

Did you  
KNOW?

Lauren Bacall once said: "I am not a has-been, I am a will be."



# Stand up for yourself at 50, 60 & 70+

By Kate Carr

Sick of being treated like a doormat? Fed-up with feeling ignored or invisible? It's time to get confident!

**T**he vast majority of women over 50 were taught that it's rude to wish to ask for what we want. With phrases such as "I want more, but" playing in our ears, it's not surprising we find it difficult to be assertive. "Our generation grew up believing it's wrong to express our needs," says Gill Haines (50), co-author of *How to Be Assertive in Any Situation* (Prentice Hall, \$19.95). But with a little courage and confidence, it's all possible to change...

## IN YOUR 50s

You don't feel as confident as you used to. You know people are taking advantage of you, but you aren't sure what to do about it.

- 1 Don't panic.** "Many women find that confidence slips in their 50s and it's impossible to be assertive if you don't feel good about yourself," says Gill. No need to panic. Accept that this is perfectly normal, give yourself time to adjust and you'll find your confidence will return.
- 2 Give compliments.** This is an easy way to start feeling better about yourself. "The more compliments for positive things in others receive, the more you will talk for positive things in yourself," says Gill. You can make someone else feel confident, too.



Learn to love yourself—yourself!

- 3 Prove how good you are.** Make a list of all your great qualities, including examples of each. "If you're a caring person, write about the time you helped your elderly neighbor or babysat for a friend," says Gill. "The more concrete evidence you have of your good qualities, the easier it is to believe them."
- 4 Believe you're worth it.** Standing up for yourself may feel uncomfortable at first. "The only way to overcome your fear is to face it," says Gill. "Assure the people still feel scared about speaking up for themselves, but they do it anyway."

**WISE WORDS** Ten minutes you will be less than your 10 years, but you can't lose time before making a decision. You can't lose time. —Maurice Dond

## IN YOUR 60s

You have more time to start thinking about yourself, but friends and family still rely heavily on you.

- 1 Give graciously.** —or not at all! Don't agree to something and then mean about doing it. "This isn't being over the top, it's just being responsible," says Gill. Instead, take responsibility for the choices you've made and do a self-audit.
- 2 Learn to say no.** Don't be acknowledging how the other person might feel about your decision. For example, "I know this might be difficult for you, but I've decided I can't

- help this time." They calm, stand firm.
- 3 One excuse will do.** Don't ramble. "I can't babysit tonight because my car's in the shop" is all you need to say. If you then add that you don't have enough food in the house, the TV's broken, your spouse gets watered down...
- 4 Surround yourself with positive people.** "You can't just dump the friends who like to complain, but you can limit the time you spend with them," says Gill. Positive friends inspire, support and encourage. Do you?

**WISE WORDS** It takes a great deal of courage to stand up to your enemies, but even more to stand up to your friends. —J.K. Rowling

## IN YOUR 70s

You've spent years making sure your family has all they need, but it's still difficult to do it for yourself.

- 1 Stand tall.** Practice standing upright like a penguin. Just don't. Shoulders relaxed, chin up, weight evenly balanced. Don't fiddle with your hair or your jewelry. Adopt confident body language and others will respect you more.
- 2 Listen to other views.** Assertive people consider others' opinions before making a decision. They spend less time doing...

- 3 Find a voice model.** Who do you know who's really assertive? How do they sound? What do they say? "What do they do to get people to listen to them without moaning or whining?" Try to step into their shoes.
- 4 Celebrate how far you've come.** And don't worry! Friends and family mean about the way you've changed. They may not like it (you used to be a doormat), but they'll get used to it. They'll respect you more, too.

**WISE WORDS** No one can make you feel inferior without your consent. —Elizabeth Cady Stanton

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