Personal Growth Series

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Assertiveness is not what you do. It's who you are!
Shakti Gawain

Assertiveness is often confused with aggressiveness, leading some people to view the quality of being assertive in an unfavourable light. But assertiveness is nothing more than being firm but tactful.

In the face of a request or conversation that we find objectionable, most of us would balk at the thought of lashing out at the other party. However, we may find ourselves swinging to the other extreme where we gave our consent or stayed silent due to the fear of offending the recipient.

However, by being assertive, it allows us to express our thoughts, feelings and position candidly and sincerely. Thus, it is an essential interpersonal abilities.

Tips on how to be assertive more effectively:

❖ **When presented with a request from another person for a need to be met, it is important to remind ourselves that we reserve the right to say 'no', especially if the request is not within our means to meet it. Learning to decline a request unreservedly and unapologetically, sans the aggression, is the basis of assertiveness.**

❖ **Sometimes we may encounter hostile reaction from another person when we assert our view or position. If this deters us from maintaining our stand, we need to weigh the pros and cons of yielding to pressure as opposed to keeping the peace.**

❖ **Some of us may feel negative about ourselves for turning someone down or airing our personal thoughts as we may perceive it as being unkind or irresponsible. If that happens, sharing your private thoughts and feelings with a professional or someone we trust may help us put the issue in perspective.**

SUTD Wellbeing Services offers professional counselling services for students in a private and confidential setting.
If you would like to see a Counsellor to discuss any issue or challenge, please email us at wellbeing@sutd.edu.sg.