TO GET MORE ASSERTIVE

1

Know What Assertiveness Means. To become more assertive, you need to understand it's meaning. The words "be more assertive" can be misperceived as "be aggressive'. But, they are not the same. On the continuum below, Passive and Aggressive are on the two extremes and Assertive lays in the middle. Assertiveness is honest, direct, respectful communication.

passive	assertive	aggressive
Doesn't Protect Self	Protects Self & Others	Only Protects Self

2

Practice Assertiveness in small doses. Start asserting your opinion in conversations where you know the personality styles. Begin statements with "I believe" or "I feel" to add confidence to your tone. Steer away from less confident phrases like "I think" or "I'm pretty sure".

3

Observe and Emulate credible co-workers that exercise assertiveness. Watch their timing, their delivery, their tone. Avoid copying them word-for-word. You want to develop your own style. But you can take a page from their self-confidence playbook and begin modeling their assertiveness behaviors.

4

Best/Worst Scenario Exercise. Jot down the topic you are preparing to communicate. Then jot down worst-case scenarios if you assert yourself. Now, the best-case scenarios. What will most likely happen if I speak up? Usually the outcome is somewhere in the middle. This will train your brain to stay out of the negative danger zone of worst-case scenario fear.

5

Get A Coach or Mentor
This doesn't have to be formal; you can use a co-worker or friend. Make sure they are a strong communicator that demonstrates assertiveness. Be vulnerable; ask them to listen to you in conversations and give feedback. If you're preparing for a meeting or one-on-one; use this coach to practice and role-play ahead of time.

6

Don't Take Feedback Overly Personal
As you become more outspoken and assertive, you will obviously receive more feedback on your input. Resist the urge to take disagreements or constructive criticism too personal. Part of being confident is anticipating feedback and learning to accept it without viewing it as a personal attack. Strive to see the benefits of the feedback.