

How to be Assertive Without Alienating Your Partner

Asking for what you want—and setting boundaries around what you don't want—is a key life skill. But sometimes in our enthusiasm to practice this skill, we over-do our own assertiveness and end up with a partner or business associate who shuts down, gets angry or feels resentful. Here are four tips for developing your assertiveness in a way that will actually strengthen, deepen and enrich your relationship—thus avoiding the “alienation trap”:

1. Get Clear.

Being assertive starts with knowing what you are—and aren't—willing to be, do, or have. For many of us, coming to this knowledge is a real task unto itself. Here, it may be useful to ask: “In an ideal world, what would I like to happen?” Focusing on an ideal outcome opens our minds, prevents us from falling into passivity or “victim-thinking,” and helps us get really clear on what we want and don't want.

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Effective Communication Skills

Becoming successful in your career is deeply rooted in effective communication. Building better communication skills is often an area that can be neglected. Without clearly explaining your ideas, instructions, and objectives, it will lead to frustrations in the workplace. It is important to understand that communication is not simply comprised of the words you use, but also the way you execute non-verbal

cues, tone of voice and listening skills. Research shows that our body language makes up 38% of the communication process. The tone of which you deliver your words is 55% of the communication process. That only leaves 7% of the communication process to what you say. In order to develop better communication with others, consider addressing all of these aspects that allow you to express yourself.

Listen: To build better communication with those around you, active listening is vital. People want to feel that they have truly been heard. One way to improve on hearing what someone is telling you requires eye contact. Repeating the person's idea back to them in your own words will also show that you are listening and understanding what has been said. Before formulating a response to someone, active listening is key.

Non-Verbal: The non-verbal cues you use during conversations can make a negative or positive impact on the overall communication with another person. When your body language and words do not match, the other person will find it harder to understand.

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2. Set Boundaries.

Once you know what outcome you need (or want), share it with your partner. Pay attention to the way stating your boundary feels in your body. With practice, you can actually sense when you're hitting the "sweet spot." It can feel really pleasurable, even exhilarating, to express your needs or desires out loud. Phrases like "such and such doesn't work for me" are simple ways of being assertive while maintaining connection with your partner or colleague.

3. Make a Regular Habit of Stating Your Needs and Desires.

You can build your assertiveness the same way you build any muscle: exercise. Practice speaking up about your needs, big or small, on a daily basis. When you speak up about things that are less controversial—such as where to go to dinner, requesting help unloading the dishwasher or when to schedule a meeting—both you and your partner/associate get used to your assertiveness. It becomes easier for you to practice and for your partner to hear. Also, when bigger issues come along, you and your partner/associate will have a healthy process in place for dealing with differences in needs, and you'll have greater confidence in the resilience of your relationship.

4. Give as Much as You Get.

Assertiveness is a two-way street. If you want your boundaries to be respected, you must return the courtesy to others. If she doesn't want you to make direct requests of her employees without talking to her first, then don't. If he asks you to give him a half an hour after work before you talk and connect, respect that. When it comes to following through on a partner's/colleague's reasonable request, actions really do speak louder than words.

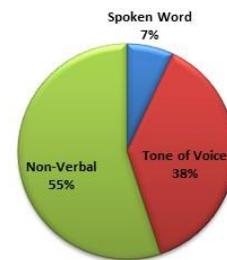
If your boundaries are not being respected, even though you've set them clearly, it may be time for professional help, a more pointed conversation or escalating the situation to your leader

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Tone: By far, the tone in which you deliver information is the most important aspect of effective communication. The words where you place emphasis will be taken as being the most important. Also, the pitch of your voice is important in communicating better. The higher the pitch of your voice, the less authoritative you will sound. Using lower tones in your speech will tell the other person when you are taking an authority role.

Speech: When entering into conversation with those around you, the words should still be carefully chosen. It is difficult to know what people will remember that you told them. Be sure that everything you say is communicating clearly what you are intending to say.

Non Verbal Communication



Taking the time to learn and enhance your overall communication skills will improve your work environment and help you to express yourself better.

Creating good communication skills will pave the way to success in your career goals. ♦

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Set Goals And Write Them Down!

We all have goals. But those who write their goals down tend to achieve their goals more often.

Why? Two reasons:

1. Writing them down crystallizes your goals. It keeps you on track, because you know exactly where you're going. You're less likely to wander off and get distracted by the next bright and shiny idea that catches your eye.
2. Putting your goals down on paper makes you more committed. You almost feel guilty if you don't follow through – after all, you've basically made a promise to yourself!

Here's a tip: Write down both your big goals and your small goals.

You see, if you just write down your big goals, it will seem like it takes forever to reach them. Months and even years will go by before you reach the biggest goals – and anyone's enthusiasm would fade if you work for years and don't achieve your goals.

For example, let's suppose your goal is to make one million dollars per year. If you're like a lot of business people, it will likely take many years to reach that point. But in the interim, there are plenty of other small goals worth of celebrating – your first dollar, your first one thousand dollar month, your first ten thousand dollar month... and so on.

So focus on your small goals, too. You'll feel accomplished as you reach those smaller milestones. That feeling of accomplishment will keep you going for a long time as you make your steady march towards your bigger goals.

SMART Goals

S = Specific
M = Measurable
A = Achievable
R = Relevant
T = Time-Bound

Does that mean you should forget about your big goals? Absolutely not! You want to write those down, too. You'll want to put them on your dream board. You'll want to think about them every day.

But the difference is that the "big prize" isn't the only goal you're working towards. You'll be working towards plenty of smaller goals – and it's these smaller goals that will create bridges to your larger goal. ♦

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"Committing your goals to paper increases the likelihood of your achieving them by one thousand percent!"

~ Brian Tracy

"You can start where you are with what you've got, and go to wherever it is you want to go."

~ Zig Ziglar



One Minute Ideas

Technology News

GET CHARGED UP IN NO TIME

Well, "no time" may be a slight exaggeration, but it is not too far off the mark. A start-up company, StoreDot, recently displayed the device at Microsoft's **Think Next** Conference.

In the demonstration, a Samsung S4 smartphone went from dead battery to full power in 26 seconds.

Rather than use lithium or nickel like conventional batteries, this battery uses "nanodots," tiny, self-assembling peptide nanocrystals discovered in the course of Alzheimer's research 10 years ago.

However, it may be several years before the quick-charging battery makes it to market. ♦

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Exceptional Leaders... Develop Future Leaders

The most highly effective leaders take the time to recruit and develop top talent so individuals in their employment will succeed and reach new heights of professional achievement. They will often look for certain leadership traits in their younger staff, such as effective communication skills, a passion for learning new things, the ability to cultivate new relationships, and the drive to tackle new challenges. In addition, experienced leaders will employ methods to develop their future leaders.

Here are several strategies for developing future leaders:

Rotate people through different jobs. You want to give your top talent first-hand experience in many different roles throughout your company. They'll gain exposure to different divisions and gain new expertise.

Create a mentoring program. Typically, employees are paired with more senior employees at their company with clear guidelines for the mentoring relationship. Partners should get to know each other before tackling specific issues. Spending time discussing work styles and personalities that will pay off later.

Provide frequent feedback and coaching. You want your best employees to stretch but not break, so make sure they have adequate support in new assignments. Frequent evaluations will help you catch and address problems early on.

A true leader will always take the extra time to nurture top talent and work towards building their professional self-esteem. ♦

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Schedule of Public Courses

The following courses are being offered to the public by Harmony Coaching & Consulting. Click on the associated link for more information on the program or to register.

Course Title	Date(s)	Time	For More Information/Registration
SHRM Learning System® is the preparation course for the HR Certification Exam <i>(Every other Saturday)</i>	Fall 2014	8:30AM – 4:30PM	http://www.cbu.edu/shrm-certification-prep/shrm.html
The Coaching Clinic® is a two-day workshop for executives, managers and leaders to experience and learn coaching skills and competencies.	November 13 & 14	8:30AM – 5:00PM	www.harmonycc.net/coaching-clinic.php

