

TFH and Being Assertive

by Bruce Dewe, MD, and Joan Dewe, MA

The assertive person is one who is able to communicate clearly and confidently their needs, wants and feelings to other people without abusing their rights in anyway.

Being assertive is a socially acceptable alternative to passive, aggressive or manipulative behavior.

Assertiveness training courses are becoming popular. I believe that within the TFH syllabus we have already some of the best tools in assertiveness training. Even with basic TFH it is possible to achieve worthwhile changes. Using the PHP II skills the changes are profound. If you have taken the structure/function workshops, *Under the Code* and *Louder than Words*, from our sister organization, Three-in-One Concepts, these skills will add further to your inner power.

Assertive people DO:

1. Decide what they want.
2. Decide if it is fair.
3. Ask for it clearly.
4. Are not afraid of taking risks.
5. Are calm and relaxed.
6. Express feelings openly.
7. Give and take compliments easily.
8. Accept and give fair evaluation.

Assertive people DO NOT:

1. Beat about the bush.
2. Go behind other people's backs.
3. Bully.
4. Call people names.
5. Bottle up their feelings.

Very few of us manage to be assertive in all areas of our life. Some manage at home but not at work. Other manage at work but not in personal relationships. Much of our happiness depends on how successful and satisfying our relationships with the key figures in our lives have been.

Gael Lindenfield in her book, *Assert Yourself*, (published by Thorsen Publishing Group) gives much practical advice that we as TFHers can use to advantage in our work of bringing people to wholeness. I recommend the book to you.

Five things that help us and our children learn this behavior:

1. **Models.** Someone who is assertive with us and whom we trust, respect and would like to be like.
2. **Love and encouragement.** These build our sense of self worth.
3. **Caring evaluation.** We learn to see ourselves, our actions and demands realistically.
4. **A sense of values.** To assess our own and others rights.
5. **A basic feeling of security.** To help us experiment with risks and make mistakes.

The essence of assertiveness.

Two primitive adaptive instinctive responses when encountering a problem area are a desire to flee or a desire to fight for our lives.

We may not experience these responses other than fear or anger. Both are biochemically produced by stress chemicals circulating in the body and manifest themselves as follows:

1. Flight - passivity
Type I behavior (back-brain)
2. Fight - aggressiveness
Type II behavior (back-brain)

In the **flight/fear/passivity** response blood drains from our head and upper torso, our face becomes pale and our legs tense up to run. The extreme flight/fear/passivity response is to faint or go into shock.

In the **fight/anger/aggressiveness** response, our upper torso and head become suffused with more blood than our lower body. The muscles of our neck and shoulders become very tense and taut and

our face becomes hot and red. Does this sound familiar?

Many mental health and relationship problems are the result of over reliance on these two basic animal responses.

There is a third response that mankind has developed to help solve the problems of living together as we do in communities. It is the ability to:

1. Discuss
2. Argue a case

3. Negotiate civilly

The aim of assertiveness training is the development of this third response (Type III behavior) which is often a more appropriate and successful way of communicating with others.

Most people are confused about the different responses and fail to be assertive because they are fearful of being seen as either passive or aggressive.

Comparing the responses of type I, type II and type III behavior.

A. Non Verbal Signals

Passive-Type I

whining voice
Clenched, wringing hands
Shuffling feet
Downcast eyes
Stoop, shoulder droop

Aggressive-Type II

Shouting
Loud voice
Pointing finger
Folded arms
Still posture

Assertive-Type III

Calm controlled voice
Relaxed posture
Direct eye contact
Arms open
Upright

B. Key Words or Sentences - used with the non-verbal signals.

Maybe
I guess
I wonder
Would you mind very much if
Sorry.....Sorry.....Sorry
Excuse me please
But
You know
If
I hope you don't mind

You'd better
If you don't
Watch out
Come on
Should
Bad
Stupid !
You !
Just you wait

I
I think
I feel
I want
I'm willing
Let's
How can we resolve this ?
What do you think ?
What do you see ?

The Stress without Distress Workshop, teaches that:

When we encounter a problem or go into stress, our survival mechanisms are activated. First we enter a state of alarm (or alert), next the adaption state and, if the stress is not attended to, we enter the exhaustion phase.

The TFH emotional stress relief technique (ESR) activates reflex points (called neuro-vascular points) which bring more blood to the frontal lobes of the brain. Back brain thinking is the survival response mode. Here we store automatic responses based on past experiences and the primitive flight/passivity or fight/aggressiveness response (Type I and II behavior). Front Brain thinking is creative thinking with new options and new

alternatives. (Type III behavior)

Stress chemicals seem to have the effect of reducing front brain - back brain communication and left brain-right brain integration. Thus they prevent us thinking creatively under stress. ESR reverses this process. This has the effect of reducing/erasing the biochemical trigger to the old stress memories.

People enroll in assertiveness training courses because of one or two specific problem areas in their lives. They will be keen to discuss these at length. Doing this with hands on frontal eminences has far more value than simply "airing the problem".

How to use TFH skills for assertiveness training.(explained in *Stress without Distress* manual)

1. Find a good indicator muscle An IM with a Clear Circuit is best
2. Test willingness to explore honestly and to upgrade Do ESR until willing
3. Muscle Test several problem areas - relationships/situations.

When we ask a person to focus on the specific stress event we reactivate the person's survival mechanisms. Having an arm sticking straight out from the body is not a survival trait. Hence the arm tests weak on the muscle test.

Relationship with spouse (.....name.....)
Relationship with children (.....name/s.....)
Relationship with parents (.....name.....)
Relationship with workmates (.....name/s.....)
Relationship with neighbors (.....name/s.....)
Relationship with friends/relatives (.....name/s.....)
Relationship with other TFHers in my area (.....name/s.....)
Saying 'no' to overtime at work
Sending cold/overcooked food back in a restaurant

4. Muscle Test several phrases. (Use a Yes/No Response here.)

I am able to express positive feelings.
I am able to express negative feelings.
I am able to refuse requests and invitations.
I am able to express personal opinions.
I am able to express justifiable anger.
I am able to give a compliment to a friend.
I am able to receive a compliment from a friend.
I can ask the doctor for more information/a second opinion.

Other suitable phrase - the table above will help.

5. Decide which balancing technique to use:

Goal Balance

(eg.) If you continually put your children down or use patronizing language with them use a goal like: "I respect my children and give clear instructions in a relaxed way"

Stress without Distress skills

"When I think of my sister's bossiness" (Hum/count)

Emotional Stress Release

"Before going into a meeting"

"Before confronting a person you are at odds with."

PHP Balance.

When working with client professionally, the PHP skills allow you to find the priority technique to deal with the emotions involved and the best age to deal with it.

6. Retest to see the change in muscle response.
7. Ask how they will be different and will notice the change?

YOU HAVE PERMISSION TO PHOTOCOPY
THE NEXT THREE PAGES TO MAKE OVERHEADS

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Aids for Developing Assertiveness

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