

REVIEW



Liadan Hynes undertook an assertiveness training course with life coach **Maria Jose Lynch** and ended up with a complete lesson in life skills

‘YOU’RE doing an assertiveness course?’ several friends exclaim in surprise. Which is gratifying. Nobody wants to be thought a push-over. My editor suggested I attend the course and write about it when I decided to leave my staff job with this paper and go freelance. I was delighted; despite the aforementioned canvassing, I’ve always felt my assertiveness skills left something to be desired. I hate confrontation and I tend to come over all quavery voiced, or worse, I well up. Leaving the shelter of a job I’d enjoyed for nearly 12 years and venturing into the world of the self-employed, pitching for jobs, negotiating over rates and building a roster of clients, good assertiveness skills would be more useful than ever.

Besides this, with a daughter of my own, I had begun to secretly worry about teaching her how to stand up for herself (helicopter parenting I know), although watching her 18-month-old self recently commandeer the dinner of a cousin 10 years older than her by dint of imperious pointing and shouting “mine”, I think my concerns in that corner are unfounded.

Maria Jose Lynch of Motivated Joyful Living is an executive and life coach, working both within the corporate sphere, and with individuals and groups. “I specialise in confidence building,” she explains. “So within that umbrella I deal with confidence, assertiveness, and building self-esteem.”

With a background in marketing, she has an understanding of what it takes to navigate the corporate world. Now, she has added the skills of neuro-linguistic programming, EFT (Emotional Freedom Technique, commonly referred to as tapping), HeartMath (a stress management system), and emotional management amongst others. Her method is to apply a sort of bespoke approach to each client, depending on their needs.

When we first meet, Maria, who is warm and full of energy in person, shoots down my attempts to be an overprotective parent, trying to remove possible future problems from my daughter’s path by way of hoarding her assertiveness skills. Children learn by example, she says kindly but firmly. We move on to me. In the face of anger, I tend to freeze, I explain.

Maria’s life lessons