

THE MAIN BARRIERS TO ASSERTIVENESS

It's difficult to list up all the factors, both situational and personal, that influence the practice of assertiveness. However, what is certain is that some individual needs, most legitimate and natural in the beginning, can represent barriers to assertiveness when they become too pervasive. Here are a few examples of such needs, together with the very specific behaviors they may be linked to:

1. Wanting to be loved at all costs: Like all human beings, we want to be loved. We are looking for affection. However, in a professional context, wanting to be loved and appreciated at all costs can quickly turn into a kind of dependency. Respect others and have them respect you (avoiding authoritarianism), and you will gain more of their esteem.

2. Always wanting to be recognized by everyone: If your priority is kindness, then your freedom of action will be very limited. The need for recognition is a natural and legitimate phenomenon. However, being too sensitive to the opinions of others can cause you to lose your independence.

3. Trying to convince everyone at all costs: Let your entourage be free to judge and give them the right to disagree. Well-managed conflicts often lead to progress and even breakthroughs.

4. Adopting the "superman complex", seeking to control all situations: Participating in a collective strategy allows developing more peaceful relationships than "playing the savior". Moreover, it generally yields better results!

5. Wanting to be perfect in every single action: A possible response would consist in identifying what is really important and being assertive on these specific points, rather than arguing too much over secondary issues.

6. Trying to gain sympathy by overworking oneself: In this case, assertiveness amounts to acknowledging one's natural limits.

7. Not giving oneself the right to failure: To say "I do not have the right to make mistakes" is to forget that "he who has never made any mistake has never made anything at all"!

8. Setting oneself contradictory goals: Taking responsibilities while hoping to avoid any conflicts will necessarily lead to disappointments. It would be more useful to set oneself attractive, realistic and relevant goals, imagining the different steps that need to be taken in order to reach them. Moreover, it is necessary to make sure that these goals are consistent with one's values, needs and (professional and personal) environment.