

Assertive Communication

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As business leaders, we hear a lot about assertive communication. This leads us to the question: what is assertive communication? Some people think being assertive is shouting louder than somebody else or barging into conversation to make sure that you are heard. Others think that if they simply state something quietly, they will be heard.

Jesus encountered an example of assertive communication when he approached Jericho and found a blind man sitting by the roadside begging. When the blind man heard the crowd going by, he asked what was happening. They told him,

Jesus of Nazareth is passing by. He called out, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" Those who led the way rebuked him and told him to be quiet, but he shouted all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" Jesus stopped and ordered the man to be brought to him. When he came near, Jesus asked him, "What do you want me to do for you?" "Lord, I want to see," he replied. Jesus said to him, "Receive your sight; your faith has healed you." Immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus, praising God. When all the people saw it, they also praised God. (Luke 18:35:43 NIV)

We can learn much from this passage of scripture. First, the blind man had a legitimate need; he couldn't see. He wasn't trying to talk to be heard; he needed help. He called out to the Lord, humbly addressing him as son of David, and asked for mercy.

When others rebuked him, he raised his voice to be heard but maintained his respect toward the Lord. When the Lord asked the blind man to be brought to him and Jesus asked what he could do for him, the man confessed, "I want to see." His request was reasonable and straightforward, a request that left no room for misunderstanding. As a result the Lord restored the man's sight.

When you want to practice assertive communication, it's important to use it only when the issue warrants that type of communication. Not everything is a big deal, and not everything requires assertiveness. Always maintain a kind and respectful demeanor when using assertiveness.

For example, most times when somebody tells me "don't you think" something what they're really telling me is they don't agree with what I'm thinking.

Think about how to use assertive communication when it is appropriate or necessary. Maintain a kind and respectful demeanor. Use your communication to ask for specific action. Then, your message will more likely bring about the right result at the right time.

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