

Advocate

Ways of de-emphasising this voice:

1. Reflect on when you tend to express yourself particularly forcefully; is it on particular occasions, over specific issues, with certain people? Put a special marker in your diary, agenda or address book to remind you to use a calmer tone and language on these occasions.
2. Don't simply keep *pushing* your point. Build on it by switching to another voice to take the discussion forward. For example, *Inquire* to clarify where others stand in relation to your point, or *Evaluate* to get a balanced evaluation of the different opinions.
3. Adopt a more relaxed posture when you speak: lean back rather than forward, fold your hands rather than waving them to hammer points home, make your eye contact less intense.
4. *Offer* your views rather than *delivering* them. '*I wonder whether it would be a good idea to...*' Invite others to develop your starting point rather than doing it all yourself.
5. Ask your colleagues, friends, partner to give you feedback about the particular phrases or figures of speech that you are in the habit of using when you are pushing people to agree with you. Then catch yourself when you use those phrases. They are in danger of becoming your personal clichés and making what you say sound hollow or rhetorical.