BEING ASSERTIVE

Assertiveness is the ability to state your opinion, rights or needs in a constructive manner without violating the rights of others.

Benefits
- Helps build honest and healthy relationships while reducing interpersonal conflict
- Boosts your confidence level as you feel more in control of your life
- Improves decision making ability
- Likely to get what you want as you can express your thoughts, feelings and ideas calmly

Roadblocks
- Wanting to be liked or ‘approved’ by others
- Fear of harming others
- Fear of feeling rejected and shamed
- Belief that other people’s needs, opinions and judgment are more important
- Belief that being assertive will hurt the other person
- Belief that acting to assert one’s own rights is foolish

Is Assertiveness selfish?
Selfishness means being concerned excessively or exclusively with one’s needs. This is not assertiveness. Assertiveness does not dismiss or ignore the needs of others.

Is Assertiveness Aggressive?
Assertiveness is different from Aggression. Being aggressive means that you express your rights at the expense of another or forcibly violate the rights of others. Being passive means that you sacrifice your rights in favour of the rights of others. Being assertive however, means that you respect your rights as well as the rights of others.
If you have mistaken assertiveness as aggression, that can prevent you from taking steps to improve your assertiveness skills.

How to become more Assertive?
Use assertive language and speak from your perspective. E.g “I feel”, “I think”, “I like…” Instead of “You always”, “You made me”, which often aggravates the situation and creates tension.
Speak up when you have an idea or opinion
Stand up for your opinions and stick to them
Speak calmly and in a firm tone (don’t yell, scream, scold, lose your temper)
Accept both compliments and feedback
Insist on your rights being respected if they are legitimate.
Respect the needs and rights of other as well
Take courage to make small steps of change
Keep reminding yourself that you want to communicate assertively and not aggressively or passively.
Review these statements

- I am honest and direct about my thoughts and feelings
- I speak up and share my views if I disagree with the opinion of others
- I am confident about my opinions and decisions
- I am able to accept that someone else may have a better idea than mine.
- I ask for help when I need it
- I can turn down unreasonable or unfair requests
- I consider my needs as important as the needs of others

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Passive Person</th>
<th>The Assertive Person</th>
<th>The Aggressive Person</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Afraid to express ideas.</td>
<td>Speaks openly</td>
<td>Interrupts and dominates the conversation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under-values self</td>
<td>Values self as much as others</td>
<td>Values self, more than others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hurts self to avoid hurting others</td>
<td>Tries to hurt no one</td>
<td>Hurts others to avoid being hurt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does not reach goals</td>
<td>Reaches goals without hurting others</td>
<td>Reaches goals but hurts others in the process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You’re OK, I’m Not OK</td>
<td>You’re OK, I’m OK</td>
<td>I’m Ok, you’re Not OK</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>