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How to be more assertive

Assertiveness is on a continuum between being passive and being aggressive. Many of us get assertiveness confused with aggression but they are quite different.

Assertive behaviour sits between aggressive and passive behaviour. When some people are criticised, they say nothing or feel intimidated to speak up. This is the **passive behaviour**. In contrast, some people react strongly and emotionally, become angry and loud or even insulting. This is the **aggressive behaviour**.

In other words, a lot of people give in to the criticism or react strongly without focusing on the message. Naturally, these behaviours are not optimal and do little to make the person feel better about themselves or others. Such reactions also do not result in a good outcome from our interactions with others. Fortunately, there is a middle ground we can use which is known as assertiveness.

Being assertive is about being able to state your opinion, state your feelings and take responsibility for you. However, it is also about being clear so that others can be held accountable for their contribution.

Real assertiveness is a beautiful thing to watch, it is hard to argue with and it brings about accountability and change. Here are some short guidelines on being more assertive.

- Use "I statements" to focus the conversation on you taking responsibility for your feelings and not blaming others. For example:
 - "I feel hurt" rather than "You hurt me"
 - "I don't agree" rather than "You are wrong"
 - "I feel ignored" rather than "You don't care"
 - "I am treated unfairly" rather than "You are so unfair"
- Say "No" when you mean it. The word "No" is quite powerful, so use it.
- Deliver your message to the person that matters, not to everyone else but the person. Gossip is harmful, disrespectful and unprofessional.
- If you don't understand the other person, ask for clarification. Don't assume

or interpret what they said. A wrong interpretation can make you upset can easily lead to a whole new conflict.

- If you want to say “No”, you can tone it down by offering alternatives.
- Avoid exaggerations such as “You always...”, “You are...”, “You constantly...”, “You never...”, “You are the most...”. They are not true, so there is no point to state them like that as they will be instantly rejected and the focus of the conversation will change towards them.

If you would like to learn these skills and add to your tool box for dealing with difficult people why not book for our workshop on **Dealing with Difficult People**.

How to Book?

Contact Teamology on 1300 707 481, visit our website – www.teamology.com.au and look under courses for workshop details or email us at enquiries@teamology.com.au.