

## Assertive Confirmation

### Dealing with dominant, controlling and predatory individuals.

An important skill in conflict communication and dealing with difficult situations is around being assertive and trying to avoid being aggressive or submissive. Whilst assertion skills are useful in getting your point across effectively there are some problems with the approach in certain situations.

The main issue is when you come up against very controlling, dominant or manipulative individuals. The problem is further compounded if that person is in a more senior position, or has overall control over a situation and does not need to comply with your assertions.



Whilst studying various personality types over the past decade, Martin Smith has looked at a range of approaches to try and get a message across to those that simply will not listen, don't care, or like to dominate, and will never be seen to agree. This is especially true with those they consider below them.

An assertive approach is essential but with an additional caveat. Whilst often assertive statements may include comments like "when you said that I felt.." or "your actions were thought to be... by this person" any statement which includes an aspect of person or emotional perspective can, to some individuals be seen as weak and insignificant.

It is this group of individuals, often what Martin would call in his EDB programme, quite predatory personality types that the use of Assertive Confirmations may help. Assertive confirmations are basically - neutral objective statements that avoid personal opinion, emotional or judgemental statements and aim to reaffirm the position of the organisation or you as an individual without relying on personal reflection or statements.

#### Examples of assertive confirmations may include:



- This is a difficult subject which cannot be solved easily or quickly
- This is what is recommended
- The policy states that...
- The situation is this...
- There are a couple of options that are available at this time, these being...

You will notice that each statement avoids any reference to you, I, them, or any form of emotional reflection such as, "I feel" "I am afraid" or "They think".

## Assertive Confirmation

Any attempt to make things personal or emotional, no matter how matter of fact it may appear, can be seen by the type of individuals we are talking about as weak, insignificant or simply irrelevant and hence cause them to ignore you or what you are trying to achieve.

It is not to say that this approach is foolproof or that it will work every time, but often when dealing with certain individuals of a predatory, controlling or dominant personality this approach and the use of assertive confirmation may just gain some traction and enable you to get your point across.

For more information on the EDB Programme and other programmes around working with different personalities in the workplace contact **Martin directly on 07 973 410 010 or email [info@taking-control.co.uk](mailto:info@taking-control.co.uk)**

