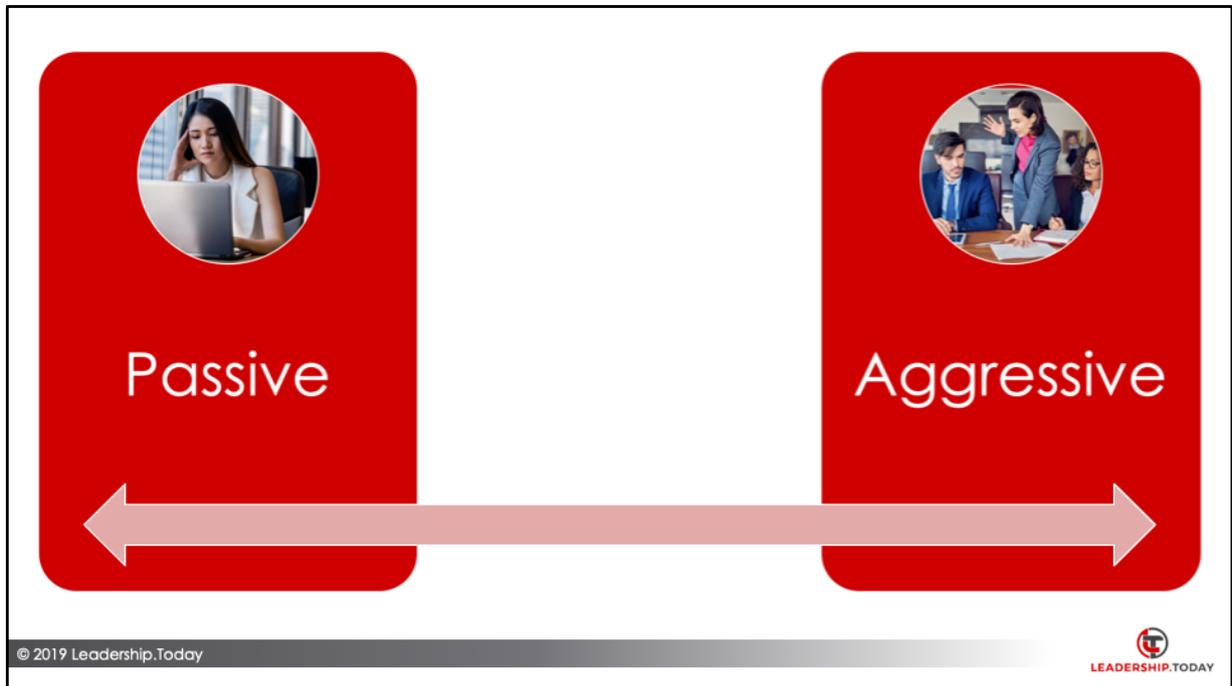




Welcome to day one of the course. We are starting this program focusing on what assertiveness isn't. So why would we do that? Why not just tell you what assertiveness is?

Working with thousands of leaders has demonstrated to me that most don't understand what assertiveness is. It's essential to start by getting rid of some of those misunderstandings before we can lay a solid foundation for developing our assertiveness.



It's helpful to start by picturing a line.

At one end of the line we have passive – someone who isn't standing up for themselves, but rather going along with what others say.

At the other end of the line we have aggressive. Here the person is most interested in their own perspective, and aren't particularly interested in what others say.

0% About Me
100% About Them

Passive

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Let's explore the passive end of the line first – this is 0% about me, and 100% about them. So my interests, views and opinions don't factor into the equation when I'm taking a passive position. 100% of the equation is about the other person and their interests, views and opinions.

Clearly being passive is not what assertiveness is about. But sometimes it might make sense to be passive. If something really doesn't matter to me and really matters to someone else, then it might be fine to take a passive position on that issue. The problem is when we take a passive position automatically, or respond passively to most situations we find ourselves in. When this happens, our interests, views and opinions don't even get on the table.

If I'm being passive about something that matters to me, it will set me up for disappointment. It also means my interests, views and opinions will be overtaken by the interests of others. People that take a passive approach may be overlooked for promotions and other new opportunities, leaving others to take the credit for their work. Or their great ideas may never be seriously considered. So being passive is not what it means to be assertive.

100% About Me
0% About Them



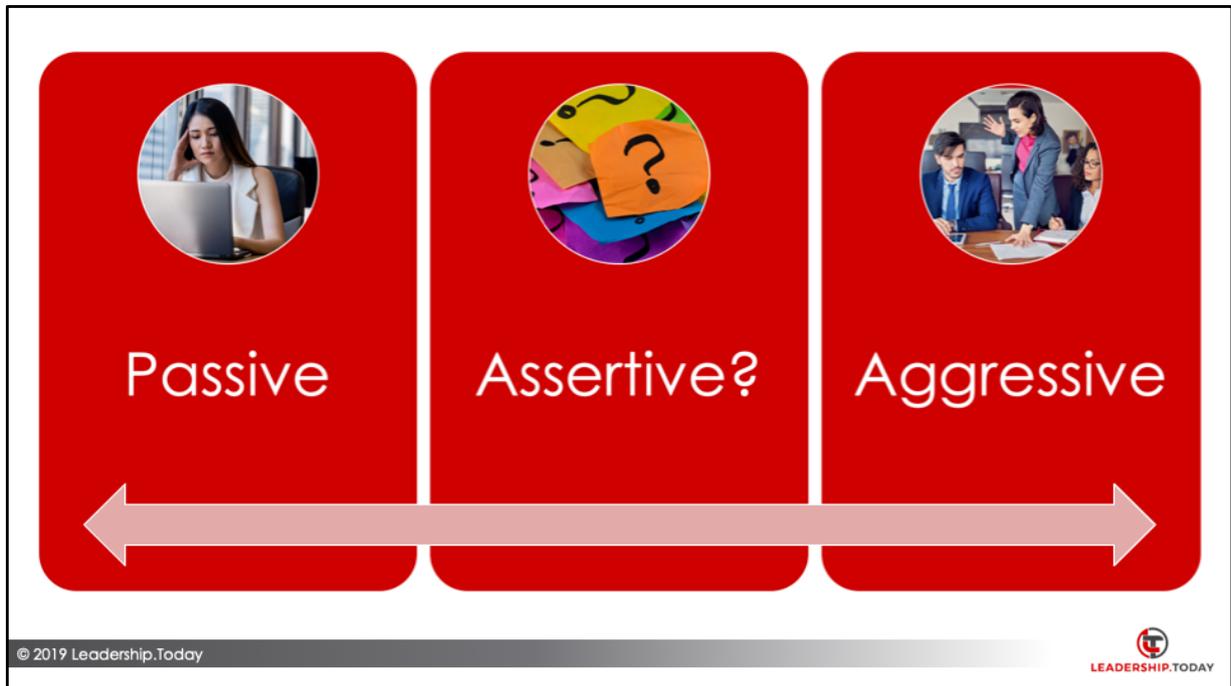
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So let's look at the other end of the line – the aggressive end. Here it's 100% about me, and 0% about them. When I'm being aggressive, my interests, views and opinions are the main concern, and the other person doesn't even factor into the equation.

This is where a lot of people go wrong when they try to increase their assertiveness. They assume that being assertive is about increasing the focus on my interests and needs at the sacrifice of others and their interests and needs. And often as they try out this new approach, they feel themselves being aggressive and don't like what they've become. They quickly default back to their usual passive approach.

Well, if you can relate to that, you'll be pleased to know that being aggressive is not the same as being assertive. People using an aggressive approach may get what they want in the short term but, over time, people start to work around them, ignore them, or leave to work somewhere else.



Okay – so if being assertive is not about being passive and not about being aggressive, is it simply the mid point of the line?

50%
About
Me?

Assertive?

50%
About
Them?

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Is being assertive 50% about me and 50% about them? Is assertiveness just about making compromises – putting my own needs and interests back a little sometimes to let others get their way?



We will learn in the coming days that assertiveness is more than compromise. We will take a whole new perspective that may well transform the way you think about assertiveness.

But I know you probably have one other question that popped up as we were talking about passive and aggressive. And that's about people who are passive aggressive.

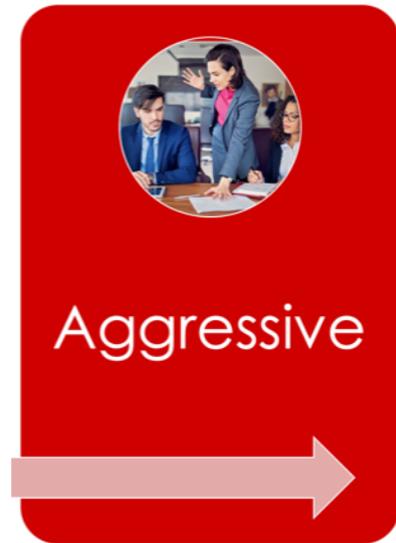


Chances are that you know someone who is passive aggressive. Someone who works away in the background against decisions that have been made, or says "yes" to someone's face then goes away and does the opposite. You might have even been that person at some points in your career and life to date. Is passive aggressive just the mid point between the two ends of our line?

PASSIVE AGGRESSIVE = AGGRESSIVE

100% About Me

0% About Them



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It turns out that passive aggressive is just another type of aggressive behaviour. Passive aggressive is 100% about me and 0% about them. The person using a passive aggressive approach may pretend to have others' interests at heart, but their actions demonstrate what they really value. Being passive aggressive is clearly not the same as being assertive.

Just before we wrap up this video, there's one final point that's extremely important.



Assertiveness is not a personality type. I've talked about when people are passive, and when people are aggressive, and when people are passive aggressive. I haven't said "passive people" or "aggressive people" or "passive aggressive people". The reality is that all of us are passive in some situations and aggressive in others. But we're not born passive, or aggressive, or indeed assertive. Sure, we may have some tendencies that mean we lean towards one of these options more frequently, but we can always change our approach once we're aware of it.

The problem isn't our personality or what we've inherited in our genetics – the problem for most people is that we just haven't stopped to think about and reflect on our default approach. In addition to that, we typically don't have a clear and accurate view of true assertiveness. So before we define assertiveness, we are going to spend some time reflecting on where we are now.



DAY ONE EXERCISE

Reflect on and monitor your passive and aggressive behaviour, thoughts and feelings

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Your exercise for today is to reflect on and monitor your passive and aggressive behaviour, thoughts and feelings. I will talk you through the exercise in the next video.