

Assertiveness Obstacles

We often create obstacles that prevent us from being assertive.

By recognizing them, we can put them in perspective. If there is nothing we can do to change the situation, we can learn to accept it, but if there is, then we can find a way to fix it.

Ask yourself if any of the statements in the left-hand column are correct. If they are, then consider the actions in the right-hand column:

Is this a true statement?	If yes, do the following:
I don't know what I want	<p>Sit down and make a list of what you want from your life in the short and long term.</p> <p>It is not as easy as it sounds, so take time and revisit.</p> <p>Becoming more explicit about what you want will help you be more confident and assertive about your needs.</p>
I am out of touch with my emotions	<p>Begin to monitor how you feel throughout the day. What makes you happy, angry, or sad?</p> <p>Start a journal to track these emotions, and review at the end of each week where things went well or poorly.</p>
I'm stressed	<p>Become aware of when you get stressed and recognize that some stress is a part of daily life.</p> <p>If the situation is not essential to you and avoidable, then keep away.</p> <p>Otherwise (for example, when you need to be assertive about something), practice breathing techniques and mindfulness to manage your stress beforehand.</p>
My needs don't matter	<p>Your needs are important to you and those around that care about you.</p> <p>Before entering into a situation where you need to be assertive, consider what your needs are at this moment.</p>
I want to be loved at all costs	<p>Trying to be liked and loved by everyone will block your ability to be assertive.</p> <p>Recognize this as an obstacle and reflect that this is not how you find love.</p>

<p>I'm insecure / I feel vulnerable</p>	<p>Often, when we feel insecure/vulnerable we believe others recognize this too.</p> <p>This is usually not the case. Prepare well for the situation ahead to gain confidence and feel ready.</p>
<p>People will think badly of me/ I'm worried about offending someone/ I don't want to be challenged</p>	<p>Recognize that we all have different thoughts and beliefs, and that is ok.</p> <p>Reflect that your opinion matters.</p> <p>If you put your point across with respect, while being assertive, you will be better able to share your thoughts.</p>

Understanding the obstacles in our way to assertiveness can help us overcome them.

Dr. Jeremy Sutton