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**Question: I find assertiveness looks different with different audiences (i.e., women vs men). How do I manage to get my point across without offending women?!**

Julianna: This will largely depend on the depth of the relationship you have with the other person. If the woman you are speaking with has a high degree of mutual trust with you, then you can likely speak up more easily and ask for what you need. If trust/respect is currently low, then you may need to use a preamble statement, such as:

“I know we have a history together, and I would like to work on this relationship with you in a way that respects us both...”

or

“I know we don’t know each other that well yet, but I’d like to learn more about you and what makes you successful/happy/what’s important to you...”

So, starting with what I call a positive “intention statement” so that the other individual knows where you are coming from and why BEFORE you ask them to change what they are doing.

**Question: What additional resources can you recommend on becoming more assertive, communicating assertively. Courses? Books?**

Julianna: Books -

1. Talking from 9 to 5: Women and Men at Work (Author: Deborah Tannen)
2. That’s Not What I Meant! How Conversational Styles Makes or Breaks Relationships (Author: Deborah Tannen)
3. Ask For It - how women can use the power of negotiation to get what they really want (Authors: Linda Babcock & Sarah Laschever)
4. How to Say It for Women - Communicating with Confidence and Power Using the Language of Success (Author: Phyllis Mindell)
5. The Well-Spoken Woman - Your Guide to Looking and Sounding Your Best (Author: Christine K. Jahnke)

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**Question: So is using the softening statement "I may be seeing things incorrectly but ..." a good choice?**

Julianna: It is! Yes.

I will often take the edge out of my directness by beginning with, "Feel free to correct me if I'm wrong, but..."

when I am challenging something that has been said and I think there is a potential for offending someone, or when I may be mistaken for being critical.

**Question: If you are consistent in using this methodology, can we see others around us adapting how they behave? Do they learn from you?**

Juliana: That is often what happens; when we change our approach, others step into the conversation and, therefore, change how they show up with us.

But...do not expect this, as having that expectation that they will be different when interacting with you can set you up for disappointment if they do not.

Coming in with openness and pure curiosity to explore both YOUR needs and THEIR needs does not rely on them changing (although ironically, that is exactly what we are hoping for as an outcome). Maintaining emotional safety (non-judgment) is key to helping them cooperate with you by reducing any perceived threat.