How To Create Win-Win Situations

The secrets to creating harmonious relationships anytime, anywhere.

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INTRODUCTION

"If we value independence, if we are disturbed by the growing conformity of knowledge, of values, of attitudes, which our present system induces, then we may wish to set up conditions of learning which make for uniqueness, for self-direction, and for self-initiated learning." - Carl Rogers

Assertiveness is considered an important communication skill that relates to respect for personal rights and boundaries with the intention to establish healthy and lasting relationships. An assertive person speaks his own mind to influence others while being respectful of the personal boundaries of others. Likewise, he protects himself against those who would cross over his own line.

Assertiveness requires direct, open, and honest communication between people. This can be between you and an associate, a friend, or a spouse. This kind of open communication will make everyone feel better about themselves and each other. More importantly, it will help develop and maintain healthy relationships with friends, loved ones, and co-workers.

To develop and have healthy relationships, you need to develop communication skills, which includes being comfortable in expressing what you really need and want. This being a two-way process, you need to learn to listen to the wants and needs of others.

Up until recently, there were no seminars on how to become assertive. Most of the time, we depended on various personal or celebrity role models to lead us how to live our own lives. Well, it is no wonder that everyone is still searching for happiness, pursuing fulfillment, and going after unrealistic goals.

No one has showed us how to live our lives the right way and some of our role models do not have any clue either. Like us, no one taught them. They just relied on what they know on how to do things. Maya Angelou said, “You did what you knew how to do and when you knew better, you did better.”

Fortunately for us all, not everyone is wandering around oblivious and ignorant about what to do. At last, there is new information available to help everyone learn more and live better. No one wants to live a cookie cutter existence. We all want a life that is fulfilling, exciting, and satisfying. Are you tired of waking up and thinking, “Is this all there is?”

This report is for you. Now is the best time to get excited about your life! It is time to assert yourself and get what you want out of life. This is your life and not a dress rehearsal! It is time to learn new skills on how to do better. It is time to learn how to be more assertive.

Chapter One
What's Stopping You From Becoming Assertive?

"Assertiveness is not what you do, it's who you are!" - Shakti Gawain

There is a huge difference between being assertive and being aggressive. Being assertive is a way of living where you get the most out of life without other people telling you how to do it. This simple means: You do not need to be obnoxious, pushy, or rude to get it your own way.

You cannot just jump in with both feet and decide, "Hey, I'm going to be assertive and no one will be pushing me around anymore. No more Mr. Nice Guy!" **Learning how to be assertive requires a new mindset and plan.** Remember, you want to learn to be assertive, not aggressive. So ask yourself these questions:

1. What do I value most?
2. What are my beliefs about how life works?
3. How do I feel about myself?
4. What are my approaches to life? Do these approaches work?

The fact that you purchased this report says a lot. It says you are seeking for improvements in life. Change starts with awareness. You are aware that you need to change; you just do not know how to get started. It is time to learn why you do what you are doing and how to turn that around. Remember, you cannot just flip a switch and instantly become assertive and successful in life.

Mark Twain said, "We do not deal much in facts when we are contemplating ourselves." In order to learn how to become assertive and be in

charge of your own life, you must be honest with yourself. Dr. Phil is always saying that you cannot change what you do not acknowledge. It is time to figure out what you are hiding from yourself.

- Do you consistently fail when it comes to attaining your goals in life?
- Are you just drifting along with no plan, goals, and idea?
- Are you stuck in a comfort zone that gives you no new challenges?
- Are you getting too little of what you really want and way too much of what you do not want?
- Are you living with guilt or frustration and do not know how to change things?

What is at stake here is the quality of your life. Do you want to live it fully and authentically? Or are you okay with someone else calling the shots and making decisions for you for the rest of your life?

Do you feel like you are constantly being pushed around? Do you feel like you are being taken advantage of? Do other people try to run your life? Do you feel that you are ready to start living life in your own terms?

You need not accept burdens like those listed above. You can assert yourself and reach for something better. You have the right and the ability to have what you want out of life. Let me warn you though, change does not come in an instant.

Assertiveness is something that must be learned carefully one step at a time. This is especially true if you have spent years following others telling you

what to do, how to do it, what to think, what to feel, etc. How motivated are you to change and learn to assert yourself?

Think about those people who run our world. Whether it is business, politics, sports, or entertainment, there is one common denominator for all these people. These people know which buttons to push to get what they want. Some of these people are extremely intelligent and articulate, while others are merely manipulative. Some are unconcerned whether you agree with them and share their views. Others are rabid in demanding that you fall in line with them. They feel that they know best and this gives them the authority to tell everyone what they should be doing and saying. It is their way or the highway.

Be aware that there are risks involved in learning how to be assertive. You will find that many will not agree with you. In fact, you will meet people who are skeptical and pessimistic. They will always argue and try to prove you wrong.

Let us continue with your assessment in life by acknowledging what is wrong in your life. Are you guilty of saying these things to yourself?

- I'm really trying but you know, it's just so hard!
- I guess it could have been much worse.
- It's not what I wanted , but what am I going to do?
- Sometimes you have to do what you have to do.
- We're doing okay, I guess.

Are you making lots of excuses, like:

- It was harder than I expected, I just couldn't do it.
- Maybe I was expecting too much.

- I have too much going on in my life to handle any of this right now.
- I'll tackle that as soon as I have the time and resources.
- I guess what I wanted isn't meant for me.
- Maybe it's not in the cards. It's not my destiny.
- I never seem to get the right break.

It is time to stop whining about bad luck, wrong timing, or how things just never seem to work out for you! Stop hosting pity parties! Realize that the deck is not stacked against you! Stop making excuses! It is time to learn to assert yourself and get what you really, really want!

Okay, let us get down to basics. What exactly are you afraid of? That is easy. People share a universal fear of rejection. The very thought of being rejected can turn the strongest man or woman into a quivering coward.

What does everyone crave for in life? This one is also easy. We all crave for acceptance. We feel lost if we are not accepted. We feel left out, excluded, and ostracized. Acceptance is everything.

We learn about acceptance from infancy. Children will go to any lengths; even do things they dislike just to gain the acceptance of their parents, friends, or teachers. It continues throughout our lives as we grow.

Paul Landres gives us an example of a mindset of an assertive person when he said, "And is the price for your acceptance for me to conform? To be as you would want me to be? You must accept me as I am."

So accepted or not and rejected or not, you have your own destiny to create. You can make it happy or sad, good or bad, successful or not. Your life is

your own and ultimately, you are responsible for how it turns out. There may be road bumps along the way and not everything will turn out according to your plan. You may have to adjust your road map and come up with a Plan B or even a Plan C. In the end, learning how to be assertive will help you win and get what you want.

Without assertiveness, you will lose control of your life and find yourself living someone else's idea of what life should be. If you shy away from being accountable and taking charge of your own life, someone will step forward to claim responsibility for it. This could be a parent, spouse, or in the case of an elderly person, maybe one of their own children. If you never master the ability to assert yourself, make your own decisions, and live your own life, someone will surely step forward and do it for you. Is that what you want?

Asserting yourself also does not mean blaming others for your decisions. "My husband left me with nothing when he died, so it's not my fault that I'll have to live with my children for the rest of my life." Rather than take the responsibility for your own decisions, you choose to volunteer for victim-hood and blame someone else.

Asserting yourself and taking full responsibility is scary and risky for anyone. "What if I assert myself and try to create my own destiny and it doesn't work out? Then, what will I do?" It is normal to be a little fearful because it is part of human nature. Keep in mind that all decisions have consequences. As you learn to be assertive, you also learn to trust your self when making decisions.

Your thoughts influence your world. “There is nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so,” said William Shakespeare. To think is to create. Your thoughts create your reality. Your thoughts influence your actions and behavior. A change in your thoughts leads to a change in behavior and eventually in your world. What do you tell yourself? Do these negative statements sound familiar?

- I’m just not smart enough.
- I’ve never succeeded before, why would now be any different?
- People refuse to listen to women like me.
- People make up their minds and there’s nothing I can do about it.
- I’m too young or too old.

Start by choosing to learn how to be more assertive starting today. With this, you will need a well thought out plan. There will be days when you wonder if you can sustain and follow through your plan. Wouldn’t it be easier to just throw in the towel and be done with it?

If you find yourself in this position, remind yourself of the benefits you will enjoy when you become assertive. Keeping the benefits in mind will help in sustaining your new and assertive behavior.

Others may be in a difficult situation. This is especially true of the elderly. It is hard for them to persevere, especially when the children try to control their lives and make decisions for them.

There are many variables here. Each person must evaluate and decide what is important and what isn’t. Being assertive means choosing for yourself

where you want to be and with whom. It means choosing what to do, what to say, and what to believe.

What is keeping you from being more assertive? What keeps you from making your own decisions? Are you afraid you won't be any good at it? Are you secretly afraid that you will be so good at it that your entire life will change? St. Paul said, "I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate."

Assertiveness is a learned behavior. Probably, it was not taught to you as you were growing up. Unknowingly, you developed certain behavioral patterns that do not support assertiveness. You fall into a trap where you constantly wonder why your life is not what you wanted.

The definition of insanity is doing the same things in the same way, but expecting different outcomes. If you have never done so before, learning to assert yourself produces a change in how you handle yourself.

Assert yourself by doing things in different ways and produce a different outcome. Presto, you have asserted yourself and changed your life! Learn this important lesson from Dr. Phil McGraw when he said, "If you continue to do what you've always done, you will continue to have what you've always had. If you do different, you will have different."

Unfortunately, some of the behavioral patterns that you learned in life become automatic. You do not even think about your response anymore. You do not allow yourself to evaluate the cause and effect of this behavior; you are just flying on autopilot. It may seem easier to let go and not think about the

consequences. In the end, you will realize that certain behavior patterns will not continue to work for you.

By remaining static and not changing the pattern of behavior, you repeat the old patterns repeatedly. It is important to stop, think, and re-evaluate whether a learned behavior is really working for you or has become another crutch to keep you in homeostasis.

There is a reason why you keep getting stuck and unable to move forward. When you continue to repeat a bad pattern repeatedly, you are doing it for a reason. You must find the reason in order to change the behavior. Change the behavior in order to change your life for the better.

Some people seem to be at the mercy of others, unable to make their own decisions, or are not in charge of their own lives. They let others push them around by telling them what to do. The sad part is that they have allowed this to happen for several years. Some of these folks may never find their own way, while others may just snap one day and tell everyone off. This kind of abrupt behavioral change leaves everyone puzzled and leads to destroyed relationships and damaged friendships.

When you decide to be assertive, you must also realize that this learned behavior must be reinforced every day. Assertiveness is not a cure-all for all your ill feelings. It is a way of managing your life.

The University of Illinois Counseling Center says, “Asserting yourself will not necessarily guarantee you happiness or fair treatment by others, nor will it solve all your personal problems or guarantee that others will be assertive and

not aggressive. Just because you assert yourself does not mean you will always get what you want; however, lack of assertiveness is most certainly one of the reasons why conflicts occur in relationships."

Reciprocity works along with assertiveness, too. Choosing to make your own decisions does not require you to damage another person. Being assertive does not give you the permission to push another aside, take over another's life, or make decisions for them.

Assertiveness is about you and your own life. It is all about your decisions and the consequences. Remember, you get what you give. How you treat others relates to Karma, which simply states that everything that goes around comes around. Let us correct a misconception here. Assertiveness is all about getting what you want AND building lasting relationship with people around you.

Assertiveness works fine when used with diplomacy. You can assert yourself without hurting others' feelings. In fact, the real essence of assertiveness is this: As you get what you want in life, you gain the support of people who would like to see you succeed.

Chapter Two
Assertiveness in the Work Place: Don't Confuse Assertiveness with Aggressiveness!

"The basic difference between being assertive and aggressive is how our words and behavior affect the rights and well being of others." - *Sharon Anthony Bower*

Oprah Winfrey calls it "the disease to please". Nowhere, except a woman's world, does it run more rampant than in the workplace. There is a special pressure in the workplace from your boss, supervisor, associates and co-workers. Everyone is extremely busy these days. This disease seems to attack women more frequently, but men can be affected by it too.

Assertiveness should not be confused with aggressiveness. A fine line divides these two behaviors. Being aggressive means selfishly pushing for what you want at the expense of other people. In doing so, you generate a host of negative behaviors that make people become angry and vengeful towards you. It may involve hostility, blaming, threats, gossip, and unreasonable demands. Aggressiveness may allow you to achieve your immediate objective, but it also guarantees that you will not have what you want the next time.

On the other hand, assertiveness means standing up for your rights while respecting the rights of others. Being assertive means appropriate expression of your feelings, needs, and opinions while respecting the feelings of others. It is communicating what you really want in a clear way while ensuring that you are not being taken advantage of.

Let us say your boss asks you to do a special favor for him. Now here is the problem: that little favor is beyond your job description. In fact, it is within the scope of his duty as the Boss. Now you have a dilemma. Do you say “no” because it is not your responsibility to do his job, thereby run the risk of incurring his ire? Or do you say yes just to avoid making him angry? After all, you need this job desperately considering the mountains of bills that you have to pay monthly; thus, you really can’t afford to make him angry.

On the other hand, you know very well that if you do his job the first time, it is most likely that he will be asking you to do things that he should be doing himself. This will eventually develop into a pattern. You do it this time and he will just keep on turning over his responsibilities to you. Before you knew it, a habit is formed and you are stuck. If previously you gave in to some of his requests, saying “no” now would make him mad at you. After all, you have been doing it before, why not do it again this time?

So, what is the answer? Be assertive right at the beginning and in all instances until the Boss realizes that you cannot be pushed around. You do not need to get nasty or abusive with him. In fact, you will probably lose your job if you do!

Be assertive right at the beginning when he asks you to take over some project that he should be doing. You could tell him, “I’d love to help you out, but I’m just swamped with my own work already. I couldn’t possibly do justice to your project that it rightfully deserves.”

Go ahead and check the language used above and you will find out that you have not directly said no to him or embarrassed him, so he cannot be too angry with you. You have acknowledged that his project is worthy of attention, but gently nudged him into remembering that it is his project and that it is his duty to finish it, not yours.

What you have done here is set a precedence that he will remember. You did not blindly just say yes to avoid his anger. He is the Boss and would have taken advantage of your skills many times in the future. For example, every time he has a project that he did not want to tackle himself, he will just pass it on to you. Now he knows he cannot just dump his duties on your lap all the time. You may have to repeat this action a couple more times before he gets the message.

The same scenario should work with co-workers who try to pass on the jobs they do not want to do. This trick is used mercilessly on newcomers in the office. Newcomers try so hard to please everyone that they get stuck with all the less desirable tasks and find themselves with very little time to accomplish the duties they were actually hired to perform.

Why do people continue to say “yes” when they want to say “no”? There are many reasons actually. One reason is that they want people to like them. They are afraid that if they say “no”, they will have no friends at all. They are also afraid that the boss will use their refusal as a ground for insubordination, and thereby dismiss them.

One reason why people are continually doing this is that they want to be known as the “go-to” person. They want to develop a good reputation and be

known as dependable and can always accomplish the task. It makes them feel wanted, needed, and more valuable to the organization. If you want something accomplished, just take it to these “go-to” persons and consider it already done! It makes them feel good when they feel like you cannot do without them. After all, if everyone needs them, then their job must be secure, right?

Unfortunately, this inability to say “no” can work to your detriment. It causes a build up of stress hormones, such as adrenaline. As a result, your heart will beat faster than its normal pace, your blood pressure rises, and blood vessels become narrow. According to doctors, these conditions can increase your risk of heart attack, stroke, and even cancer. Saying “yes” to others all the time could put you in an early grave!

In the early days of man, these stress hormones could literally save lives. During the pre-historic times, people lived in a ‘fight or flight’ world. It is either they hunt or be hunted. Adrenaline saved them from danger.

Nowadays, danger is present in the way you eat and in the lifestyle you live. Many become couch potatoes and worry constantly. The stress you experience these days is different but just as deadly.

Therefore, the answer is to stop being a doormat and learn to say “no” more often. I can almost hear your gasps and objections to that statement. I anticipate your reactions: “Wait a minute, you do not know the situation I am in” or “You just do not know how to be unemployed”.

You might be afraid to say “no”, but sometimes it is necessary. For starters, those people who already like you are not going to stop liking you just

because you said “no”. Those who behave in a grumpy manner were like that long before you told them so.

Okay, so you mustered all your courage and said “no”, but now you feel guilty for doing so. How do you handle that? You probably feel like you let them down. Guilt is not necessary here; it is a useless emotion.

Stop and think about how you really feel when they ask you to do them a favor. Did you say “yes” then feel resentful about it? If that is the case, now you have a cue that when this situation happens again, say “no” right away. Do not make up excuses that you both know are lies. It will make you guilty for saying something deceitful and wrong. You could tell them that:

- You’re right in the middle of some projects and simply don’t have the time.
- You’d rather tell them “no” than only be able to give it a fraction of your attention.
- You’re really not the best person for that job.
- Your calendar is full right now and you can’t take on any more tasks.

If they surprised you with the request and you do not know what to say, ask them to give you some time to think about it and consult your calendar. Many times, they will ask you without warning, hoping you will just say “yes” right away.

Learn to always give yourself a little wiggle room or flexibility. When you do decide to inform them of your negative decision, say it right off the bat, so they understand they cannot talk you into a “yes”. Being definite about your response

at the soonest possible time will make them respect you more and cause fewer hurt feelings later.

Somehow, we have been led to believe that it is hurtful to say “no”. You have been taught that you have to be nice to everyone and say “yes” even when you don’t want to. This is especially true for women.

Think of it this way: Is the other person’s time more valuable than your own? Is it necessary to bend over backwards to avoid saying “no” and just take in everything at your expense? Think of the consequences. Eventually, you will find yourself gradually building resentment towards the person making the request. Everything he asks you to do becomes another nail in the coffin!

It is actually better for you to say “no” to everyone involved and save a working relationship, not to mention your own nerves and stress level. Keep in mind that the more often you say “yes” the more often they will ask you for more favors. Therefore, you should only say “yes” if it is something that you truly would like to do for them. You can say “yes” if it is something that you can conveniently fit into your schedule without causing any wear and tear on your nerves. People are basically good and you would like to help people whenever you can, but so many “yeses” can turn into more than you can handle. You have heard the phrase, “No good deed goes unpunished.”

Recognize that there are limits to everyone’s time and energy. The disease to please somehow convinces you that you can fit more in each day than anyone else. You will discover this reality when you realize you do not have time to do more than a shoddy job. You will discover this truth when you begin to feel

overwhelmed and realize that your commitments are way past your own personal limits. It is simply better for all involved if you just say “no” at the beginning. By telling them right away, they have a chance to find someone else who can help them.

Remember, they have the right to ask a favor, but you also have the right to say “no”. Do not give up your rights just because you want them to like you. They will respect you more if they see you know how to handle things properly and without overtaxing yourself or stressing others out.

You may have decided that asserting yourself is a good idea, but do not know how to apply it in scenarios involving confrontations. Confrontation involves getting in the other person’s face and not taking into consideration their feelings. You probably would not want to hurt other persons’ feelings, right?

So what do you do? Many people avoid confrontation altogether, which is not always a good idea. Sometimes, it is easier to approach the person as gently as possible, say what you have to say and get it over with.

Approaching the issue with assertion and without anger is always best. This is true even if you feel you are the aggrieved party and need to defend yourself. Many people use this as a last resort when all else failed. It is important to simply lay out the problem, enumerate what you think needs to be resolved, and find a compromise by which everyone gets what they need.

One way to bring this about is not to approach confrontation in a heated manner. This needs to be well thought out in advance. Have a plan. You should have everything you feel and want to say planned out in your mind or written

down on paper as reference during the discussion. Be prepared and ready to face the consequences when this confrontation is over. It could be the end of your job or a friendship.

Again, you have the right to assert yourself. This is your life and your workplace. It should not be a place where you dread going to each day. Everyone needs to have personal standards for how they treat themselves and how others treat them. Boundaries have to be set and maintained even in the workplace. We will discuss more about boundaries later on.

Assertiveness, not aggressiveness, is what is essential for you to feel better about yourself and develop better relations with others. It will also help keep the unpleasant or discomfort levels to a minimum, relieve stress, and maybe even move your career forward. Learning to be assertive could even move you into a leadership position one day.

Remember, while assertiveness can help you get what you want out of life, aggression will bring about resignation or involuntary compliance on the part of those around you. We are talking about the best-case scenario. The worse case is that they resent you, resist anything you want from them, and maybe show downright hostility to boot. This is not what you want at all. Aggression simply decreases your chances of getting what you really want.

Aggression will only bring in fear, threats, and hostility because of manipulation, where you force and coerce people to do it your way. You cannot always make someone give in to what you want. As they say, “You might win the battle, but you will lose the war.”

Pushing someone into doing something they do not wish to do may result to grudging compliance at first, but you will not win them over. They may give in just to get you to shut up and go away. You have not won them to your side. With the passive aggressive types, you might even find yourself on the receiving end of an object lesson.

True assertiveness means without aggression, guilt, and fear. It is far more effective in the long run and infinitely more satisfying. Winning others to your way of thinking, the legitimate way, is much more fun!

Chapter Three
Assertiveness at Home:
Teach People How to Treat You!

"When I'm trusting and being myself as full as possible, everything in my life reflects this by falling into place easily, often miraculously." - Shakti Gawain

Assertiveness has its place at home, as well as, in any other place. Wherever humans gather, there will always be a need for well-placed assertiveness. Just as there is a need for boundaries in the workplace, so there is also a need for boundaries at home.

A boundary is a line that you draw between yourself and others; this includes even loved ones. It is a line that represents physical and emotional limits. You draw the line to indicate that going beyond that means a violation of your standards and rights. It may sound strange to think of boundaries between family members, but it is essential for a healthy and happy family.

All members need to know their limits when dealing with you and that same boundary protects them too. Setting boundaries can make you feel safe and make others feel safe, too. Everyone would know what to expect and have information about wants and needs of everyone.

Stop and think about the times you felt uncomfortable, hurt, angry, or betrayed. Those dark emotions indicate that your boundaries were somehow crossed. This clearly shows the need for everyone to have those boundaries.

Boundaries ensure that your rights are protected. You have the right to enjoy positive and satisfying relationships. This type of relationship allows you to express yourself honestly and tell others how you wish to be treated.

I think you would be surprised to know that many couples simply do not know how to treat each other because they do not know what they want. If you want your spouse to treat you with consideration and respect, you have to tell him/her. It seems so obvious and simple. Your spouse would not know if you do not tell them. You must teach them how to treat you.

There are times when being assertive towards your spouse may seem like an uphill battle. It just feels like he/she is not listening to what you are saying; it seems like he/she is not attentive to your needs. Approaching them in the same old manner may be your problem. It is time to find a new way to say what you need to say.

Many men and women approach their spouse with the old guilt trip starting with negative feelings, feelings of superiority, and blame. Remember how your grandmother used to tell you how you could catch more flies with honey than with vinegar? Same thing applies here. If you start with the blame game, your spouse is going to shut down within thirty seconds. He/she has heard all this before and will tune out as soon as you open your mouth. It is time to try a new tack.

Put aside those negative feelings and do not start with a criticism. Try to see things from your spouse's point of view and find again good things that you love about that person. Appreciate his/her good points and put aside the issues you two fight about.

Approach the encounter carefully, keep calm, and most importantly, watch your language. Always remember that ill-chosen words can hurt deeply. Avoid blaming the other person. Try to be supportive of your spouse and for heaven's sake, admit when you are wrong!

Asserting yourself and negotiating does not mean tearing the other person down all for the purpose of proving that you are right and the other party is wrong. Making your spouse feel miserable and unworthy is no way to negotiate your wants and needs. That is not a win-win situation. Instead, look at your spouse's positive points and boost his/her morale. Abraham Lincoln said, "It is difficult to make a man miserable while he feels he's worthy of himself."

Sometimes, the problem is not your spouse but another member of your family or your spouse's family. Keep in mind that you are living your own life now with your partner and children as a family. Do not let relatives or in-laws push you around. You will encounter some family members that practically insist on a fight. It is better to politely avoid an argument and simply refuse to be pulled into any form of discussion or confrontation. Keep it simple and try these deflections:

- I'm going to bow out of this one, thanks.
- Sorry, I don't have an opinion on that.
- I truly wish I had something to contribute to this, but I don't.
- Maybe you could rephrase that, please.
- Leave me out of this.

Goethe told us that, “Behavior is a mirror in which everyone shows his image.” It is good to keep in mind that we are all created equal and should treat each other accordingly. Do not be recklessly assertive and go overboard when dealing with a loved one. When dealing with those you are closest to, learn to be more assertive and less aggressive. Be more confident and less fearful. Learn to be more effective so you will not come off as wishy-washy. Stop being a fence sitter; say what you feel and mean what you say. Demanding to have everything your way will not earn you the respect you desire from your family. Being calmly assertive and fair with everyone will command that respect. It will even encourage them to emulate you.

Boundaries must be set and adhered to at all times in order for families to be happy, healthy, and respectful of each other. Asserting your rights within the family is not asking too much and makes for a better relationship. Boundaries would include making sure each member of the family has needed privacy and space. It also has to do with how each member speaks to the others in the family. Negative, insulting, or rude talk is not acceptable.

It is unfortunate that some people allow others to decide for them and then become bitter in the end. This is especially true within the framework of a family. One spouse begins making the decisions for the entire family, without necessarily consulting the other. If you find this to be true in your own household, keep in mind that your partner began making those decisions because **you allowed that to happen**.

Many spouses let their partners have it their own way to maintain the peace in the family. This can absolutely work to your disadvantage. The longer you allow it to continue, the more difficult it becomes to assert yourself, take back your own life, and exercise your decision-making capabilities.

This whole dynamics can lead to low self-esteem and feelings of inferiority since you allow others to decide matters for yourself. Their actions are inferring that you are not capable of making your own decisions.

Eleanor Roosevelt said, “No one can make you feel inferior without your consent.” If your spouse has begun taking the initiative and is making decisions that you do not agree with, guess whose fault was it?

By your inaction, you have taught your partner that it is okay to go over your head and decide what you should have and not have. You have given away your power but you can still get it back. You will find in the last chapter of this report a short assertiveness training manual to help you regain your power of decision.

If people in your life are treating you badly, you must figure out things that you are doing which allow them to continue behaving such ways. What is it that makes them feel free to verbally or physically abuse you?

Women may find themselves feeling uncomfortable around men who curse, have potty mouths, or tend to talk about women in unacceptable terms. Men who behave this way have no respect for women. By remaining silent, these women are allowing this behavior to perpetuate.

Sometimes men act this way with the intention of putting the woman in her place and make her feel subjugated. Some guys truly do not have a clue that they are creating an uncomfortable atmosphere for women to live with.

Women will have to be assertive and teach these men to treat women with respect. They must insist on putting an end to this kind of talk. Sometimes, a simple reminder such as: “Excuse me, Lady in the room,” is enough to get their attention.

One of the biggest roadblocks to asserting yourself could be the unarticulated desire. Many people want something from someone but are unclear, even in their own minds, on exactly what that “something” is. They make no verbal assertions about their wants and needs, but rather expect others to instinctively know what that mysterious “something” could be.

While we are all about improving ourselves by learning new skills and developing new talents, most of us are simply not capable of reading the minds of others (outside of the amazing Kreskin, that is!). People cannot possibly grant that mysterious “something” to you if they do not have a clue on what it is.

Stop waiting for your spouse, kids, boss, co-workers, or friends to magically figure out what you want or need. Assert yourself and tell them clearly what you need. Remember that assertiveness is about getting what you need and protecting your rights, while not stomping on the feelings and rights of others. So, open you mouth and say what you need. If you want to reap the benefits, you must first give it a name. You must articulate whatever it is that you want, need, or desire.

Maybe the simple act of making a decision is what is holding you back. Indecision keeps you from articulating what you need. Indecision causes homeostasis, inaction, and resistance to change. If you do not make a decision, someone will eventually decide for you and you probably would not like the result.

Knowing what you really want is essential. In this world, the only thing you will get is exactly what you ask for. What are you asking for?

Chapter Four
Teach Your Children to Be Assertive: Create Confident Offspring

"When children are treated with acceptance, they develop self-acceptance." - Stephanie Matson

Children experience pressure at home. For sure, they also experience pressure in school. So it is not too early to teach them to be assertive. Keep in mind that teaching them to be assertive is not the same thing as teaching them to be aggressive or obnoxious. It does not mean teaching them to go on the offensive.

It started when we were children and continued into our adult life. The situation is more difficult for the children. They are not yet aware that they have rights, the same as we adults do. Children (and even adults!) need to be taught that:

- No one has the right to make them feel guilty, foolish, or ignorant. Though some may try to do just that, your child needs to know that those bullies do not have the right to do such mean things to anyone. They should be ignored and not listened to for the sake of your child's well-being.
- They do not need to make excuses to everyone for every little thing they do.

Children are accountable only to few people and these are mainly their parents, brothers, sisters, close relatives and immediate family. Of course, they are also accountable to themselves but no one else.

- They are allowed to change their minds and not feel bad about it.

  Sometimes, adults have a change of heart. So why can't kids have the same? They need to know that it is okay to change their minds. Nothing is carved in stone, especially when it comes to children.

- If things go wrong, it is not necessarily their fault.

  Many children internalize family problems. They take the blame for things they have no control of. In fact, these are things that they should not deal with at all. An example of this is the separation of their parents.

- They do not have to know everything. It is okay to say, "I do not know" or "I do not understand".

  Adults do not know everything so why should a child know everything? It is important to teach your child not to feel inferior because they do not have the right answers to all questions at once. Children often feel this way in the early years of school. They need to be reminded that their lack of knowledge is the primary reason why they have to study in school!

- Making a mistake is not the end of the world.

  There is nothing wrong about committing mistakes. They need to know that no one is perfect and we all make mistakes. They should just

admit the mistake and correct it, if possible. Mistakes are mechanisms that facilitate learning.

- They do not have to be everybody's friend.

  Not everyone is going to like them, but that is okay. Many children feel that there is something wrong with them if they have few friends in school. This is one of the basic lessons for children. They are going to meet other kids who will not like them. It is the same in the adult world, isn't it?

- If they do not understand something, it is okay to say, "I don't get it."

  Children feel bad if they do not get it. They think that they are inferior and there is something wrong with them. Not everybody gets it, but it is okay. Life still goes on.

- They do not have to prove themselves to everyone they meet.

  Children need to be taught that they do not have to prove anything to others. It is okay just to be themselves. Having to prove something to everyone is exhausting and will sap the self-confidence you are trying to build in your child.

- They do not have to be perfect.

  Perfection is not possible anyway. They should just be themselves. It is unfair to expect perfection from your child, when you cannot attain it yourself.

The biggest obstacle to your children's personality development might just be their own social skills. Young children have social and communication skills to

make them feel self-confident. Meeting new kids makes many children nervous. They are unsure about what to say or how to approach other children and adults.

You can prepare them for new social encounters by doing frequent little role-playing activities with them. Help them practice social conversation by pretending to be the new kid. Teach your child how to initiate and sustain conversation with others.

Teaching them social skills is the first step to making them more comfortable in just about any given situation. The more comfortable they feel in these situations, the easier they will learn how to be assertive. The better they understand themselves, the more they will know and articulate their needs.

As you go about the role-playing activities, you must teach your children how to ask questions and get others to respond. Also, equip them with skills on following up the information they receive. This will teach your kids to become good listeners. This is especially helpful for shy children. This way, you develop children to become good listeners, excellent conversationalists, self-confident and assertive individuals.

Because of their tender age, frustration easily sets in and children have a tendency to respond with anger. It is imperative to teach your children that anger is not a good tool for asserting themselves. As an adult, you already know that other people react negatively towards anger and aggressiveness. Anger distorts the message the child is trying to deliver, thus resulting to a break down in communication. Just as this is highly ineffective for adults, so it is with children. Credibility is automatically discounted when they display anger.

Children are more expressive in communicating anger. Signs of anger may include dragging their feet (passive aggressive), throwing tantrums, breaking toys, or even hitting others. It may be hard to understand, especially for young children, that anger is not an effective tool in building assertiveness.

When you are asserting your authority over children, one of the qualities that you should have is persistence. Repetition is another effective way of teaching young toddlers. You repeat over and over what you want from them. Your children can use the same tool to help assert themselves to their peers. Yelling, screaming, and pounding will not get them what they want, but persistence will wear down the opposition.

Another useful tool is working out a compromise with others. Everyone wants to feel they won the round. A compromise insures that both sides win and nobody loses. Asserting without denying the rights of the other person can bring about a peaceful solution for everyone.

Non-assertive children will be oversensitive to criticisms, especially those expressed by family members. They are also terrified of getting caught making a mistake. They are constantly afraid of being wrong, doing something wrong, or being thought of as stupid. You can also spot non-assertive children because of their lack of persistence. They give up far too easily and do not try after a single failure.

Children must be taught to deal with mistakes. They have to know that it is not the end of the world if they make an error. Everybody makes mistakes, so it

is okay as long as you admit and try to rectify it. When children are not taught how to cope up with mistakes, they tend to get extremely upset.

Learning to deal with one's own faults and those of others is difficult enough for adults to deal with, let alone children. Let them know it is okay not to be perfect, none of us are. You should not expect them to perform perfectly all the time. Perfection is something none of us can live up to, no matter how hard we try. It is unfair to expect a child to be perfect. Many children spend their whole lives trying to live up to their parents' unfair expectations, instead of learning to be the best at whatever they choose.

As far as criticism is concerned, you should prepare your children in handling them. They will receive criticisms all through out their lives. There will always be somebody around to criticize them. The critics are out there waiting to pounce on them for any imperfection or error. When children learn to relax, just be themselves, filter what others have to say, and learn not to be easily influenced by opinions of others, they will lead a happier and relaxed life. They will grow up and become well-adjusted adults in the future.

Keep in mind that the only way you will be able to teach your children how to assert themselves is by learning how to be assertive yourself. As much as you want your children to be assertive and learn to stand up for themselves, you should not become a pushover parent.

If you find it hard to say "no" to your children when they are making unreasonable demands, and if you give in repeatedly, you are setting the stage for their demands to grow larger and larger with each passing day. It is up to you

as the adult to set the example for your child. No means no, period, end of discussion. You do not need to become a doormat to ensure that your child becomes assertive.

Be a good role model for your children. Children learn what they see and experience. If you are assertive and fair, they will learn to become one, too. Always keep in mind what John W. Whitehead said, “Children are the living messages we send to a time we will not see.”

Chapter Five
Assertiveness Training for the Non-Assertive

"What lies behind us and what lies before us are tiny matters compared to what lies within us." - Ralph Waldo Emerson

Shakti Gawain taught us, "You create your opportunities by asking for them." In this section of the report, I'm going to show you how you can become more assertive and more in control of your life.

We will concentrate on assertiveness training that will help you in your career and other types of social encounters. Non-assertive people encounter many difficulties when it comes to their business or careers. People grapple with the right words on the right situation and would not have any idea on how to fast track their climb in the corporate or business ladder.

The first part of the assertiveness training is geared towards showing you how to get control of yourself, how to be less shy, and become more expressive towards others. The second part of the training will show you how to influence others and how to have better understanding of other's behavior towards you, particularly those that mistreat you or take advantage of you.

According to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary, "Assertiveness enables individuals to act in a bold and self-confident manner." Whether it is on the job or at home, you are dealing with people. These people include customers, co-workers, supervisors, boss, doctors, dentists, nurses, repairmen, installers, teachers, principals, banker, etc. that you encounter on a regular basis. Lack of assertiveness can cause a number of problems, as you may have discovered.

Maybe you are tired of always saying “yes” to everyone and feeling resentful later. Maybe you are tired of everyone taking advantage of your good nature. Maybe you are just plain tired because nobody is listening to your opinions and thoughts, as if you are not even there.

If you identified with any of the above situations, there is a solution. The steps are easy to follow, but you will need to practice every day. Repetitions are necessary for you and for those you deal with on a regular basis.

Once you have mastered the basics of assertiveness, you will notice a difference right away. People will listen to you more closely, once you have grabbed their attention assertively. You will start to gain the respect you know you deserve. Best of all, you will feel better about yourself. You will feel less shy and confident about yourself and your abilities.

You will no longer fear confrontations and learn to say “no” with ease and without guilt. You will learn to stay calm, even when people are arguing with you. You will realize that you need not be rushed into making decisions. You will avoid agreeing to things you do not really want. With more confidence in your own assertiveness, your stress level will drop dramatically.

First of all, **we will work on your self-confidence**. Self-confidence is built by undergoing a series of experiences that affirm your self-worth. Every time you try something new, you gain a new experience and perspective in life. It does not matter if what you experienced resulted to failure, you will still come out as a winner as long as you learn something from it. Always keep in mind that a failure

or mistake is temporary. For the experience to become useful, you must learn from it.

Everything that you will learn from this assertiveness training should be practiced every day, possibly with a supportive friend, until you feel comfortable with the responses. Only then will you be ready to jump out into the real world and experience the assertive you.

Next, **we will work on your negative self-talk**. It is important that you refrain from putting yourself down. You will meet enough people willing to do that for you! Instead, start focusing on what you can do and not what you think you cannot do.

As the new assertive you emerges, remember to keep your emotions in check. Being emotional will not help you in staying in control. You must remain calm at all times, especially if you want to be taken seriously in your encounters.

How do you do this? Realize that you have absolute control over your reaction. You can change and re-learn your reaction over your emotions. Let us try one exercise. This can help you relax before a stressful meeting. Imagine yourself in a happy and comfortable place. Others imagined themselves in a zen-like garden, a room that evokes soothing atmosphere, in an open field, or in a nature scene. Breathe in deeply as you see yourself part of the whole atmosphere. Exhale as you bask in the beauty of your surroundings. Breathe in through the nose and exhale slowly through the mouth. Do this breathing exercise three times. You can also include meditation if your have sufficient time to enjoy the lasting effect.

If you have been in staying at home for too long or have limited contact with a variety of people, dealing with the outside world can sometimes be daunting. Career professionals may make you feel inferior, ignorant, or less than adequate. You can overcome these feelings with a little preparation.

Preparation is the key. The more prepared you are, the more in control you will feel, and the more confident you will be. Preparation means being aware of the particular situation that needs attention, knowing the person you need to talk to, and having an understanding of the message that you want to communicate. Writing it down will help ensure you cover every aspect and not miss a thing. Having it on paper in front of you will help keep you focused on the issue and minimize confusion and flustered feelings. It will also help if you will anticipate any responses or objections and plan how to address concerns.

Part of the preparation is your overall projection. As trivial as it may seem at first but you have to plan what you are going to wear. Make sure it is appropriate for the occasion. They say that clothes do not make the person. However, knowing that you are dressed nicely and you look good will give you more confidence.

Keep in mind that you do not need to justify every opinion or statement you make. Never apologize for being yourself. Some people can easily sense if you try to mask the real you. This is a major turn-off for majority of the people.

Okay, so the script is ready and you are dressed to the “nines”. It is now time for a little dress rehearsal. Stand in front of a long mirror so you can see yourself clearly from head to toe.

While in front of the mirror, practice your body language. Stand straight. If this encounter is going to be in an office and you will be seated, pull a chair over to the mirror and practice how to gracefully sit down. Look straight and smile. Practice maintaining eye contact and look alert and interested. Do not frown, for you do not want to appear angry. You want to look determined, not daunting.

Watch your posture and remember to use easy gestures with your hands. Keep your voice intonation even. It is okay to sound determined, just do not overdo it. You should be passionate about the subject, but not emotional.

No matter how passionate you feel about the subject, keep you emotions on check all through out the conversation. Negative emotions, such as anger, will only muddle the message that you are trying to communicate. The other party will end up confused and focused on your anger.

Make sure you have the right timing for setting up a meeting. Everyone should be relaxed and hopefully no one in a bad mood. Now practice what you are going to say in this encounter. Remember to use assertive language -- that is, use clear and powerful words. Assertiveness counselors call them "I" statements. Examples of this type of statements are: I think…I feel…I want…The way I see it…In my opinion…What I need is…

You will discover that individuals generally behave in one of three ways:

1. Non-assertive

   A distinct trait of these people is they automatically withdraw from an encounter. They deny their feelings only to wind up allowing others to make decisions for them, then feel guilty or resentful when it happens. They let

themselves be trapped into doing things they do not want to do or go where they do not want to go. Later on, they get angry with themselves and the ones who led them to the trap.

They are good at putting themselves down. Even their language is non-assertive:

- It doesn't matter
- Oh, that's okay
- I didn't have a very good plan anyway, I'm sure yours is better.

2. Aggressive

These people have the tendency to over react to just about everything and are highly emotional. They tend to be domineering and controlling. If you will allow them, they would make decisions for you. They get hostile and defensive, making others feel hurt and humiliated. They will even resort to name calling, blaming, insults and sarcasm.

Their language reflects their aggressiveness:

- We'll do it my way
- I don't need to hear any more from you
- You don't even know what you're talking about!

3. Assertive

These people are open and direct. They are usually good communicators and negotiators. It is no wonder that compromise comes easily to them. They are able to view both sides of a situation, but they won't be made into doormats. They know what they want and they are not shy about letting you

know. They are all about getting what they need and protecting their rights, but without stomping all over the other person's feelings and rights.

As you can see, assertive behavior and responses allows you to get your point across the person, get what you need, and negotiate a good deal for yourself. You do not need to suffer through a hurtful relationship, attack someone else's self-esteem, or make someone defensive in any way. You can even persuade difficult people more easily by remaining calm, laying out your points and reasons, and acknowledging their side as well.

As you stand in front of a mirror, practice what you want to say and anticipate probable responses. Practice will make you feel more comfortable and confident when you approach the person in a real meeting.

When you feel you are prepared, walk out of that comfort zone. Be confident in meeting that important person and put everything you have learned. Make sure you look sharp, stand up straight, shake his hand, and smile. Take a deep breath and start making your points.

Speak slowly and clearly. Do not mumble and dash through your prepared script. Your notes are just there to keep you focused and to help you remember important points. Do not just read it; let it be your guide to what you want to say.

Listen and graciously allow the other person to respond now and then. He may want to discuss certain points and negotiate with you about your needs. Hopefully, you will reach an agreement at the end of the meeting. If this is not the case, allow him time to think. He may need to consider all you have said before

making a final decision. It is okay to give him time to think. Pushing him to make a snap decision could work against you.

If it goes as well as you had hoped, you will feel a sense of elation and excitement. If you achieved your goal, you should definitely celebrate. You stepped outside your comfort zone and did something you have never done before. Pat yourself on the back for a job well done. Your confidence level just jumped several points and you probably feel like you could take on the world.

When another time comes, allowing you to jump out of the comfort zone and display your newly acquired skills of assertiveness, remember this day and remind yourself, “I did it before and I can do it again.” The first time is always the most difficult and each succeeding time will get easier and easier.

Assertiveness In Times of Conflict

Another example of using assertiveness effectively is in the area of conflict and problem solving. This often happens in the office, since you are dealing with so many diverse personalities. There is bound to be some conflict at one time or another. This report can help you recognize the problem and resolve it peacefully and fairly. There are certain steps you must follow to successfully resolve a conflict with another co-worker.

- If you have a problem with a co-worker, you should take it first to them in the hope of having a quick resolution. The problem could be as simple as a misunderstanding and a private chat could clear things up immediately.

- Whatever you do, speak with that person privately; never criticize in public. Always praise in public and condemn in private. Humiliation will not help your cause. Speaking in private allows the other person to save face, especially if it is just a simple misunderstanding. The rest of the office need not know anything about it and you can lay it to rest quickly and with finality.
- Try to speak to the person as soon as you encounter the problem. Problems left on their own and unresolved just grow bigger and bigger in the imagination. Go for a resolution as soon as you can.
- Keep calm as you speak to the person and avoid getting defensive. At the same time, do not apologize for the issue you want to complain about.
- Stick to the one issue that is bothering you. Do not begin by complaining that they always do something that is irritating or they never do something you think they should do. Focus on the complaint and do not deviate from that issue.
- Before you decide to speak to the person about that complaint, ask yourself if it is something that can be changed. The saying goes, “Change the changeable, accept the unchangeable, and avoid the unacceptable.” Pick your battles. If it is a lost cause, move on. It is not worth beating your head against a brick wall.
- Start by complimenting the person for something he accomplished in the past. Keep in mind that no one likes criticism. He will be more likely to step

forward and solve the problem, if you show that you appreciate his hard work in other areas.

If it appears that you have a hand in the conflict, own up to it, and become a part of the resolution as well. This will do a lot towards cementing relations in a large office. Always take the high road; do the right thing.

Compromise does not mean you are not being assertive, it just means you know how to play fair.

Assertiveness In Dealing With Negative People

Assertiveness will also help you deal with the people who constantly put you down. Instead of dealing with a problem and coming up with a resolution, they opt to insult and hurt your feelings.

Jules Feiffer calls these situations as “little murders” as these are intended to insult, humiliate or embarrass others. These people attack your self-confidence and your self-esteem. In the process, they “murder” what you have worked on so hard. Most of us just put up with these humiliating put-downs, but that only encourages them. We learned earlier that we teach people how to treat us, so we need to teach them that these “little murders” are painful, humiliating, and need to be stopped. C. H. Spurgeon said, “Insults are like bad coins; we cannot help their being offered us, but we need not take them.”

Sometimes the only way to avoid these put-downs is to avoid those delivering them. Remove yourself from their presence. Assert yourself and tell

them it is an unacceptable behavior, then leave. The barbs only work if you react and show them how upset you are.

Speak your mind, then leave. It leaves them with nothing; you have taken the wind from their sails. Eventually, they will learn that you cannot be drawn into their little insults any longer and they will lose interest in you.

So, you have learned how to:

- Grow more assertive, not aggressive.
- Adjust your behavior to get what you really, really want.
- Protect yourself and your rights.
- Say 'no' and not feel guilty afterwards; you can cure this disease to please.
- Be respected for your actions and decisions.
- Bring up assertive children and teach them to be strong.
- Teach people how to treat you.

What is left for you is to **practice, practice, practice**. Build up your self-confidence and self-esteem.

Use your mistakes to your advantage. They will teach you wisdom. "Good judgment comes from experience, and often experience comes from bad judgment," said Rita Mae Brown.

Put all the knowledge and wisdom you have gained into your everyday life and see what happens. Still unconvinced of the benefits of asserting yourself? Ask yourself, "What's the worst thing that could happen to me if I learn to be

assertive?" Now ask yourself, "What's the best thing that could happen to me if I learn to be assertive?"

Imagine yourself in the position of assertiveness. You have learned to stand up for yourself and people are no longer taking advantage of your good nature and willingness to help.

You have gained a brand new position of authority at work doing only your own work. Your spouse has a newfound respect for you. Even your kids are more respectful, since you taught them how to treat you. You are not being mean to anyone, just firm about how you intend to be treated from now on. Elbert Hubbard said, "To know when to be generous and when to be firm -- that is wisdom."

Remember, being assertive is about standing up for yourself and your rights, but without stomping on the other person's feelings and rights.

Your attitude, behavior, beliefs, and values are now in line with who you really are: an assertive, no-nonsense, action-oriented, take-charge kind of person!

Bonus 1
How to Assertively Ask for a Raise

One of the ways that assertiveness can help you is when it comes to asking for a raise. Almost everyone is nervous and unsure about how to approach the boss in this situation. Should you act humble or toot your own horn? Should you make an appointment with the boss or just try to corner him in a social atmosphere and send some hints?

Here again is where the right sense of assertiveness comes in handy. You know that if you say nothing, nothing is probably what you will get. That yearly review will net you very little if you do not assert yourself now. Here are some guidelines for handling this sticky situation. Each boss or supervisor is different and may require some adjustments.

- Before you approach your boss or set up a time to meet with him, crunch a few numbers and decide how much money you need for that raise. Each company is different, but most will consider a raise of a certain percentage each year to cover the cost of living increases. In order to receive more than that, you have to be a stupendous worker, with an awesome background, and a penchant for making money for the company. The more productive you are, the better your chances for that raise.
- Never pop in on your boss or supervisor with a request of this magnitude. You have to set aside time for this.

  Just dropping in and making the request is unprofessional and rude. It would be inappropriate if you just break into his busy day asking for

money. If you irritate your boss, your answer will be a swift and certain “no”. Always make an appointment to speak with him and allow enough time so you would not feel rushed.

- Make sure that you both sit down for this appointment. Sitting comfortably is more conducive for this kind of meeting. Standing around an office makes it too easy for the conversation to be interrupted, and there goes your chance to talk seriously about that raise you need and deserve.
- Do not waste time with chitchat. Your boss or supervisor is a busy person and so are you. This is not a social visit; so get right to your point. It may seem better and subtler to slowly introduce your concern into the conversation; but in reality, you are hurting your case by not getting to the point right away. He will respect you more if you get right to the main issue.
- Make sure you have your script ready or at least some notes on what exactly you want to say. Nothing says unprofessional like hemming, hawing, and not getting to the point. So write down everything you want to say and focus on your goal -- make them realize why giving you a raise is in their best interest and the company’s as well. Make certain you have rock solid reasons for the extra money.
- A word of caution too — do not, I repeat, do not discuss this issue with anyone else in the office. The walls have ears and the last thing you need is for your request for a raise to reach your boss’s office before you do. It looks unprofessional and indeed sneaky. In office politics, it is best for all

involved if you do not talk about this meeting with anyone. Just because the meeting went well, you do not have the reason to assume you are getting the raise and for you to start spreading the word all over the office. Your boss will not appreciate it and it could seriously hurt your chances.

- Do not expect your boss to give you an answer right away. He has figures to check and probably has to discuss it with the Human Resource Department before making any decisions. Even your boss has to be accountable to higher-ups too, you know. If he requests for another meeting, be sure to have extra information that could aid your cause.
- When your boss does call you in for a second meeting, listen carefully to what he has to say. Even if the answer to your question of a raise turns out to be “no”, that does not mean it is the end of it. Be a good listener and ask questions when he is finished.

  If he does not bring it up, ask why you did not qualify for a raise and do it politely. Getting angry and demanding for concrete answers will not help you at all. Take a deep breath and calmly ask your boss what he recommends that you should do to increase your chances the next time. Find out how you can improve your performance. Be willing to do what is necessary (within reason, that is) to ensure that the next time you ask for a raise, you will receive a favorable reply.

Like it or not, the reward and punishment system is a fact of life. Objections to the system are a waste of time, since everyone uses it. Take to

heart what your boss tells you about improving your performance and put it into practice as soon as possible. Your willingness to improve weighs in your favor.

In the meantime, work on your self-confidence. Each task you do and accomplish adds to your self-confidence. Also, work on your negative self-talk. You are what you believe you are. Think assertively, act assertively, and you become assertive.

Learning to be assertive at work will earn you the respect from your peers and your bosses. This might even increase your chances of getting a promotion and a raise in pay. Being assertive means speaking up for yourself, handling conflicts, and getting problems solved.

Bonus 2
Questions and Answers

Q: *What if I do become more assertive and I use what I have learned in my relationships, in my office work, or with friends; I even learned to say "no". What if people get angry with me?*

A: People who are truly your friends are not going to get mad at you. Real friends want you to learn and grow as a person. They will probably be happy for you now that you have learned to stop being a doormat. True friends want the best for you; in fact, they may have been secretly worried about you being such a pushover.

As for your spouse, if your partner truly loves you and wants the best for you, he/she will rejoice that you are learning to be more assertive and growing as a person. Your spouse's own life will be enriched by your experience. You will be more self-confident and happy, thereby making both of your lives better.

If you apply these skills to your job, your boss and co-workers will have more respect for you. At work, it can mean getting a promotion, being assigned new and interesting challenges, or maybe even a raise. When your boss sees your capability to take control, handle crises, remain calm, and maintain poise, he will begin to see you in a completely new light. Standing up for yourself makes a huge difference in the way people look at you and in how they treat you, especially at the office. It may be true that you cannot please everyone with your newly acquired skill. The ones

who will not like the new you are probably the ones who used to push you around and took advantage of you at every turn. Do not worry; they will get over it.

Stop depriving yourself of the respect due to you. Be assertive and earn other people's respect. Be in control of your life and feel more self-confident. Your life will never be the same again.

Q: *If others do get angry with me, how do I handle it? What if I fall apart?*

A: If you use these new skills appropriately, things will change, situations will improve and yes, you will earn the ire of some people. As previously pointed out, those who will get angry are probably the ones who used to mistreat you. However, you are improving your own life and protecting your rights. They are upset because they can no longer push you around, infringe on your personal rights, and pass on to you the jobs they do not wish to do.

That is why they are angry. Bear in mind that you are not responsible for their feelings. They will have to deal with their feelings. It is now their problem, not yours.

Q: *Are my friends going to get mad when I start telling them "no" all the time?*

A: They would be more upset to know that you have been saying "yes" to everyone, when you really mean to say "no". Agreeing to things that you really do not want to do will make you feel resentful towards that person.

You hate feeling that way towards friends, right? It is almost as if you have been lying to them.

Being assertive and saying “no” is a more honest approach, don’t you think? Or would you rather risk destroying their love and respect just because you cannot say “no”?

Q: *What about saying “no” at work; won’t that get me in trouble?*

A: By agreeing to everything that everyone wants you to do at work, you will find that you simply cannot keep up with all the work. There are just so many hours in a day. If you say “yes” to everything, you are cheating yourself and the others who are depending on you to finish what you said you would do.

Doing shoddy work is not going to impress anyone. By taking on too much, you would not have the time to do a good job on everything. By limiting the number of jobs you accept, you are actually doing everyone a favor. If you keep the workload down, you can do a great job on your assignments. This is what will impress people. It is better to cut the workload and finish everything well, than to take on too much and finish nothing.

Q: *What if someone asks me to do something I know I can easily accomplish and yet, I say “no”; will he think that I’m selfish or self-centered?*

A: Just because you can do something does not mean you have to do it. You can refuse even legitimate requests assertively. Sometimes, you have to put your own needs ahead of others. You cannot please everyone all the time and you do not have to. Bitterness will grow if you let the guilt get to you and make you a 'yes' person all the time.

Q: *If I'm assertive about what I know and what I can do, won't that make me sound egocentric? Shouldn't I be more modest?*

A: Being assertive and let people know you are clever and skilled is not being immodest or egocentric. Sometimes you have to toot your own horn, so to speak, and there is nothing wrong with that. If you do not do it, who will? Sometimes being modest is not a good thing. It makes you sound like you cannot say anything positive about yourself. It also indicates that you cannot give or receive compliments.

Q: *If I toot my own horn, as you say, won't people expect me to be great 100% of the time? What if I screw up?*

A: Without being assertive and letting others know of your skills and accomplishments, you will miss out many opportunities. Since no one is perfect, you will make mistakes occasionally. Own up to them and learn from them, then move on.

Even if you mess up once in a while, you will be respected far more for giving it your best shot than by not trying at all. As Wayne Gretzky, the hockey player said, “You’ll always miss 100% of the shots you don’t take.”

Q: *I’m a woman and I’m not sure it’s considered feminine to be assertive all the time. Men can get away with it, but not women. Will men in my office hate me if I try to be assertive in the workplace?*

A: It is unfortunate that assertive women often have more trouble at work than their male counterparts. However, that should not stop any woman from standing up for herself in the workplace. If you possess the skills necessary for the job and have the experience and the drive, you can assert yourself and get what you want. A woman in a management position may find herself walking in a fine line. She must be assertive in order to do her job, but may be thought of as pushy or unfeminine when she does. Oddly enough, studies done on this topic showed that the criticism came mostly from other women, not the men in the workplace. Someone once said that we should learn to live without the good opinions of others. If your career is important to you, you will have to learn to be assertive and be selective about considering other people’s opinions.