**Assertiveness Training for Managers and Professionals**

**Might this assertiveness training
raise your sights about what you can achieve
as a manager?**

**YES it might, if you really want to be able to**

* put your point over in such a way that people recognise you really mean what you say and take you more seriously,
* be assertive without putting people down, getting  into arguments, creating scenes or damaging your reputation - in other words - be assertive without being aggressive,
* speak up for yourself with integrity and in a calm, and clear and courteous way that commands attention and respect, especially in difficult situations such as managing conflict or disagreement.

**What you'll take away from this assertiveness training**

Assertiveness is one of a small set of **communication skills** vital to anyone in a managerial or leadership position. This assertiveness training course will give you simple assertive techniques enabling you to take a firm stand under pressure and be taken seriously, but without antagonizing others or getting a bad reputation. You'll be able make people understand clearly what you want, and - just as crucial - what you *don't want*. You'll be able to put your foot down and say *no* when you need to. Our assertiveness training will help you develop a way of speaking assertively, an assertive language you’ll feel comfortable using. Being able to find the right words can’t fail to build your self-confidence and expand your vision of what you can achieve as a manager and leader.

**INTERESTED?**

If so, you can have a **FREE exploratory coaching session**. It'll give you a foretaste of what you can get from the course. You make no commitment to proceed beyond this until you're sure this training is relevant to your own particular need.

**How to accept this offer**

Simply**contact us** for a preliminary chat and to arrange your free exploratory coaching session.

**What this session will do for you**

In this session we'll aim to give you something practical you can use right away that'll help you handle a difficult situation more successfully at work. All you need do to [**prepare for this session**](https://www.gouldtraining.co.uk/faqs/how-to-prepare) is think about the kinds of situations you want to be able to handle more successfully.

**Want to know more
about our assertiveness training?
Read on**

**Why as a manager might I need assertiveness training?**

Assertiveness is one of \*the two crucial skills\* you need for managing the most challenging situations you face as a manager or leader, such as dealing with aggressive people and managing difficult people. It's how you get people to take you seriously. It's how you give effective feedback, tell people where you stand, what you want, what you *don't* want, what you're pleased and satisfied with and what you're dissatisfied or concerned about. It's as necessary for managing upwards as for managing downwards.

If you don't know how to be assertive you'll find it difficult to stand up against bullying, or say *no* to someone. You'll struggle to set high standards and hold people to those standards. If you can’t be assertive you have to resort to either to pleading with people or to trying to force them to do what you want, neither of which are very successful ways of winning their confidence, trust and cooperation.

Your assertiveness makes it easy for people to take you seriously - your bosses included. That’s because without attacking or threatening them you're talking straight about your own wishes, feelings and needs - and most people respond positively to this approach because it creates an atmosphere of mutual respect and frankness.

**What's the difference between assertiveness and aggression?**

The word *assertiveness* is often confused with *aggression*. Both assertion and aggression are ways of avoiding being submissive or passive. But aggressive behaviour is different from assertive behaviour. Aggression puts people on the defensive because they experience it as an attack. And it’s not transparently honest. Of course the feelings behind it may well be genuine, but because you're not openly admitting them it makes people fear and mistrust you. On this assertiveness training course we’ll help you master the art of being strongly assertive but without being aggressive.

**\*What's the other crucial skill\* a manager needs, the other crucial ingredient in this assertiveness training?**

In addition to assertiveness, the other crucial skill a manager needs is *empathy* - a **listening skill**. It doesn't make sense to make managers more assertive without also developing their empathy. These two crucial **communication skills** are at the heart of **emotional intelligence.** This assertiveness training course provides a powerful combination of assertiveness training and listening (or *empathy*) training. Once you've mastered these two skills there'll be very few situations you can't handle successfully. That's why they're so confidence building.

That's why this assertiveness training teaches you both skills. Together they form the basic tool kit you need for **managing conflict** and disagreement, for **influencing** and persuading people, and for **carrying people with you in times of change**.

**What two keys to assertiveness will this assertiveness training give you?**

* One key to assertiveness is recognising your own feelings and giving yourself permission to admit them - own up to them - speak about them, e.g.,*"I'm angry", "I'm worried", "I'm frustrated", "I'm disappointed", "I'm delighted", "I'm relieved", "I'm full of admiration", "I'm satisfied", "I'm not confident".*

If you try to keep the lid on negative feelings they're likely to build up a head of steam and explode or leak out in the form of aggression. Admitting them is a safe way of letting off steam and avoiding explosions and leaks. Openly admitting you're angry with someone is not the same as attacking them. In fact it's a way of avoiding attack. And it helps you be more true to yourself and give the other person access to what's going on in your mind.

* The other key to assertiveness is empathy. Empathy is awareness of the *other person's* feelings. It enables you to connect with what's going on in the *other person's* mind.

Assertiveness without empathy is unbalanced, one-sided. If all you do is talk about your *own*  feelings, and pay no attention of the *other person's*, your assertiveness comes across as an attack. But when the skills of assertiveness and empathy are combined barriers can come down and relationships heal. That's one of the main reasons why this assertiveness training is so powerful.

Both skills are necessary for building and improving relationships, managing developing teams and team members, engaging in creative problem solving, lateral thinking and constructive dialogue with colleagues about business stragegies, use of resources, getting people to accept solutions to problems, and conflict resolution.

Practise these two skills is a wonderful way of improving your self-confidence. It also develops your emotional intelligence - and the more emotionally intelligent you are the more powerful your assertiveness and empathy become.

**On this assertiveness training course you'll learn precisely what words to use**

Here are the guidelines this assertiveness training course will give you for speaking assertively, and below is an example. In the protected environment of the course you'll practise saying, as briefly as you can, three specific and true things about yourself (you can say them without fear of contradiction because you happen to be the world's highest authority on the subject):-

* + 1.  **How you feel** (Name the feeling. You can use positive feelings, e.g., *“I’m very pleased”, “I’m totally satisfied”,* or negative ones, e.g., *“I’m disappointed”, “I’m not happy”, “I’m extremely concerned”, “I’m alarmed”*.)
	+ 2.  **What about** (What specific event or experience you are referring to.)
	+ 3.  **The reason why** (What underlying need, belief or difficulty of yours has caused you to react in this way. In other words, what really matters to you.)

Then **pause** and wait. The pause adds power to your words. Watch and listen with close attention to the response. Without the pause your assertive words have no time to sink in. Allowing sufficient pauses in the conversation is one of the crucial skills you'll practise on this assertiveness training course.

**EXAMPLE
How you can use the method taught on this assertiveness training course in real life**

You can use this approach to complain in a restaurant, without being aggressive, rude or making a scene. Many people are so uncomfortable in this situation that they can’t bring themselves to speak up, but if you do it *this*  way it's far less uncomfortable:-

* Simply say in a quiet but clear voice, *“Waiter, I’m disappointed. It’s my steak. I ordered it rare because that’s how I prefer it”*, followed by silence in which you keep a straight face and wait for a response.
* You're making it very difficult for the waiter to do anything other than say, *“I’m sorry, Sir/Madam. I’ll order you another one right away.”*

**Why is the method taught on this assertiveness training course so successful?**

* Its economy and clarity – few words, powerful effect.
* Its authority – you're giving information no one can argue with. So you can speak with quiet conviction. There is no need to shout, be rude or make a scene.
* You feel better for saying it and your integrity remains intact.
* You are being firm and clear on the issue without attacking the person.

If you experiment with this approach you will soon see how extraordinarily well it works. On this assertiveness training course we'll give you lots of practice and coaching to help you maximize your power in using it.

**What common difficulties do managers have in learning the skill taught on this assertiveness training course?**

Many of us are prevented from being assertive by mental habits we're unaware of. This assertiveness training course will make you aware of the habits that are holding you back. The first step in overcoming them is to become aware of them. You might find it helpful to glance through this list and see whether any of these difficulties ring a bell for you:-

1. Lack of empathy. It may be a strange idea that what prevents people from being assertive is often simply that they don't know how to show empathy. The reason is that being assertive on it's own can come over as uncaring and aggressive, even when we don't intend it to, and most of us are reluctant to give such an impression. When you listen with empathy you show you *do*  care and are not being aggressive. So being able to show empathy frees you up to be as assertiveness as you need to be. That's why the two crucial communication skills, *empathy* and *assertiveness*  need to be learned together as a pair. and that's why we include both skills in this assertiveness training course.
2. Lack of awareness of my own feelings. Many of us are too busy thinking about the past, planning the future, reacting to events, trying to solve problems, to ask ourselves, *“What am I experiencing right now?”*  We make no time to tune in to our own feelings. It may be that we don't like to dwell on them because they're uncomfortable, but one of the consequences of shutting them off is that it severely limits our ability to connect with others. It's difficult to be truly assertive unless you're unaware how you feel right now? This assertiveness training will make you more aware of your own feelings.
3. Reluctance to express feelings. Many of us have been brought up not to express feelings. We may be afraid that they'll get out of control. So it may come as a relief to realise that talking about feelings acts as a safety valve, preventing the build-up of tension and destructive outbursts. You'll have lots of opportunity to practise an experiment with this in a safe environment on this assertiveness training course.
4. The belief that other people know how I feel without being told. Being assertive is making my feelings known. The reason many people don't do this is a belief that their feelings are already known. But this is usually wrong. Other people are usually unaware of our feelings. If we want them to know, we have to tell them.
5. Fear of being disliked. Some people find it hard to be assertive because they believe it will make them disliked. But, again, this belief is wrong. Most people react to frankness, firmness and assertiveness with respect rather than dislike, and if you couple it with empathy it is hard for them dislike you. Again, the safe environment of this assertiveness training course will help you overcome some of your fears.
6. Mismatch between verbal and non-verbal behaviour. When what you say is matched by body language and tone of voice, facial expression, pace, posture and gesture, the message you send is convincing. But when there is a mismatch, people get confused and end up not trusting you. Incompatible non-verbal habits need to be identified – if you think you have some, you could ask a friend to point them out. (But rather than going into a detailed analysis of non-verbal behaviour, it will probably be more helpful to consider the next item – habit 6.)
7. Not saying what I mean as though I really mean it. If you wish to become more congruent, simply practise saying what you mean as though you really mean it – as if your life and theirs depends on you being taken seriously. When you do this, incongruent habits fall away. Each of us has our own unique way of speaking when we really mean what we say. You needn’t to try to mimic others. Your own way is the right way for you. We'll encourage you to experiment with this kin the safefy of this assertiveness training course.
8. Expecting failure. Some of us don't realise we carry around with us, probably unconsciously, a belief or expectation we'll fail. This is another of those self-fulfilling prophecies as long as we believe it – and some people belief it throughout their lives. We're reluctant to assert what we want because deep down we're convinced we'll not get it or don't deserve it, and the anticipated failure is too painful to risk. It's hardly surprising we have a lot of disappointment. Self-limiting beliefs are wrong and can be changed. But before changing them we have to realise we have them – they have to be brought to the surface where we can see them and challenge them. Talking about them to someone who can listen patiently and with empathy can help.
9. Stating my opinion rather than saying how I feel. It is all too easy to revert to the habit of using the words, *“I feel that …”*, and of following them with your opinion. If you do this you're not giving any information about your emotion, with the result that you're leaving people guessing. The trouble with giving your opinion is that others receive it as an invitation to argue. If you want to be taken seriously it is much more effective to give them a fact they can't argue with – by naming your feeling and making it clear what it is about, and why you feel it. On this assertiveness training course you'll become more conscious of the words you're using, of the way you say them, and of how you're coming across.

**Yet more reasons why you might benefit
from this assertiveness training**

* There are difficulties that need to be confronted at work but you feel very uncomfortable about confronting them for fear of making enemies.
* You don't know how to express dissatisfaction constructively, or make a protest without showing aggression or antagonising people.
* It's necessary sometimes for you to talk tough, be more decisive, speak more clearly, in a more determined way that gets through to people and makes them take you more seriously. That's why you might need assertiveness training