

Stand Up For What You Believe In

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One of the most important lessons a parent can teach his/her children is to stand up for what they believe in. In other words, be assertive, which essentially entails believing in and standing up for yourself. Unfortunately, being assertive tends to get a bad rap. However, being assertive is not a bad thing. There tends to be a negative connotation associated with being assertive because many people equate it with being aggressive. Being assertive does not entail being aggressive. Successfully assertive individuals are firm rather than aggressive.

As adults, each of us has certain basic rights; however, we often forget them. Being assertive entails exercising these rights when they are infringed upon. Some of these rights are as follows (Bourne, 2005):

1. I have the right to ask for what I want.
2. I have the right to express all of my feelings, positive or negative.
3. I have the right to say no to requests or demands I can't meet.
4. I have the right to make mistakes and not have to be perfect.
5. I have the right to be treated with dignity and respect.
6. I have the right to expect honesty from others.
7. I have the right to change and grow.
8. I have the right to be in a non-abusive environment.
9. I have the right to my own needs for personal space and time.
10. I have the right to be happy.

Do you exercise these rights? Do you support your employees in exercising these rights? If not, why? What is holding you back? What is keeping you from being confident and self-assured? What is keeping you from fostering your employees' confidence and self-assurance?

These are important questions to ask yourself, because assertiveness fosters communication in conjunction with confidence and self-assurance. It is vital to equate assertiveness with fostering better communication, rather than aggressive behavior, because the more comfortable an individual is with being assertive, the more willing he/she will be to communicate. Successful individuals and organizations understand the importance of effective communication and hence, the importance of being assertive.