

Why It's Difficult to Be Assertive

	Submission	Assertion	Aggression
Nature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adrenalin level not high enough to cause a response. No reaction until you get angry. • Other person stronger than you - no option but to give in 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication is not possible • Discussion would take too long anyway - safer to counterattack or run away immediately • Build-up of stress if you don't respond physically 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adrenalin level reaches a point where you are forced to respond • Other animals only understand aggression - communication is not an option • It feels good to get angry and then let off steam
Upbringing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children are taught to obey their parents • Parents are bigger • School is all about obeying rules and fitting into systems • Scripts - "I'm not worthy" • Faulty thinking - it's not worth trying 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your parents will tell you not to argue, not to be a "smarty pants," or that you have no rights as a child • Faulty thinking - that assertiveness requires you to be cleverer than others or quicker at thinking of a good answer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents as aggressive role models • School playground is fairly similar to a jungle, with physical or mental aggression defining the pecking order
Conscious or subconscious beliefs: the perceived pay-offs or benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People will like and accept you, and therefore not hurt you • People will look after you • You'll lead an undemanding and easy life • You won't get into trouble • The chances of getting hurt are low • Our unpleasant decisions will be made for you • You will get promotion by "fitting in" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You will develop and maintain workable relationships with people • You will base these relationships on openness, trust, consistency, and on being an active listener • You will not accept that you can be a target for manipulation or attack • You will be respected for your integrity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You will get things done your way • You will get things done quickly • You will bend people to your will • They will respect, even be afraid of you • You will hide any of your own weaknesses by attacking others and exposing theirs • You'll have power, inspire confidence, and will progress in your career
The potential results of each type of behaviour in a modern civilised society where working relationships matter in the long term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You are overlooked or forgotten about • You are perceived as weak or indecisive • You may despise yourself for being weak • You won't be trusted • People will be frustrated in their dealings with you and will show it • You lack personal integrity and self-esteem • You suffer stress from bottling up grudges • You do not take control of your own destiny 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You manage potentially stressful situations more effectively • You extend your self-confidence and inspire confidence in others • You avoid manipulation by others • You have a realistic view of your own integrity and will make every effort to ensure that it remains intact • You maintain and exude a sense of well-being 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You inspire antagonism and dislike • You attract extensive opposition from stronger people, sabotage from the weak • You have to continually fight to maintain your position • People will not trust you – they know you don't respect them or care about them • You won't be able to trust others • Your stress level will be high • You have an unrealistic view of your own integrity, and will reject any indications of the real situation • You stand a chance of being physically assaulted