

AWARD WINNING UDEMY INSTRUCTOR

ASSERTIVENESS MASTERY

BOOST YOUR CONFIDENCE
&
SELF-ESTEEM



DR. ROY
NARAINÉ

Assertiveness Mastery

BOOST YOUR CONFIDENCE & SELF-ESTEEM

DR. ROY NARAIN

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INTRODUCTION

Have you ever had the feeling that others were not listening to you or were not reacting to the message you were sending? Do you find yourself agreeing to do something even though you feel the urge to refuse? Would you like to stand up for your rights and the rights of others and at the same time eliminate anger when solving a problem? If so, you have come to the right place. My name is Roy Naraine. I'm a medical doctor with over 20 years of experience in self-improvement training. During this time, I have helped corporate executives to boost their power of assertiveness. In the first section of this book, I will take you on a journey to make you understand how to communicate in a strong and confident way. You will learn how to control your emotions, manage your verbal and non-verbal message and influence others. You will learn how to say 'No' without embarrassing people or destroying their dignity. By using the tools I provide, you will be able to improve your relationship with others, make it more meaningful and earn their respect and admiration. You will adopt a more positive outlook on life and handle uncomfortable situations more effectively. Being assertive means controlling your emotions, managing your stress level and hence controlling the situation. This is what prepares the path for success in both your private and professional lives.

Assertiveness at the workplace is a vital communication skill that allows you to effectively manage challenging situations, regardless of the office politics and difficult personalities. You express your opinion and desires clearly and are able to get what you want without hurting others. However, you remain unruffled when things do not go your way. Being assertive at work means that you are able to design a stress free atmosphere that is conducive to high productivity. You mitigate conflictual situations and promote healthier relationships in your department. You understand how and when to react. You comply when necessary, but at the same time know how to reject your boss's unreasonable request, without him harboring grudges against you. In section two, you will learn how to assert your position at the workplace by venturing into the unknown and making use

of opportunities at work. You will learn how to capture people's attention and convey your point of view by using the right verbal and non-verbal communication. I will show you how to provide feedback to others properly and how to react to nasty criticism, without losing your self-confidence and self-control. The life examples and solutions given in this section will allow you to react effectively in analogical situations and improve your life at work.

Section three has been reserved solely for real life situations, where the knowledge of assertiveness played a significant role in handling everyday difficulties. I believe that the more examples you analyze, the easier it becomes to react properly when faced with a challenging situation, be it in your personal or professional life.

The book is structured in a particular way and it is meant to be read in that way as well. For example, you need to understand fundamental facts related to assertive, passive and aggressive behavior before you learn to communicate in an assertive way. Remember, assertiveness is not a skill you can learn right off the bat. You need to analyze the examples and solutions I provide and then experiment whenever the opportunity arises.

Thank you for purchasing this book. I hope you will enjoy spending the time with me and I am sure that by the time you get to the last chapter, you will have profound understanding of assertiveness. By practicing, you will sharpen your assertiveness and become a better communicator. So, fasten your seat belt and let's begin the journey to improve your assertiveness and lead a better life.

SECTION 1

DEVELOP YOUR ASSERTIVENESS

1. WHAT IS ASSERTIVENESS?

Definition of Assertiveness

Assertiveness is the art of interacting with people so as to convey what is on your mind without abusing them or without feeling conscious stricken by your own behavior. It is the ability to grab the attention of the recipient and hold it long enough for your message to sink in and get the required results. In our contemporary fast-moving world, it is becoming more and more difficult to capture people's attention because time has become too precious and the majority of the population are busy chasing something or the other. If you do not approach them in the right way, you stand no chance of gaining their attention, much less being heeded by them.

Do unto others as you would have them do unto you is a biblical statement which means that we should treat people the way we would like to be treated. This statement encapsulates the essence of assertiveness. Simply ask yourself how you would like others to react when you are communicating with them. For example, if you are having a bad day, wouldn't you like someone to perceive your present state of mind and empathize with you, at least at the beginning of the conversation? If you were elated due to having reached your goal, wouldn't you feel even better if someone noticed that and celebrated together with you? This is called building rapport and is indeed a reflection of the statement, "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." Once you apply this rule, you will be able to manage the way you conduct yourself during social and professional interactions.

Some people believe that assertiveness is the art of saying 'No' and they go about negating everything and rejecting everyone's ideas. Assertiveness is indeed related to saying 'No'. However, at the same time, it is the wisdom of understanding when to negate and the art of negating in the proper way. By the same token, assertiveness is also the competence to make good judgements before saying 'Yes' and then having the potentiality to say 'Yes' in the right manner. If we agree to accommodate someone's request, it should be done in such a way that will make both you and the requester feel good. For example, your daughter has asked you to take care of her children. You moan about how busy and tired you are, but in the end you agree. In this case, both you and your daughter would feel distaste because your reaction was inappropriate. Considering that you have decided to help her, wouldn't it be better for everyone if you told her that by all means you would be happy to help? A new, inexperienced worker asks you, the specialist for guidance to resolve a problem. Even though you have time and are aware of the complexity of the issue, you refuse bluntly and inform him that he should do more profound research, instead of disturbing others. Such behavior would make the junior worker feel embarrassed, disgusted and daunted. By taking the time to put him on the right path, you are not only helping the new worker, you are also doing a good deed for the whole department by strengthening the weaker links. In this case, simply let the worker know that you would be happy to help. It makes such a difference when someone knows that you are doing something for them with pleasure.

As strange as it may sound, being assertive is also related to understanding whether or not to react in different situations. Imagine you were attending a presentation and a few of the twenty odd participants were being disruptive. The best approach would be to remain impassive and wait for the presenter to enforce his authority. If you intervened to restore order, the presenter might feel relieved, but could at the same time feel embarrassed for not having reacted at the appropriate time. However, if the presenter remained passive and the distraction became unbearable and prevented understanding of the topic, then you would have to take matters into your own hands to bring back peace and quiet.

Passive Behavior vs Aggressive Behavior

Assertiveness is considered to be the point of balance between a passive and aggressive attitude. Passive behavior is related to complying with the wishes, requests, needs and desires of others. People who are passive do not stop to consider their own rights because they are more concerned about the feelings of others. They yearn to be liked and accepted. They will therefore step back, allow their friends to make decisions and then obey the rules that have been set, even though they may be against these rules. Deep down inside, passive people feel that they are acting against their own conviction. This makes them despise themselves whenever they capitulate. Unfortunately, their urge to please the surroundings is so strong that they continually give in to their friends' needs and expectations.

Low self-esteem and lack of self-confidence will give birth to passive behavior. Passive people experience internal conflict because they are too weak to protect their rights and express their own point of view. The internal battle leaves them with the feeling of inferiority to others. This in turn will decrease their inner values and further damage their self-assurance, thus worsening the situation.

Aggressive attitude involves disregarding other people's basic rights, feelings and point of view. The aim is to dominate others and acquire whatever they desire without taking into consideration people's objection. In fact, there is no room for retaliation or rejection. The aggressive individual does not waste time flattering others or showing their appreciation. They tend towards undermining people's confidence, as well as humiliating and intimidating them. They bully their way to victory. However, sooner or later, they will have to pay the price for this kind of behavior. Aggression destroys trust and respect. People who obey you and accommodate your demands do so out of fear and not because they respect you. This will eventually lead to resentment and at the first opportunity, they will oppose you to regain their self-esteem. In the history of mankind we have had many examples of dictators who controlled the game, but only in the short run. People eventually retaliated, participated in

overthrowing them and then celebrated when they lost power or were annihilated.

There are two reactions to aggressive behavior. We accept it and become passive until we reach the boiling point, or we repay immediately by being aggressive. Some people have a combination of both passive and aggressive attitude. Even though they do not accept a particular situation they are going through, they will not confront you openly. If you happen to decode their non-verbal signals and ask them for their feedback, they will still not reveal their true feelings. This is because their intention is not to address the potential problem, but to get revenge sooner or later. They will devise a plan that will lead to your downfall and then they will derive pleasure from your misery.

2. THE BENEFITS OF BEING ASSERTIVE

Manage your Emotions

People who lack assertiveness are engulfed with the feeling of anxiety and tension whenever they face uncomfortable situations. They are convinced that they would not be able to handle the encounter properly and end up behaving inappropriately. This in turn builds up their self-hatred, frustration and the feeling of helplessness. Their antagonism towards their environment also increases as they are certain that others are at fault for taking advantage over them. They keep beating up themselves emotionally for succumbing and allowing others to manipulate them. Once this begins to happen periodically, it will inflict a severe blow to their self-esteem and their self-assurance will automatically start to shrink. Unexpressed or stifled frustration and anger may eventually lead to physical ailments and mental deviations, for example, psychosomatic illness, and in the end, depression.

Once you have acquired the power to assert yourself, you begin to feel good in your own company. You manage your emotions effectively and express your thoughts and feelings openly. Interaction with others becomes less stressful and more compelling. You will not quiver anymore at the sight of your boss or when you have to voice your opinion at a company meeting.

Social dynamics

It is obvious that when you change your aggressive attitude into a more assertive one, people will be more attracted to you and will feel at ease in your company. After all, you are not destroying their rights and dignity anymore with your outrageous behavior. You now know to respond

judiciously and allow others to retain their basic rights and dignity. You understand the importance of listening and responding to others regardless of whether you are in agreement or not. You have learnt to flatter people and show them that you are grateful for what they have done. You admit to your mistakes and are ready to take the right measures to rectify them. This is the kind of behavior that will draw people to you and make them more cooperative.

Manage your relationship

It is a bit different when you transform from a passive to an assertive person. In the past you gave in and accommodated all requests even though it was against your will. You chose not to react or get involved because you did not want to stick your neck out. You resented being passive, but made no effort to implement changes in your life. The people who surrounded you were happy because it was convenient for them and they always got what they wanted. When your assertiveness starts to emerge out of nowhere, they will surely feel dissatisfied because no one wants to be deprived of the power to control others. Once you summon the determination to stick to your newly acquired attribute, they will be forced to redefine their expectations in the relationship. Paradoxically, even a greater bond will be built to bind you all. You may lose a few pseudo friends, but does it matter? Passive people believe that by succumbing on a continuous basis, they are able to preserve their relationship with others. They allow themselves to be exploited because they yearn to be liked and accepted by others. Unfortunately, this is not the case and it will only serve to put an additional burden to the relation.

Preserve your Integrity

People who have low self-esteem are liable to comply with others. This is because they do not believe in themselves. They are afraid of being criticized. They could have been criticized in their childhood and this pain remains implanted in their memory. They think that their point of view may be meaningless, ridiculous or inconsequential. As time goes by, they begin to feel as persona non grata in other people's company. They degrade

themselves in their own eyes and lose respect for themselves. Remember, once you lose respect for yourself, no one will like and respect you. This leads to a vicious circle. Assertiveness plays an important role in bringing back your integrity and faith in yourself. You begin to rely on your power of perceptiveness and instinct and you find it easier and healthier to disagree with others. Even when you contradict someone's standpoint, you are able to control your emotions and do it gracefully, without hurting their pride. People do not generally like to be proven wrong, but with the right approach you will gain their respect and admiration. Once you earn their respect, you begin to perceive yourself in a better way and start to like and respect yourself.

Regain your freedom

Before you acquired the characteristics of being assertive, you agreed to fulfill everyone's needs. You accompanied your friend to the shopping mall whenever they asked even though you considered it a waste of time. You worked over-time or took on additional tasks at the weekend because your boss thought that you were the most ideal person for the job. You took a few days non-paid leave to renovate your sister's house. You cleaned the apartment because the other household members were simply reluctant to get engaged, meaning that they were not mentally capable of doing so. It is of course noble to give a helping hand when others are in need. However, helping and being exploited fit in totally different categories.

Imagine how much additional time you would gain if you learnt to refuse without hurting people's feelings. You would regain your independence, take control of your life and do the things you consider to be important. If you are not continually bombarded by parasites, you will be able to set your own goals and tend towards their achievement. Ask yourself how many opportunities have gone past you because you were enslaved by others and did not have the time nor energy to focus on your own needs. The power of assertiveness will allow you to do what you know you should do to propel your career and improve the quality of your private and professional lives.

Positivity

People who have developed the skill to be assertive are able to communicate effectively with others. They do not only listen to the spoken words, but also to the manner in which they are vocalized. They pay keen attention to the non-verbal signals that accompany the verbal message and are therefore able to decrypt the real meaning behind the verbal language. This allows them to take the appropriate steps to improve the relationship. Assertive people understand the importance of allowing others to express themselves and then focus on the message, instead of thinking of their next argument. They do not judge others, but try to understand their point of view. Remember, understanding someone's standpoint does not mean that you agree with them.

Assertiveness comes together with the ability to empathize with others through understanding of their emotions. An assertive boss will show empathy when you fail, point out your mistakes without destroying your integrity and show you how to make amendments. They will also be one of the first to acknowledge your success and compliment you on your performance. When you move off the right track, they will encourage you to keep trying by showing you your inner values. When you cooperate with assertive people, you feel that you are valued and your self-confidence automatically increases.

People who are assertive do not show favoritism. They treat everyone equally and therefore avoid internal conflicts in the department. They also maintain a positive and enthusiastic attitude to life and when things go wrong, they learn from their mistakes and simply continue on the road to success. Regardless of whether it happens at home or in the office, it will surely have a positive impact on your surroundings.

When you behave assertively, you gain people's respect and improve the relationship. Once this happens, cooperation becomes easy and success is inevitable. When you leave home in the morning to go to work, your heart is beating regularly because you are more contented with your job. You know how to express your true feelings and you are not afraid of making

decisions. Your self-esteem and self-confidence have reached the highest level and stress is beaten into submission.

3. BUILD YOUR ASSERTIVENESS

Build your confidence

Confidence is a state of mind that makes you feel at ease in uncomfortable or difficult situations. It is the internal resource that drives you towards achieving your goals and fulfilling your dreams. It allows you to communicate assertively and hence initiate healthier relationships. The good news is that we have all had situations in our lives when we felt extremely confident and were able to destroy obstacles and accomplish our goals. And believe me, images of these incidents are stored in our minds. All you need to do is to delve into your subconscious mind to pull back the images and relive the moments once again. Literally drag your body and mind back into these past situations and recapture the feeling of confidence. Recollect the way you were standing and talking and gesticulating. Recall your facial expression and visualize how others were reacting. They were looking at you with respect and admiration and were willing to collaborate with you. By reliving these situations, you reinforce your feeling of confidence.

In addition, before tackling something you perceive as problematic or overpowering, try to envision all the pleasure and benefits you would get upon its accomplishment. This is usually enough to trigger your brain into action. Remember, if you see it and feel it, you will achieve it.

Confident people dress with authority. They smile, look others in the eyes, stand tall and walk as if they had a mission to fulfill. Single out such people in your company and emulate their behavior. If you can reproduce their motions of confidence, you will acquire their emotions of confidence. Remember, fake it and sooner or later you will make it. In order to acquire confidence and communicate assertively, you need to bear in mind that it is normal that you may not be liked and accepted by everyone. You should strive towards building professional relationships in the office that is based on honesty, clarity and constructive discussions. If

someone does not like or accept you, then they have a problem. Let their blood pressure go up, not yours.

Getting out of your comfort zone

The comfort zone is a psychological state in which you feel comfortable because your level of stress and anxiety is low and you know what to expect. You meet the same people at work and are able to predict their behavior. You know who you can rely on, who to avoid and who will exploit you. Even though you may not accept everything, you remain passive because you are afraid to venture into the unknown. The unknown means an additional dosage of nervousness, palpitation of your heart and escalation of your blood pressure. The good news is that our brain can get accustomed to anything once you give it a chance and enough time. When you went to school the first time, you were nervous, frightened, your mouth was dry and your heart exceeded its speed limit. The same symptoms appeared when you walked into the company on the first day or when you had to meet an important person. Did you die or suffer from a mental breakdown? Of course not. After a few times, your brain kept its hormones in place and stopped reacting. Bear this in mind when taking your first step out of your comfort zone to face challenges. Stop being afraid of what people will think as this is one of our biggest obstacles in life. First of all, people have enough of their own problems to concentrate on your behavior. And if they do, remember you cannot please them all. When you face a new challenge, think about all the positive things that you would experience upon its achievement. If this is not enough, then consider what could happen in a worst case scenario and prepare yourself for that. It is better to try and fail than fail to try. Are you socially anxious and therefore find it difficult to express your ideas in the company. Practice talking to strangers in public places and keep pushing until you feel comfortable to speak up during staff meetings. Once you do so, your confidence and assertiveness increase and others will begin to acknowledge you and accept your ideas.

Body-cure your assertiveness

Have you ever walked into a clothes shop without being properly dressed? Your hair is rumpled, your clothes scruffy and your face is still suffering from a terrible hangover. No one would pay attention to you and if they did, it would be because they wanted to keep an eye on you. You approach the shop assistant, who looks down at you and treats you like a non-entity. The mere fact that you are not well-dressed will make your shoulders slouch and you will walk and talk without confidence. You become the necessary evil in the shop and the workers are frustrated because you are destroying their good name. They are waiting impatiently for you to disappear.

Now, go back home, take a refreshing shower, put on a suit or a jacket, comb your hair and go back to the shop. You now look good and therefore feel good. You walk into the shop with your shoulders widely spread and your head held high. You emit an air of confidence and authority. You walk and talk with confidence and when you stop to exchange a few words with the sales clerk, you maintain eye contact. When you adopt this attitude, you will immediately gain the attention of the store clerks and they will fulfill all your expectations. They will patiently and painstakingly unbutton yet another shirt for you to try on. They will measure the size of your pants and even offer to take in the waist or get them shortened without additional cost.

How is it possible that the same people could have changed their attitude to you? It is simply because you have injected a dose of assertiveness into your body by pampering it in the right way. As shallow as it may sound, people formulate their opinion of us based on our physical appearance. Remember, clothes make the man. However, dressing well does not necessarily mean that you have to dress up. You simply need to look clean, neat and tidy and your clothes must be compatible to the event. If you treat your appearance seriously, people will notice that and will reciprocate with the appropriate treatment.

In addition, learn to project confident body language in order to capture people's attention and make them cooperate with you. Expose your eyes and try to maintain as much eye contact as possible. When you look at the person with whom you are talking, you give them the impression that you

are strong, confident, knowledgeable, trustworthy and appealing. These are the pre-cursors to becoming assertive and influencing others. If you avert your eyes, look into distance as if you were considering something that was said during the conversation or avert your eyes when you are in the process of thinking. Right-handers will look up and to the left when trying to recall or recapitulate a past situation. Refrain from wearing sunglasses when you are inside a building as you may be perceived as being deceptive or nonchalant. Keep your hands away from your face during your interaction with others. Gesticulate freely by opening your arms and showing your palms. When you do so, it becomes easier to draw people's attention and get your point across.

Assert yourself non-verbally

The eyes can be used as a powerful tool to define your assertiveness. When you maintain eye contact with others during the conversation, you are telling them that you are sincere and interested in what they have to say. It also proves that you are strong and confident. This will allow you to be treated seriously and increase your power to influence others.

Even though your parents and grandparents may not have known the modern definition of assertiveness, they intuitively felt that it was right to adopt a straight posture, with your shoulders thrown back and your head held high. They knew that your posture determined whether you were in command or not and that is why they reprimanded you every time you slouched. Obey these wise words and it becomes easier to behave assertively and achieve your goals. People may formulate their opinion of you based solely on the way you dress, stand, walk and shake hands. If you get it right the first time, it will set the stage for fruitful discussions. When you greet someone, make sure your hand is dry and kept in a vertical position as this would convey strength and character. When you talk, make sure your body is dancing in alignment with the message. Open your arms and show your palms to convey sincerity and agreement and to welcome the others to participate. Bow slightly and use the palm up gesture when asking for something and others will comply willingly. If you use the palm down gesture or your index finger, they would most likely ignore you as

these gestures portray a condescending attitude. Folding the arms is generally considered to have a negative connotation and should be avoided during a friendly discussion. However, you may use it to show your disagreement when someone has become too snippy or aggressive. This is when you allow your body to represent you. Assertive people turn their whole bodies towards their interlocutors and subtly emulate their non-verbal signals. This creates the feeling of closeness and harmony. Remember, they like you if you look like them.

The power of the handshake

When you introduce yourself the first time you usually give your name and business and reach out to shake hands. The introduction phase only lasts a few seconds and you need to get it right the first time. In order to avoid stumbling and fumbling for words, it would be advisable to prepare and practice what you want to say beforehand. In this way, you make sure that the intro comes out smoothly and without a flaw. Speak loudly enough and make sure you enunciate your words to allow others to understand and therefore remember you. Inject energy into both your voice and body. Look at your conversation party when introducing yourself. You may avert your eyes from time to time during the conversation, but never do so during the introduction because this is when you create rapport and build the relationship. We human beings have the natural tendency to non-verbally show our intention before we utter a word. So, your hand will move into the handshake a split second before you start the introduction. Make sure your hand is in a vertical position and when it interlocks with the hand of the interlocutor, the grip should be strong and vigorous. The handshake may last from two seconds to more, depending on the relationship. People who know each other well will keep their hands embraced for a longer while and pump them a few times. So, do not make the mistake of holding on to a stranger's hand interminably as it would have a strange connotation.

The handshake is an eloquent reflection of your personality and will determine whether you are able to assert yourself and attract people's attention. The vertical or manly handshake shows that you are strong and

confident and are willing to initiate an equal relationship. This will surely prepare the way to a fruitful interaction. If you are walking through a company, keep your bag in your left hand. Your right hand is free, dry and ready for the handshake. By the same token, if you happen to be at a get together, keep your glass in your left hand. This is because everyone resents the feeling of a cold and clammy hand shake. This would repel them and your chances of asserting yourself would surely decrease.

If you happen to be a dead fish or limp hand shaker, make it your duty to eliminate it because you would come across as being insecure and easy to dominate and control. It would also evoke the feeling of repulsion, distaste and disrespect from others. And for sure, no one will be eager to be drawn into a conversation with you, much less be influenced by your words. So practice using the vertical handshake in order to acquire the power of assertiveness. When you reach out with your firm hand, smile and maintain eye contact to show that you are open and ready to cooperate.

4. THE VERBAL MESSAGE

The Art of Interaction

During your interaction with others, it is important to make them feel that you understand and respect their point of view. Understanding their approach to a problem or their way of thinking does not necessarily mean that you agree with them. However, it clearly shows them that you are aiming towards mutual respect. This would make them gravitate towards you and be more attentive and receptive to your ideas. For example, a subordinate of yours may declare their unwillingness or objections to work with a particular colleague. Instead of telling them in a harsh way that you do not care, you may say something like, “I understand that you find it difficult to cooperate with John. However, the deadline for this task is next week Friday. So, please get together because only synergy will lead us to our goal.” When you tell someone that you understand their feelings, look at them and open your arms so as to show your sincerity. At the same time you need to adopt a confident posture and a decisive tone of voice when you deliver the command.

Being assertive does not mean that you will never be caught off guard or caught by surprise during a conversation. Instead of reacting impulsively and blundering, pause for a while to collect your thoughts and regain your tranquility. If this is still not enough, then let them know that you are not in a position to answer the question and would need some time. In this case, you could simply say, “That’s an interesting question, Rob. Let me consider it and get back to you by the end of the day.”

You may find yourself in a situation when someone refuses to comply with your request. In order to assert your authority, you will have to make them aware of the consequences of their inappropriate behavior. After doing so, you need to be firm and unyielding, otherwise they would lose whatever respect they had for you. One of my subordinates had the tendency to begin work one hour late and leave her office whenever the necessity

arose. She felt that because it was an online job, she would get away with negligence. She would abscond from work to pick her child up from school or tend to private matters. I do not have anything against people occasionally picking up their children from school or going to the outpatients' clinic or tending to bureaucratic formalities during working hours. However, I demand openness and honesty. After I had caught her the third time, I had to pull her up and let her know that disciplinary actions would be taken the next time she failed to abide by the company policy. This type of assertiveness was enough to wake her up and make her more responsible for her professional life.

The Power of Using 'I'

Assertive communication is the competence to deliver messages that clearly reveal your intentions, without destroying the protocol of etiquette. If you treat people with respect and show them that you understand their way of reasoning, then they will reciprocate and become more receptive during the interaction. Show others that you are prepared to take responsibility for your actions by using 'I' statements. In order to increase your power of assertiveness, you need to show your readiness to take responsibility for your thoughts, understanding, judgement and behavior. This is where 'I' statements come in handy. You may convey your needs to your boss by saying, "I have to take my son to see the cardiologist and I would like to leave at 2 pm today. Would that be okay for you?"

People are generally economical with their compliments. They would merely say, "Good job" or "Nice presentation." An assertive individual would be more personal and specific, "I think your speech was mesmerizing. You have great understanding of the topic and you kept me glued to my seat." If you want to flatter someone for having done a good job, you could say, "I am really impressed by your work" and then you could go on to state exactly what impressed you. People have the tendency to generalize. They would say things like, "You have a beautiful dress." Wouldn't it be better to add a more personal touch to your compliment? For example, "I think you look beautiful in that new dress." You want to flatter your child for having tidied their room. Most parents would say,

“Oh, your room looks great. Now you will finally be able to concentrate on your schoolwork.” Assertive parents would do it differently, “I see you have done a magnificent job. You have cleaned the floor and put away all your clothes in the wardrobe and placed your books on the shelves.” By pointing out exactly what impressed you, you add more significance to your message.

‘I’ statements may also be used to ask for clarification whenever a discrepancy occurs. It can be used in face to face communications, as well as in email exchanges.

Look at the following examples:

- As I understand, you would like to delay the launching date so as to be able to include another functionality in the system. Am I right?
- I understand that you would like to reprioritize the project tasks. I will therefore need you to explain which one will be the most important and most urgent.
- I understand that you prefer to spend the rest of the day in the SPA, instead of attending the concert. Am I right?

Some people find it extremely difficult to suppress their negative feelings towards others. They will lash out and abuse them for a wrongdoing just to vent their emotions. They will attack people’s personality, instead of concentrating on the issue at hand. Even if there is a legitimate reason, we should not allow ourselves to be controlled by our emotions. Assertive behavior is related to expressing your feelings and at the same time respecting the feelings of others. Instead of telling your daughter that she is untidy or a slob, it would be better to let her know what you see and how you feel when you enter her untidy room. You could say, “When I see all those clothes scattered on the floor, I feel irritated.”

One of your subordinates may be systematically late for a strategic staff meeting. You have two options. You can punctuate their unpunctuality by telling them that they were irresponsible and disrespectful. This might surely help, but it would evoke unnecessary bitterness and enmity. It would be better to say: “When you are late for the meeting, we are forced

to repeat points that we have already discussed. I feel annoyed because it is a waste of precious time. In the future, I would like you to be more punctual.” Be calm when conveying the message. Do not raise your voice. Assertive people do not have to shout to be heard.

Communicate Clearly and Concisely

Assertiveness is the art of communicating with others in such a way that the message being sent is understood in exactly the same way as was intended. People have the tendency to conceal their real intentions or use complicated sentences to express themselves. This leads to confusion and misunderstanding, which in turn may lead to conflict in your relationship with others. If you want to avoid unnecessary problems, then use simple sentences to express yourself. Talk about your feelings and expectations. At work you may say the following to the time waster from another department, "I appreciate the fact that you dropped in to talk, but I have a load of work to complete. I would be happy to meet up during the lunch break." Of course, the verbal message must be enhanced by the appropriate non-verbal signals.

Have you ever phoned a friend or relative to ask a favor and ended up beating around the bush for the majority of the conversation? Wouldn't it be less complicated if you greeted them, stated the reason for calling and settled the matter? After that, you could get engaged in other topics. The bottom line is to state your intention clearly and as early as possible. Some people believe that it does not behoove them to be so direct. However, the relationship is healthier when we are truthful and straightforward.

Your husband or wife is going on a business trip to an exotic country and would like to take you. You approach your boss and imply that you have been overworking and need some time off to reload your batteries. Wouldn't it be wiser to state plainly that you wanted to accompany your spouse on the trip abroad? Tell him that it is an exceptional occasion that you would not like to miss. The worst thing about asking a favor is when you negate its meaning. You simply cannot ask someone a favor and at the same time manipulate them into accommodating your request. Be polite. Be clear and allow them to feel the satisfaction of helping. When you hide your true desire, you leave people with the feeling of distaste, even if they succumb to your plot.

The Broken Record

The essence of assertiveness is to be able to get your point across without losing control of yourself. After all, if you are a dignified person, it does not behoove you to lose your temper. You may find yourself in a situation where someone was trying to impose on you. In order to show that you are unyielding and make them understand that you really mean what you say, you need to use the broken record tactic. Repeat your statement using the exact words and sequence over and over again. For example, a colleague of yours may want you to switch night shift with him for one reason or the other. You have other obligations and say to him, "I am not in a position to take on another night shift at the moment." If their intention is to get what they want, they will for sure not give up without a fight. They will come up with different arguments to convince you to change your mind. They may promise to reciprocate at the first given opportunity or even try to bribe you. Look at them, smile and repeat your sentence sincerely, and in exactly the same way, "I am not in a position to take on another night shift at the moment." By concentrating on reproducing the same sentence, you are able to remain calm and unruffled and at the same time punctuate the fact that you have no intention of changing your mind.

As a last resort, they will try to evoke your empathy by asking you to comply just for the sake of the good relationship that exists between you. Regardless of this, do not capitulate. You can counter-attack by adding a few words before the original statement, "I'm sorry. I do value our friendship. However, I am not in a position to take on another night shift at the moment." In case you are having doubts as to whether you should react like this to a friend, just tell yourself that no true friend should put you in such an awkward situation. It is simply not ethical and you have the right to protect yourself from being taken advantage of.

Some people who understand the power of the broken record technique may try to use it to force others to do something against their will. They will continually repeat their request until their victims give in. Remember, if you want to preserve your dignity, do not use the broken record strategy to manipulate others. Use it only to protect yourself. The broken record

technique is very often use by politicians when they do not want to answer an uncomfortable question asked by a journalist. They create a short answer and repeat it relentlessly until the journalist finally gives up. Unfortunately, their accompanying body language reveals sarcasm, insecurity and uncertainty and therefore weakens the effect of the broken record technique. We, the spectators begin to feel that they are hanging between the truth and the lie. Remember, the broken record verbal message must be in alignment with the non-verbal signals.

Silence is Golden

People find it unbearable to listen attentively during the conversation. Their impatience overcome them and as a result, they may do two things. They may bluntly interrupt you because they are too eager to get their point across. If this fails, they may spend their listening time trying to plan what they would be saying next. Even though they are smiling and nodding their heads, they are not fully receiving the message you are conveying to them. It is extremely difficult to listen effectively while formulating your next sentence. This happens every time two people are arguing. No one is listening. They are simply waiting for their turn to lash back at each other and they will delve very deep into the past to find a proper counterargument. I think you know exactly what I am talking about. Assertive behavior is related to attentive listening and waiting in silence until the speaker has expressed a thought. By doing so, you show people that you value their contribution to the topic being discussed. At the same time, you gain understanding of their point of view and this will make it easier for you to remember the information they provide. On the whole, people like talking about themselves and would be very glad and fulfilled if they found someone to listen to them. It makes them feel important and will serve to increase their self-esteem.

People who lack emotional intelligence have the tendency to attack your personality when criticizing. Instead of pointing out the problem, they proceed to humiliate and destroy. Unfortunately, this person may be higher in the hierarchy. Nevertheless, do not give them the pleasure of feeling that they have succeeded in destroying you. Remain unperturbed. Remain

silent. If it is necessary to remain in their presence, then change the topic gracefully after the period of silence.

Assertive people will also use silence to punctuate their point. For example, you may say to your subordinate that you would like a task to be completed by a certain date. He may retaliate and state that he will be hampered by his other responsibilities. Instead of wasting your precious time to get into unnecessary discussions, simply remain silent. After this short silence, repeat your request once again. Silence serves to add gravity and power to your statement and the worker will realize that you have no intention of bending under his pressure or moaning.

During a negotiation, silence comes in handy when you have proclaimed your price. The person who breaks the silence first is considered to be the one to lose the negotiations. Whatever you say just after stating your price will be picked up by the subconscious mind of your opponent as a sign of weakness. They would also believe that you crave to provide more information or arguments because the initial price may have been unreasonable. Of course, if you state your price and their body language tells you that they will reject your offer, then in this particular case, you need to jump in and take the appropriate measures before they verbalize the 'No'. Before they reject your offer, they will fold their arms or touch the region around their mouths. Should this happen, then you need to lean forward with your arms open, expose your palms and tell them that you see they would like more details or clarification. By doing so you force them to unfold their arms and become receptive again. So, remember that silence is a virtue, but at the same time, observe the non-verbal gestures and react accordingly.

Let your Body Speak

People who possess the power of assertiveness also know that silence can be used when they do not agree with others and at the same time consider it a waste of time to get into an unnecessary discussion. A patient walks into the doctor's office and complains that they had been waiting too long. Should the doctor explain that ailments can range from minor to more complex ones and therefore some medical cases may require more time?

Of course not. Some people are by nature egoistic, and silence in this case will show your disapproval and disdain. Silence combined with the appropriate body signals will speak for themselves. This is when the arm-cross gesture comes in handy. By folding your arms, you are saying to the impatient patient, “I disagree with you and I will not waste my energy to utter a single word.”

During a conversation, your subordinate informs you that they hadn’t read a particular document because they considered it irrelevant. Deep down they knew that the information was important, but because of other obligations, they decided to omit the document. By talking about it, they are expecting you to endorse their decision, hence making them clear their guilty conscience. One of the ways to react would be to remain silent, with an impassive expression on your face. The arm-fold would accentuate your discontent. Silence would leave the worker wondering whether or not their decision of not fulfilling a requirement was appropriate. They would eventually take steps to correct the mistake.

A regular latecomer joins the meeting and apologizes for yet another unpunctuality. You can assert yourself by letting them know exactly how you feel when they are late. Another way would be to ignore the apologies by remaining silent. Oftentimes we try to be nice and friendly and show them that we understand. However, this kind of reaction is applicable for one-time incidents, not regular premeditated professional misconduct.

5. STRESS MANAGEMENT

Eliminate Stress Factors

Stress is a normal defensive reaction to our fast-moving world of daily challenges, demands, juggling multiple responsibilities and back-stabbing. When the brain perceives an uncomfortable, difficult or threatening situation, a series of reaction take place, which leads to the release of specific hormones. Cortisol increases the level of glucose in the blood to cater for top muscle performance. Adrenaline, which is considered as the fight or flight or freeze hormone stimulates the heart to beat faster to send more blood to our muscles. Our blood pressure goes sky high, our mouths become dry and we may sweat profusely. This prepares us to fight or flee. Unfortunately, when our bodies get transferred into the stress mode, we may lose our ability to communicate effectively. Our way of reasoning changes as opposed to when we are poised and relaxed. We become irrational and begin to behave in a passive or aggressive way.

The first step to overcome this problem would be to identify the factors that trigger stress and then take steps to eliminate them. For example, you may have to convince your internal or external stakeholders to accept a solution you have provided. Now, talking to upper management can indeed be stressful, so simply make sure you do your homework before attending the meeting. Do your research and gather all the facts to support your argument. Envision yourself sitting there in the boardroom during the meeting, talking to them in a confident and convincing way. This will allow your brain to get acquainted with the stressful situation before the situation. Your brain will therefore turn off its alarm system. When you walk into the room, you will feel strong, self-assured and knowledgeable and the stakeholders will notice that. Remember, when you have great understanding of the topic being discussed, you become calm, composed and assertive.

You are one of those people who feel extremely anxious before going to work on Monday morning. This is related to stress factors at work that you keep concentrating on, even when you are away from the office. My philosophy is simple. If you cannot resign from your job, then find reasons to like it. In order to like your job, seek and focus on the things that give you pleasure at work and once your brain makes that linkage, your heart will stop pounding nervously on Sunday evening and you will stop being a Sunday monster to your family.

You may have a well-paid job that is stressful. Concentrate on the stress and you will be committing mental suicide. Assertive people focus on the incentives and reserve their good mood. Your working hours are spread over different time zones. Those who continually beat up themselves for having to work unsociable hours will suffer. The assertive individual will come to terms with this situation and focus on the prestigious position and all the other benefits he receives from the company.

In times of impending redundancies, workers begin to worry themselves into depression. They are convinced that they will be the next victim and then send this message to their subconscious mind day after day until it becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy. They begin to malfunction and eventually secure a place on the firing list. The assertive worker will summon the motivation to perform even better, but at the same time update his resume and speed up his networking.

Some time ago, one of my clients told me that she was having problems falling asleep and the lack of sleep made her irritable and aggressive at work, and the more coffee she dumped into her body, the more restless and impatient she became. It so happened that she had been spending the last few hours before going to sleep on the computer, doing her accounting and catching up with critical tasks. This had been going on for over a month due to tight deadlines at work. Now, when the brain is subjected to distressing situations, it will surely be difficult to switch off its alarm and fall asleep. The secretion of the stress hormone cortisol increases in order to boost your alertness. However, you surely do not want this to happen at bedtime. Recurring sleep curtailment can inhibit your reflexes, decrease your concentration and impair your memory. This in turn will make you

less efficient at work, more irritable and less assertive. In fact, the chances are that you will react aggressively at the slightest excuse. The remedy to my client's problem was simple and straightforward. I instructed her to plan her work so as not to be overloaded in the evening, and not to use the computer before going to bed. I advised her to make it her duty to spend the evening doing something relaxing, like reading a book or having a relaxing bath, anything that was soothing and pleasant for her organism. She believed me, followed the new rules, regained her sanity and was able to assert herself properly.

Change Your Attitude

A student of mine was permanently stressed at work because of a co-worker from the same office. This made her less productive and more passive. She claimed that her colleague was continually criticizing her for her performance at work and was unfriendly, sarcastic and condescending. When I asked my student about her reaction, she retorted that she reciprocated by behaving in exactly the same way. Of course, the knowledge you have acquired so far would allow you to assert yourself properly in this situation and eliminate stress. However, considering that my student would be working with her colleague in the same office for many years, I chose a different solution. I asked her to stop thinking about her so-called friend's ill behavior during the upcoming weekend. I explained to her the importance of concentrating on all the virtues of her co-worker. It could be related to her work or something about her personality that she admired, anything. I told her to seek, find and focus on all the positive things related to that person before going back to work the next Monday.

Two weeks later, she came back to me with the results of the experiment. When my student soaked her mind with positive information about her colleague, she automatically began to treat her in a more friendly way and stopped reacting to her biting remarks. After the first week, her teammate stopped criticizing her and became less combative. As time went by, they both began to like and accept each other, and working in the same office became less stressful and more pleasant. My student revealed to me that

her heart was not palpitating anymore when driving to work. Her blood pressure returned to its normal level and she had stopped venting her frustration on her poor husband. What is the moral? The solution to our stress is in many cases straightforward and may just be a matter of changing your reaction to a given situation. Having said that, please remember that stress will not disappear from our lives. We need to acknowledge stress, adopt the right attitude to properly manage its level and overcome challenges. Once your emotions are under control, you will be able to communicate in an assertive way.

Meditation

Everyone needs to relax and recharge their batteries. This allows us to regain our mental and physical equilibrium and repair the damage that stress has inflicted on both our body and mind. Meditation has a soothing effect on the brain, which remains for a long time after the meditation session. Aerate your room and then isolate yourself there for at least fifteen minutes. Close your eyes and imagine that all thoughts of fear, anxiety and self-doubts are leaving your mind. Dismiss these thoughts without analyzing or evaluating them. You need to see yourself literally pushing these thoughts out of your memory. At the same time, you can say to yourself the following, “I am now freeing my mind of all thoughts of concern and uneasiness.” Repeat the procedure until you feel a cleansing effect in your brain and whole body. During the whole time, breathe using your diaphragm. Once you have been successful in eliminating these thoughts, you can go one step further and fill your mind with positive thoughts. You just cannot leave your mind in a state of emptiness because it will naturally fill itself with negative, damaging thoughts. Pump positive information into your mind. Think about all the good things in your life. Find examples when you were happy, confident and in control of the situation.

Believe me, there are many great situations in your life. It is only a matter of accessing these moments and recapitulating them in your mind’s eye. If you can fill the empty space in your mind with positive, empowering thoughts, then you are on your way to getting rid of stress, worries and

self-deprecation. Once this happens, you begin to understand your values, your self-esteem increases and you begin to communicate more assertively. Napoleon Hill said, “Whatever the mind can conceive and believe, it can achieve.” If you believe you are a non-entity, then you may have the tendency to be passive and on some occasions, aggressive. If you know your values, you assert your authority when the necessity arises.

Avoid conflicts by setting good examples

Communication is the art of interaction both verbally and non-verbally between two or more individuals, during which clear, precise and succinct messages are transmitted. Failure to do so results in conflicts. In our fast moving, competitive world of tension, stress and jealousy, people find it difficult to manage their emotions effectively. Once the tongue outraces the brain and arguments rebound off the ears, there will be disharmony. Those who have acquired the power of assertiveness understand the importance of listening and acknowledging disagreement during an encounter. If you show others that you understand their point of view and treat them with respect, it will be easier to gain their attention and tend towards reconciliation. Once the situation gets out of hand, people stop listening and delve into the past to find counter-arguments, even if they are not related to the topic. Are you guilty of doing so? One of my students told me of a strategy she used whenever she had an argument with her fiancé. As soon as he started to dig up the past, she raised her hand and said, “Wait, this is not the topic of our argument.” Her reaction evoked a smile and both of them were able to cool down emotionally and solve the issue. Her fiancé has learned from her and now uses the same strategy when she reaches her boiling point.

At the workplace, conflicts are inevitable, especially when workers are tired and stressed due to deadlines. Your colleague may have failed to submit part of his work. Instead of losing your cool, simply approach them, point out the problem and ask politely for an explanation. You could say, “I noticed that you didn’t submit your work yesterday. Is everything ok?” Your subordinate is irritated because of the complexity of his task and the approaching deadline. Instead of getting involved in a fruitless

battle, let him know that you understand how complicated and challenging the task is and how difficult it is to deliver on time. By empathizing with him and creating rapport, you make him feel less frustrated and more motivated. Only then can you move on and ask him to work on Saturdays to finish within the time limit.

The majority of people today use nagging as a tool to make others change their behavior. They are deeply convinced that by emphasizing someone's unacceptable behavior, they would trigger them into taking action to make changes. The problem, however, is that when people are chastised for their behavior, they feel that pain has been inflicted upon them and will surely try to defend themselves and fight for their rights. Benjamin Franklin said, "A good example is the best sermon." This is exactly the rule that assertive people apply in order to change things around them. They set examples which they would like others to follow. You cannot demand punctuality when you are systematically late for a meeting. You cannot foster a positive attitude at work when you are negative, lacking enthusiasm and have the tendency to complain. You simply cannot be lethargic, lackadaisical and negligent at work and at the same time expect your children to perform well at school. If you want your children to lead a healthy life style, then instead of attacking them, start initiating changes in your own daily routine. Wake up early, go jogging, work out for at least thirty minutes a day and refrain from eating junk food. Sooner or later they will feel the need to emulate you.

Your husband spends 10 hours at work and then isolates himself in his study to catch up with important professional matters. How do you feel? Enraged, lonely, neglected, and sorrowful. You begin to manifest your frustration by nagging and whining at the least opportunity. The recipient of your pitiful attack will simply retaliate or retreat into their shells and further contact will be terminated. Assertive behavior in this case would mean taking matters into your own hands and beginning to focus on making your own life more interesting. Enroll in a gym and start working on your physical appearance. Go to the swimming pool more regularly. Pay more attention to the way you dress. Take up a hobby that will keep you engaged most of the time. By doing so, your self-esteem increases and

you begin to feel better with yourself and about yourself. You stop complaining because you have more important things on your mind. Sooner or later, you will arouse the interest of your significant other and draw their attention and who knows, you may even find a companion to go to the gym. Remember, the power of assertiveness is the ability to force yourself to set the right examples by changing your attitude, instead of fighting a lost battle.

Auto Suggestion

If you have reached this point, it means that you now have comprehensive knowledge of how to behave assertively. However, even though you understand how to assert your authority, your brain may still refrain from taking action. This is because you may still be traumatized and overwhelmed by your persecutors. Your tormentor may be a family member or someone higher in the company's hierarchy. This is where autosuggestion comes in useful. Auto suggestion is the act of consciously controlling the thoughts that you send to your subconscious mind. If these thoughts are accompanied by faith and true emotions, then the subconscious mind will accept them and render the appropriate results. Envision yourself in your mind's eye talking to your tormentors in an assertive way. See yourself looking confident and feeling confident during the conversation. See yourself conveying your message effectively and asserting your authority. Choose multiple scenarios and visualize yourself confronting these people and reacting to their typical aggressive behavior. Be your own film director and see yourself becoming more and more assertive during the interaction. Imagine yourself winning the battle. They are now complying with your rules, your instructions, and your point of view. At the beginning, it will be difficult and you will succumb to their power and authority. However, you need to be relentless and practice being assertive in your mind's eye as often as possible. After you have overcome your fear and conquered them in your mind, you can move on to more physical situations. Talk assertively to a picture of your tormentor or get a close friend to hold the picture whilst you communicate to it. Your friend should play the role of your aggressive boss or family member and react in exactly the way they would react. Emulate the situation as accurately as

possible. If you cannot find a suitable person to role play the scene, then talk to an empty chair and react to what the chair would say. Remember, the chair is substituting your tormentor. When you communicate your feelings, feel the surge of confidence flowing through your body. Feel the good taste of communicating your feelings to them in an assertive way. Practice, practice and practice and then implement at the next opportunity. Do not give up even if you are unsuccessful the first time.

SECTION 2

WORKPLACE ASSERTIVENESS

6. MAKE A LASTING IMPRESSION

The Impact of Apology

In our fast- moving world, more and more people find it difficult to admit to their mistakes. They believe it would denude them, expose their defects, and therefore make it more painful and laborious to achieve success and recognition. People with low self-esteem are reluctant to apologize as this would strike a severe blow to their already low morale. Self-assured and self-reliant people, however, have the ability and willingness to acknowledge and reveal their misdeed or misbehavior and take measures to address the matter. In order to be assertive at work, you therefore need to accept your wrongdoings and be prepared to apologize. Paradoxically, by apologizing, you come across as being strong, confident, authentic and credible and this is what allows you to win the attention and admiration of your colleagues and upper management. I vividly remember the reaction of one of my students when I apologized for my professional misconduct. I was twenty years old and still wet behind the ears. The student, one of the school bullies was being disruptive and creating disorder in the classroom. I suddenly let go of the irritation and anger that had been building up inside me and growled at him to plant his ass in the seat and shut up. My tone of voice, facial expression and body language beat him into obedience. Now, as you all know, this is not the right way to speak to a student, regardless of how outrageous they were. Fortunately, I immediately regained my sanity and apologized to him for using such inappropriate words. As I looked at him and apologized, I saw the respect and appreciation that crept into his eyes, which made him in turn apologize for his ill behavior. After that incident, he became more cordial

and compliant during my classes. The bottom line is to recognize your flaws and take steps to fix them as soon as possible. It is better to act sooner than later, or at least act later than never. It is better to tend towards conciliation than aggression and conflict as this will only serve to destroy the atmosphere and hinder productivity in the workplace.

Two weeks ago, I had the opportunity to apologize to one of my subordinates for a misjudgment. How does it sound? “I had the opportunity!” It surely sounds like an occasion. The point I am making is that at work you may have to stoop to create rapport and bring back harmony. Having said that, please be careful not to over deliver. Do not go about apologizing for someone else’s mistakes. Do not say sorry because you are forced to ask your boss to follow up on something or remind him of a high priority task. This will only show that you are lacking personality and once others notice that, they will take advantage of you. Do not start your presentation by saying sorry for your lack of knowledge or lack of preparedness. People usually do so in order to evoke the feeling of empathy. Unfortunately, it arouses the awareness of the audience and they will automatically try to prove you right. Portray confidence and others will be influenced. Portray inferiority and you will be ignored. One more thing. Do not start your speech with sentences like, “Sorry, but” or “Sorry to intrude, but.” Over-apologizing is a sign of insecurity.

Express Yourself Publicly

During staff meetings, some workers prefer to hide themselves in the back row. If there is only one table in the boardroom, then they maintain a long distance from the boss or presenter. They cross their legs, fold their arms, hunch their shoulders and spend most of the time admiring the floor. By doing so, they hope to remain unobtrusive and therefore safe from any difficult situations during the meeting. Even though they may have good ideas or solutions to an issue, they choose to remain quiet and take no risks whatsoever. They are usually afraid of being judged by others, especially if their understanding of the matter turns out to be erroneous. Speaking would be a distressing experience for them even though they were proficient in the topic under discussion. They are self-conscious and

believe that they would not be in a position to express themselves properly. Well, the bad news is that this is the first step to passiveness and ostracism in the company. Remember, in our contemporary world, it is not what you know, but what you do with your knowledge. If you remain invisible, you remain unexplored and no one may realize how valuable you are to your department. So, start asserting your position in the company by asserting yourself in the meetings.

Ask yourself how much you would benefit by actively participating in staff meetings and this will give you the drive to speak up. The first time may be difficult and you may probably stumble or fumble for the right words because you are trying too hard to find the right vocabulary. You need to bear in mind that once you have the expertise, then words do not matter. At the end of the day, it is not what you say, but how you say what you say. The other participants will not remember the exact words you use, but the way you expressed your opinion. Please do not get me wrong. I am not saying that you should walk into your next meeting and start talking. Plan your action before making your move. Begin at home. You know the agenda for the next meeting, so prepare yourself by talking to yourself in front of the mirror, where you can maintain eye contact with yourself. Practice using your body to enhance the message. Go through the motions of turning your body to face those who you are addressing. Envision yourself sitting in the boardroom and delivering your message with confidence and conviction. By doing so, you are preparing your brain for the upcoming meeting and hence stifling its flight or freeze hormonal reaction. When you do express yourself, your heart will not pound shamelessly. You will not sweat immensely. You will look good, feel good and even smell good because you have done your homework and you are ready to assert yourself and gain recognition in your department.

If you have a meeting with the upper echelons, then get the facts in place, double check them and you will be more confident and less likely to fail. Remember, knowledge, wisdom and appropriate mental preparation generate confidence. Confidence triggers impeccable body language, which attracts people's attention and wins their admiration. Speak and you will be heard. Remain silent and you will be misunderstood.

Manage your speech

The voice is a tool for communication. If used properly, it will attract people's attention. However, if misused, it may repel others and you will be ignored. During the listening process, people try to decode the verbal message that is being sent to their ears. If the voice is a bit too quiet, others will have a problem to interpret the message. As a consequence, they will perceive the speaker as being nervous, hesitant, insincere, fearful or too humble. If your listeners have to eternally ask you to repeat what you have said, they will eventually become frustrated and retreat into their shells. It will certainly be difficult for you to assert yourself and achieve your goals during the discussion.

You may be one of those people who naturally have a quiet voice, so start practicing to increase the volume if you want to be treated seriously. The volume of your voice is a reflection of your self-confidence, so make it right and you will boost your assertiveness. Do not yell, as yelling will make you look combative and aggressive and the accompanying facial expression will make the listeners less receptive and more hostile. Yelling destroys the tranquility in the atmosphere and effective communication becomes impossible.

It is said that around 38% of the impression you make on the audience comes from your tonality. This is because the tone of voice puts life and credibility into the content of the message. If you speak with conviction, the crowd will be convinced. If you inject passion in your voice, it will arouse their attention. Some people have the tendency to rush through their message without pausing. This leaves them breathless and the listeners confused and irritated. Assertive people understand how important it is to pause so as to allow the audience to capture the significance of the message. During the process of listening, people do not focus on each particular word that is being used. Instead, they create a picture of the words that are reaching them and in this way, it becomes easier to understand and remember the message. So, learn to pause when speaking and you will be appreciated by the audience. Furthermore, when

you pause, people get the impression that you are strong, self-assured and in control of the situation.

7. THE ART OF POSITIVE THINKING

Think Positive

One of the side effects of our professional life is that we encounter obstacles from time to time. We may not have influence on these drawbacks, but we can decide how to react to them. If we allow these bumps to dominate and dictate our lives, then we are on our way to impairing our self-esteem. Once this happens, we lose our self-assurance and become a bit too passive or a bit too aggressive. It is therefore essential to adopt the right attitude and state of mind when faced with difficult situations at work. For example, you are working hard to reach a milestone in your project and the team leader informs you that due to certain unforeseen circumstances, you may miss the deadline by a week. Well, you can do the tail spin that is typical for stressed dogs and show your disappointment, anger and irritation. You can worry yourself and a few members of your team into depression. Will this improve the situation? Of course not. In fact, it may decrease morale in the team and lead to confusion and failure.

In such critical situations you need to summon the power to think positive. Tell yourself that it is a test that you and the team will sooner or later have to take. After all, even the best project team will encounter difficulties. Assertive project managers will conceal their stress. They will not criticize anyone as criticism in this particular case would be demotivating to the team members. The assertive managers will think their way out of the crisis. They will reassign their resources or ask the team members to work additional hours during weekdays and full time during weekends. Assertive people are not afraid to ask for help when the necessity arises and this is when they get to know who they can count on in tough situations. Remember, a problem has emerged, so find some positivity that will give you the energy and wisdom to solve it. This is surely not the time to hang up your gloves or accuse people of negligence.

You are supposed to be having a meeting with an important customer or the CEO of your company. Tell yourself that it is an honor and a rare opportunity to prove yourself and become more visible. Seek a positive outcome of the interaction and you will become more confident and assertive. Many years ago, a former university student of mine phoned me and said that the owner and CEO of his company had asked him to find out whether I would have time for a discussion. I did not think about the long distance I would have to travel to meet the CEO. I did not think that it would be a waste of my precious time. I was not intimidated by the fact that I would be meeting a magnate. Instead, I concentrated on a win-win outcome of our discussion and therefore agreed to meet him. That was about ten years ago and today I am still rendering services for his company. If I had not considered the positive aspects of meeting the CEO, I would not have been able to summon the courage to meet him. I would not have been confident and assertive during the encounter and I would not have created a good first impression on him. I would not have been offered a lucrative contract as a consultant.

Let me give you another example of how positivity can boost your confidence and assertiveness. I was informed that I would have to travel abroad to meet the key stakeholders of one of the companies with which we had been cooperating. Now, my philosophy is straightforward. A job is there to be done, so find all the pleasure related to its execution and your brain will be motivated to guide you. I therefore prepared myself for the first encounter in the corporate jungle by getting fully acquainted with the topics to be discussed. After that, I spent my time thinking about the good things that could happen due to that discussion. When I walked into the company, I was looking good, feeling good and ready to connect with the stakeholders. Having such a positive state of mind, I was able to assert myself in their working environment.

Let me give you one last example of a sales representative who had failed to secure a long-awaited contract with a small, but prospering company. A few days before the negotiations, he subconsciously focused on all the negative aspects related to the company owner. For example, the owner and CEO had acquired the business from his parents. He was lucky

because his parents had paved the way for him. He was too young to manage such a company and he probably didn't have the business awareness. He was a spoilt brat. How could he have so many cars at his age? These were the negative thoughts he kept turning over in his mind before his meeting with the CEO. The negotiations lasted only thirty minutes and one day later, the sales representative received a short rejection email, "We have considered your offer and are unable to do business with your company." The salesman was shocked when I told him that his negative attitude to the owner was the cause of his failure. I explained to him that he had spent his time pumping negative messages to his subconscious mind and that on the day of the negotiations, his brain rendered what he had asked for. Remember, we human beings interact on a subconscious level and the negotiation party will subconsciously pick up the negative signals that we are sending.

Make Use of Opportunities

If your goal is to assert yourself in your company, then it is essential for you to make use of those big opportunities that appear only from time to time during your career. A few years ago, a multinational company with which I had been cooperating was informed that the Vice-President of Operations would be visiting their company. The Vice President was supposed to be accompanied by other distinguished members from headquarters. As part of the program, it was required that one of the employees would have to prepare a presentation related to the progress they had made in their move towards mastery. To my surprise, no one was eager to present their work to the visitors as the fear of facing a group of VIPs had paralyzed them all. Eventually, one victim was selected to prepare and conduct the presentation. He was an up-and-coming junior manager who had acquired a managerial position within a relatively short period of time. When he reached out to me for advice and guidance, I immediately congratulated him for being given such a rare opportunity to be more visible in the company.

We went through all the relevant steps that would bring top performance and leave a lasting impression on the audience. It was a nerve-wracking

experience for my student, but due to proper management of his mind, he was able to focus on the incentives, on the positive impact it would have on his career. He was able to think positively. His presentation was outstanding and he was able to enthrall his audience right from the beginning and keep them spellbound. When the Vice-President shook his hand and congratulated him, he was unconsciously paving the way for the manager to achieve success in his career. The manager's popularity in the company surged very quickly and whenever he had something to say, others were by all means ready to listen and comply. This is exactly how you build your power of assertiveness at the workplace. Show people that you are unafraid to tackle tough situations. Show them that you are venturesome and they will look up to you. Walk away with your tail between your legs and they will treat you with disrespect.

I remember very well a particular conversation with a friend of mine, the CEO of an international company. He said that an effective way to assert oneself was to find something in the department that required improvement and strive towards its attainment with dogged diligence. You see, you become assertive and popular for your courage and good deeds rather than your lack of involvement. This is my motto today. Find something that needs repairing and then jump into action. Try to excel where others have failed or have failed to try. Be prepared to step beyond your comfort zone by controlling your thoughts.

Extend the comfort zone

The comfort zone is a state in which you feel secure. You accept what you have and even if there are certain things you would love to change, you remain passive because changes mean collaborating with the unknown. Unfortunately, we have the tendency to fear the unknown, so we settle for the bare minimum at work. Speaking up at a meeting or conducting a presentation is a mental torture for you, so you refrain from taking actions and pretend that your career will not be ruined by these minor drawbacks. You are involved in a discussion with your colleague and realize that he is trying to take advantage of you. However, you do not react because you are afraid of the consequences. You therefore convince yourself that it is

wiser not to stick your neck out. After all, there is no harm in doing some additional work for others. Someone is late for your meeting and asks you to go over what you had already covered. You comply because you want to maintain the friendly relationship. There are numerous situations in the workplace to which you get accustomed simply because you do not want to venture out of your comfort zone. If you continue to behave like this, others will exploit you at the least opportunity.

Begin by defining and accepting your limitations. Link as much pain as possible to your restrictions, to your obstacles. After that, envision all the pleasure you would derive by conquering them. If you are afraid to share your ideas to a group of people, then ask yourself how much you have been losing out by not doing so and how much pleasure and admiration you would gain by educating them. This is usually enough to arouse your desire to initiate changes. Now remember, I am not telling you to throw yourself in at the deep end. Start by exchanging a few words with people in public places. Maintain eye contact with the waiter when giving your order and then thank him and give him a tip for the good service. Talk about the weather with a stranger at the bus stop. Greet the janitor at your workplace and exchange a few inconsequential remarks with him. Keep extending the comfort zone by praising your colleagues or even your boss for a job well-executed or for a compelling presentation. Sooner or later, your brain begins to perceive such situations as the norms and this is when you take a bigger step and express your opinion at meetings and then go on to conduct presentations.

Once you succeed in stepping out of your comfort zone, your confidence increases, your self-esteem grows and you become more motivated to take further action. Your behavior changes. Your body language becomes more appealing and it is only a matter of time before your colleagues and boss notice the transformation. This in turn will evoke the feeling of respect. It will now be easier to tell your exploiters that you are not in a position to accommodate. You will be composed when telling the latecomer that you would like them to be punctual for meetings as it is a waste of precious time to repeat the points that had already been discussed. What is the moral? Extend your comfort zone and you will become more visible and

influential. When you speak, others will stop what they are doing to listen to you.

8. HOW TO DEAL WITH DIFFICULT SITUATIONS

The Human Obstacles

I am continually bombarded with questions about how to be assertive to trouble makers when conducting a meeting or presentation. One of the worst things that could happen is when an attendee begins to use his cell phone or iPad during the meeting. Let me give you a few life examples. About ten years ago, I was conducting a one-day self-improvement workshop for workers of an international company. One of the workers who was half-sitting, half-lying on his chair suddenly reached for his cell phone and began typing a text message. I had taken note of his lackadaisical, know-it-all manner, but had decided to ignore him as long as he was not going beyond the etiquette rules for meetings. As soon as he pulled out his phone and started typing, I stopped talking, turned and looked at him, with one arm kept in mid-air. There was sudden silence as the other participants also turned to follow my gaze. When he became aware of the silence, he looked up and saw me looking at him, with my arm still frozen in mid-air. I had an admonishing look in my eyes. When the human obstacle realized that all eyes were turned towards him, he immediately muttered an inaudible apology and put away his phone. Simple, isn't it? Get the whole crowd on your side and verbal exchanges become unnecessary.

On another occasion, when someone started to use his iPad, I clapped my hands loudly, uttered his name and asked him to comment on what I had just said. The clapping of my hands as well as hearing his name startled him and left him feeling confused. Of course, as he was unable to give a comment, he felt a bit embarrassed and decided that it was better to close his iPad. Remember, I did not abuse anyone verbally. I did not raise my voice. I simply brought their attention to their ill behavior and showed them that I had no intention of condoning such inappropriate attitude. I

asserted myself without getting into long and useless discussions. In fact, there was no room for discussion.

Let me give you an example of a tactic used by a student of mine towards latecomers. When she sent out the agenda, she punctuated that the boardroom would be locked one minute before the meeting began, as she did not want the audience to be disrupted during the session. On the day of her meeting or presentation, she did exactly as she had mentioned and did not open the door even when she saw someone standing there, waiting to be let in. People learned very fast and were either punctual or resigned from attending when they realized that they would be late. My student, the director of marketing, asserted herself without straining her vocal chords. As she had set the stage for a serious approach to work, no one even considered using their phones or laptops during her meetings. She was liked and admired by her colleagues, who knew that there were certain rules that should not be broken. Once you assert yourself and set certain rules, life at work becomes more pleasant.

Manage Your Emotions

Being assertive does not mean that you will always succeed in getting what you want and that others will always be obliging. There may be times when others will argue with you just to prove a point or simply because they are convinced that you are wrong. Be prepared to acknowledge disagreement and allow others to share their point of view. Manage your emotions and try not to be impolite or abusive. Treat them with respect, regardless of whether or not they deserve it. Listen attentively and show them that you are doing so by opening your arms to welcome their opinion. You could even say that you understand their way of thinking. Understanding does not mean that you agree. When you do so, it makes them feel better. It makes them feel comfortable and important and this is what brings back the harmony. Remember, where there is harmony, there is success. If you ignore their argument and cut them short during the discussion, you automatically destroy the atmosphere, you destroy the communication bond and this will lead to failure. No one will be willing to listen to your ideas when they are chastised.

Some people have the tendency to roll their eyes and look at the ceiling as if they were appealing to the almighty to give them the serenity to endure the nonsense. They may inhale deeply or sigh heavily just to show their annoyance. They may rub their eyes, cover their mouths or ears and fidget during their listening time. Such non-verbal signals will be picked up and decoded by others and will only serve to add more fuel to the fire. Once the situation gets out of hand, everyone will start talking at the same time and no one will be listening and those who are supposedly listening are simply thinking of a counter-argument. If you want to be listened to, then you need to non-verbally show your conversation party that you are interested in their message.

Are you having a hard time with one of your co-workers? Do not ridicule or belittle him behind his back. Analyze the problem and then initiate a face-to-face conversation as soon as possible. Let him know what is bothering you. Maintain a calm, composed and confident attitude during the discussion and listen without disruption when they are talking. Let that person know that both of you can work together to solve the problem and move on to more important things. As I have mediated such business disputes, I know very well that in the majority of cases, both parties are suffering in silence, but are too proud to admit to it or make the first step towards a settlement. Assertive individuals will make that move, solve the problem and move on in life.

Some people lack emotional control and may break down in conflictual situations. I have spoken to many workers about how they perceive the miserable workers who tend to cry when faced with difficult situations. They all agree that instead of sympathy, it evoked the feeling of despise. If you happen to be that kind of worker, then you need to leave your office and go for a walk in order to change this negative state of mind. If you remain there, the tears will appear, your voice will start to shake and others will lose whatever respect they had for you. So, tell the tormentor that you will get back to the topic later, go out for a walk and give yourself a pep talk before going back to the office. In due time, your brain will get accustomed to such corporate obstacles and react more calmly. Remember, you have an option. Stay and cry or leave, maintain your dignity and

summon the courage to assert yourself. In one of my online courses, there was a great discussion regarding workplace confrontation. I would be happy to present this discussion to you in its exact format. So, please continue reading.

Workplace Confrontation – Online Course Extract

At the workplace, you will encounter a variety of hostile situations and the way you react will have an influence on the outcome. Here is an extract taken from one of my online discussions with my students:

Student A: What are the best mannerisms to practice with a co-worker who acts verbally abusive in a cubicle environment?

Roy: The atmosphere in the department should be created and dictated by the boss. It is his duty to ensure that his subordinates feel at ease. If the atmosphere is good, productivity increases. A boss must be perceptive enough to detect all deviations from the norms and react accordingly.

If a co-worker is verbally abusive to others, and you are not the boss, then you should remain impassive and should not show approval and acceptance. The problem today is that people tend to smile or laugh when they find themselves in uncomfortable situations. This will simply motivate the abuser to perpetuate the repelling behavior. The way others react will define whether or not the abuser will feel comfortable or uncomfortable with his behavior.

Should the co-worker verbally abuse you, then you need to assert your authority once and for all. Do not emulate his behavior! Do not raise your voice! Do not use obscenities! Let your body speak for itself. Adopt a confident posture and demeanor and let him know how you feel about his behavior. Use your body to punctuate the message. Look him in the eyes and let him know that you have no intention of condoning his behavior. Once you have delivered your message, move on and behave normally. Do

not repeat yourself. Do not come back to the problem. Do not harbor grudges. Do not ignore him!

My philosophy is simple: if there is a problem, solve it and move on. The sooner you solve it, the better. Some people stifle their problems and then the problems start to eat them from the inside. And eventually, it will have a negative impact on their private life.

If you have a problem to face the abuser, prepare yourself mentally at home for the confrontation by using the law of auto suggestion.

Student A: You are an inspiration sir, thank you I appreciate your response. My 3 & 4 year old sons are learning from you as well. Little gentlemen of the future. Peace.

Student B: Great advice

Student C: In the situation mentioned in the workplace, I wonder if it would it be preferable that the abusive co-worker should be told - not in front of other co-workers - as he then would lose face and be tempted to replicate negatively. What do you think?

Roy: I fully agree with you. In the presence of others, there is always the temptation for the abuser to retaliate and lash out at you. It is important to remain calm and composed and choose the time and place for the confrontation. However, in some cases, immediate reaction is required. This is when you really need to assert yourself. This is when it becomes necessary to choose the right words, tone of voice and body language to accentuate your disapproval.

Student D: Good conversation and Great advice(s).

9. THE ART OF INTERACTION

Criticism

It is normal that when we achieve success at work, a few of our colleagues will become jealous and negative emotions will accumulate in their system. These emotions stifle them and make them suffer and at some point they feel the irresistible urge to strike out at you in order to gain some satisfaction and compensation. They will find flaws in your achievements at work and then proceed to criticize you. Assertive people treat this kind of unjust criticism in a special way. They consider it to be a hidden compliment delivered by those who find it difficult to manage their thoughts effectively. This allows them to remain unruffled. They do not even try to defend themselves because explanations will only make jealous people feel happy.

Let me give you an example. A student of mine was promoted to the position of project manager due to her outstanding performance in several projects and the positive influence she had on other team members. This aroused the feeling of jealousy in one of her team mates, who lashed out by proclaiming that getting a promotion in the company was related to knowing the right people and not to one's expertise. My student looked at her with a smile and said, "That is an interesting way to put it" and continued working as if nothing had happened. This reaction left the sufferer suffering even more. My philosophy is simple. If you are picking on me because of your inferiority complex and your inability to manage your emotions, then I will simply stand by and allow you to eat yourself from the inside.

Another kind of criticism is destructive criticism. It usually comes from aggressive people, with a condescending attitude. Their natural inclination to use damaging remarks could be a result of their low self-esteem. If this person happens to be your boss and the feedback is substantive, then

ignore the biting remarks and tend towards making improvements. It is quite normal that you will be enraged. However, you need to be assertive enough to manage your anger. Tell yourself that you are wise enough not to allow yourself to be provoked because once you lose control, you may end up misbehaving. It is enough that the boss has a very low boiling point.

If the person providing feedback is a co-worker, then you could say, “Hey Tom. Stop! I appreciate your feedback and I agree that you may have a point there. However, I would like you to be a bit more subtle when addressing me as it spoils the atmosphere.” Do not raise your voice and when talking, use the palm down gesture to reinforce your statement. Another alternative would be to just look at the worker and remain silent. Silence will show him that you have no intention of accepting such ill behavior.

Feedback

You have noticed that one of your subordinates is falling behind with his tasks, which is hampering the progress of the other team members. In addition, the work he was able to complete is of poor quality and requires modifications. His estimation of the work effort for his project deliverables is usually alarmingly high in comparison to other workers who had worked on similar tasks. The other team members are losing their patience and tolerance as they are forced to make up for his negligence. A passive boss or worker would spend their precious time correcting his mistakes even though it irritates them. They would not bring his attention to the problem, but wait until he is not in the department and then rage over his inadequacy. The worker may eventually become the laughing stock of the department without even realizing his defects.

The aggressive boss would publicly humiliate the worker for his stupidity, for his incompetence. He would most likely use abrasive sentences like, “How could you have made such stupid mistakes? You need to think.” He would then go on to remind the worker of how lucky he was to still be working for the company as he would have difficulties getting a job elsewhere. This kind of reaction would most likely make the recipient dispirited and lower his self-esteem and consequently, his productivity.

How many times have you seen this happening at the work place? How many times did it happen to you at school? Unfortunately, it also happens at home. Remember, it is impossible to pull back the bitter words that leave your mouth. They will have a disastrous effect on the self-confidence of the recipient and destroy their positive energy. Consequently, it becomes difficult for them to improve their performance. This results in the vicious circle.

An assertive boss will clearly communicate the worker's mistakes without attacking their personal qualities. He will concentrate on how to get the worker back on the right path and do so in a calm and friendly way. He will conduct the conversation in his office to allow the worker to maintain his dignity. He will create rapport with the worker by showing that he is willing to support him in order to improve the situation. By behaving in such a manner, it becomes easier for the worker to confide in him. Maybe the worker has been going through some difficult times in his personal life or maybe the worker has been having problems to understand the requirements. Whatever the reason, only proper communication will allow you to isolate the facts, gain control of the situation and achieve a win-win result. This is what we call constructive criticism. It is usually delivered by assertive individuals, by people who are emotionally intelligent. Once you are assertive, you will be able to create an atmosphere that is conducive for top performance and people will be happy to come to work and render more services.

Managers who lack assertiveness may refrain from giving constructive feedback to their subordinates. Even though their intention is to improve the performance of their employees, they are afraid that it would annoy them, destroy the relationship and demotivate the workers. Instead of remaining passive and allowing the whole department to crumble, it would be better to use the sandwich feedback technique. In this technique, constructive feedback lies between two layers of praise, which serve as a buffer and make it easier and less painful for both parties.

Let me give you an example. Your new employee has completed a difficult task on time. However, you noticed a few flaws which were related to insufficient analysis of the requirements. In this case, the first layer of

praise would be, “Rob, you have done a great job. The screen shows both grid views and the partial search functionality is working perfectly.” This layer serves to create rapport with the worker as you have appreciated his hard work. You have just built a bridge that you will need to take him across to his mistakes. Now, you can continue with the negative part of your feedback, “I noticed that you forgot to include the additional column that was mentioned on page 14. Please check the requirements once again and implement.” The worker is still feeling good and may even apologize for the mistake because of the friendly atmosphere you have created. Now, you can apply the last layer of the sandwich, “By the way, I like the way you implemented the slide-out panel and pagination.”

The aggressive boss would most likely say, “Rob! You did not read the requirements. Look here! Where is the additional grid view column? The next time you deliver something to me, make sure you test it thoroughly.”

One of your top sales representatives tends to leave the company without asking for permission every time he is working onsite. In this case, you could let him know that you are aware of his good results and his consistency in reaching his sales target. After that, tell him that you would like him to leave work at 5 p.m. just like all other workers. At the end, add a touch of praise by telling him that you are pleased with the good relationship he has built with his customers. Some people argue that the sandwich feedback method may undermine the feedback. However, I personally consider it to be effective, especially when dealing with oversensitive workers, who are easily offended. Remember, assertiveness is the ability to get what you want without humiliating people.

10. NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION

Dress like a Winner

The key to assertiveness lies in the way you are dressed for work. Before leaving your home, make sure you look neat and tidy and your attire is suitable and in accordance with your professional environment. When you dress well, you feel good and your confidence increases. You stand, walk and talk with confidence and it becomes easier to influence others. If you are shabbily dressed, you feel shabby and will therefore find it difficult to assert yourself at the workplace. Never leave your home if you are not satisfied with the way you look and feel, as it would have a negative impact on your image and performance at work.

Let me give you an example of a teacher who paid little or no attention to his outfit. He covered his body with the same worn-out, everlasting jeans and changed his shirt every other day. His hair was permanently oily and he walked slowly and phlegmatically. In fact, his strides lacked dynamism and his feet almost never seemed to leave the surface of the ground when walking. He literally dragged himself to the classroom. Even though he was knowledgeable, he was not respected by his students and found it extremely challenging to capture their attention long enough to convey his knowledge.

Remember, no one will respect and like you if you do not respect and like yourself. No one will listen to you if your physical appearance denotes insecurity and carelessness. Carry yourself with class and the people with whom you work will notice it and treat you accordingly. If you are conducting a meeting or a presentation, then it would be wise to be immaculately dressed as this makes you look smart and feel smart. An eighteen-year old student of mine once told me that when she was dressed elegantly, she felt that she was able to conquer whatever obstacles appeared along her path. She was appealingly graceful and was always chosen to represent her school in inter-school debate competitions. Her

attire made her feel indomitable, assertive and this is what cemented the way to a successful future. Today, she is the executive director of an international corporation.

One more thing, learn to cherish your physical assets and accept the defects that you cannot change. Once you do so, you begin to like yourself and feel good with yourself. This will boost your self-esteem and you will walk tall. People who moan over their so called physical defects will find it difficult to maintain a confident and positive state of mind. They leave home with so many negative thoughts in their minds. They are too old or too young. They have a wrinkle or dimple in the wrong place. The nose is too big or the lips are too small. They talk openly about their so-called defects and hence draw people's attention. If you keep telling others that you have a big nose, they will eventually believe you and perceive you as the person with the big nose. If you repel yourself from yourself, then you automatically repel others from you and it therefore becomes difficult to influence them. If you hate yourself, you become passive or aggressive.

Body Language 1

I think we all remember how our parents, grandparents and teachers reacted whenever we happened to lower our heads, slouch our shoulders, hunch our backs and walk sluggishly. They became angry and scolded us because we looked like losers. We gave the impression of aimlessness. We were weak and insignificant and would therefore find it hard to attract and influence others. In order to assert yourself at work, you need to look confident and feel confident and this comes when you adopt the right posture and the right walk. Stand up straight, push your shoulders back, raise your chin and make large, energetic strides that show you have a mission to fulfil. People who scurry or creep give the perception that they are insecure, unworthy and will therefore be ignored or treated with disrespect. Let your eyes look straight ahead when walking and when you stop to converse, make sure you maintain as much eye contact as possible. This shows that you are strong, confident and trustworthy. I personally maintain eye contact for over 80% of the interaction with others. This is why people find it easier to confide in me and are willing to listen and

cooperate with me. Your eyes can be used as a tool to boost your assertiveness at work, so use them to your advantage. When you avert your eyes too often, you come across as being insecure, insincere. This will trigger the feeling of suspicion and people become less receptive to your message.

When you greet the other stakeholders at work, make sure you use the manly or vertical handshake as it conveys strength and self-assurance and shows your willingness to build rapport. If you have a dead fish or limp handshake, then regardless of its reason, you will be perceived as being insecure, two-faced, unreliable or lacking character. This will automatically evoke the feeling of repulsion, distaste and disrespect in your customers and co-workers.

Hand clamminess will also repel others and hence make it difficult for you to assert yourself. It could be a medical deviation that is caused by hyperthyroidism and will therefore require diagnosis and appropriate treatment. However, hand clamminess may occur when you are about to encounter a difficult, exceptional or stressful situation at work. It could be an interaction with key customers or an important meeting with upper management. As soon as they make contact with your clammy hand during the handshake, they will realize that you are nervous, intimidated by their presence. Unfortunately, this will create a negative first impression as no one wants to touch a clammy hand. Consequently, your chances of being assertive during the conversation will decrease.

In order to counteract clamminess, it is advisable to mentally prepare yourself before the encounter. You have gathered and validated all the facts related to the meeting, so all you need to do is prepare yourself mentally for the interaction. Simply create a picture in your mind's eye of yourself conveying your message with conviction and confidence to the group of executives. Turn this picture over and over in your mind as many times as possible before the meeting so as to allow your brain to get acquainted with the situation. On the day of the meeting, your brain will trigger the right verbal and non-verbal language and make it easier for you to be in command of the meeting.

Body Language 2

In order to boost your assertiveness, it is important to show people that you are open, sincere and willing to cooperate. This can be achieved by spreading your arms and showing your palms during the conversation. Do not fold your arms as you would be sending a subliminal message that you are inaccessible or insecure or in disagreement. Now, I am not saying that you should not disagree with others. Communicating in an assertive way means that you should listen to other people's argument, show them that you understand their point of view and then express your opinion with your arms open and your palms facing up. By doing so, you are paving the way for constructive discussion and increasing your chance of being listened to by others. Remember, listen and you will be listened to, open your arms and others will feel invited.

People who lie or feel intimidated have the tendency to move their hands to different regions of their face. They may rub the area below their eyes. They may rub or pull their earlobes or their fingers may make a hovering movement around their mouths. This is why we should try to keep our hands away from our face at all cost. You see, even though you may not be lying, the interlocutor may subconsciously feel that something was wrong and this would trigger the feeling of discomfort during the conversation. When others are suspicious, it becomes difficult to assert yourself and exert influence.

Some people have the habit of putting their hands in their pockets during the conversation. It could mean that they are easy going. However, it denotes an air of smugness, indifference, arrogance and this may serve to repel others. It simply does not behoove you to keep your hand or hands in your pocket when greeting someone or when you are engaged in a discussion. In addition, when you hide your hands, people feel that you are hiding something or holding back important facts. It may also show that you are shy or insecure and this will surely have a negative impact on your assertiveness. People are most likely to be unreceptive when interacting with those who hide their hands.

Body Language 3

There is one more important body language that should be taken into consideration when trying to assert yourself during the interaction. It is the body angle. This is what reveals your real thoughts, your real emotions. If you want to attract people's attention and get them to listen and cooperate with you, then you need to acknowledge their presence during the conversation and show your involvement by turning your head, upper body, legs and feet towards them. This is the position that will draw people's attention and make them more open-minded. If you are still looking at your interlocutor, but your body, legs and feet are turned elsewhere, it means that you would prefer to be elsewhere. They will subconsciously pick up the non-verbal signals and feel neglected and you have just earned yourself an enemy.

If three people are participating in the talk, the assertive individual will make sure they form an equilateral triangle between all parties so that no one feels left out. If they are all seated, then special attention should be taken when crossing the legs. This is because the leg on top is usually directed to the person in whom you are more interested. Ideally, it would be better not to cross the legs. Remember, your body is managed by the brain, so it will express what you will not verbalize. Show people the respect they deserve during your interaction and you will become likeable. When you are likeable, you are able to get what you want without abusing the rights of others.

One last point, mirror their body language during the conversation and you will create rapport and assert yourself. Open your arms when they open their arms. Gesticulate when they gesticulate. Reach out for your coffee when they do so. By mirroring another person, the assertive individual shows that there is mutual understanding between them. It is like being engaged in a dance, where you all move in accordance. When mirroring others, it is important to use your judgement. If you are discussing your promotion with your boss and he suddenly sits back in his chair and clasps

his hands behind his head, you should not emulate him or you will be in trouble.

11. HOW TO GET A PAY RAISE

Pay Raise

In this section, I will show you how to be assertive during salary negotiations. This is actually quite a wide topic, however, I will discuss the topic in a nutshell so as to give you a general understanding of how assertiveness can be helpful when asking for a pay raise.

Asking for a pay raise is still considered to be one of the most stressful things at work. This is because workers are afraid that they may be perceived as being too arrogant and egotistic. Assertive people are not worried about how they will be perceived because it is natural for them to strive towards getting what they truly deserve. They will not burst into the boss's office without making an appointment and they will certainly let the boss know the agenda of the meeting. They will choose a time that is conducive for such discussions and will therefore make their move only when the company is going through a prospering period. And of course, they will be immaculately dressed for the salary discussion.

During the salary discussion, they talk freely and honestly about their strengths, their achievements, as well as the goals for the future. They define their value to the company without being too conceited. When they talk, they maintain eye contact and spread their arms to show their palms and in this way show their strength, confidence and trustworthiness. Only after talking about their achievements will they mention how much they would like to earn.

If they succeed in getting a higher salary, they will express their gratitude to the boss for taking the time to talk to them and for being considerate. This approach serves to strengthen the boss's conviction that he had made a good decision. As trivial as it may sound, thanking someone for a good deed leaves a lasting impression that may make a difference in the future.

However, the thank you must be reinforced with the reasons for your gratefulness, as it carries a profound meaning.

When you walk into your boss's office with your pitch, you also need to be prepared to react in the case of a negative outcome. Your boss may say that he is unable to give you a raise at the moment and that you will have to wait another six months. He may even be polite enough to say that your performance has been good enough for him to review your salary in the future. The aggressive worker loses his temper and states that he would be able to earn by far more in another company and that he would be treated better elsewhere. After the outburst, he may walk angrily out of the office. He will go on to defame the boss in the presence of other workers. As the aggressive individual finds it hard to control their emotions, they will lash out at innocent people in the office just to feel better.

The passive worker may feel disappointed, but at the same time embarrassed. They will avoid eye contact with the boss and accept his decision. They will go back to their office with the feeling of dejection and try to hide their embarrassment. However, when they return home, back to their comfort zone, they will spend the next few days complaining about their unfair boss until their brain gets accustomed to the rejection. Approaching the boss a second time will be out of the question.

Assertive workers will remain unruffled. They will maintain eye contact and ask the boss what areas they should work on in order to improve their performance. They may even discuss future goals with the boss to make sure they are moving in the right direction. At the end of the conversation, they will thank the boss for both his time and advice and ask him when it would be possible to revisit their salary request. They may even go one step further to send a follow up email to the boss informing him that it had been a constructive and inspirational discussion and that they would ask for another discussion in six months, as the boss had mentioned. By respecting the boss's decision, assertive people show their maturity, professionalism and commitment to the company. This will surely pave the way for the next salary discussion. What is the moral? Do not burn the rungs that will take you up the ladder.

SECTION 3

ASSERTIVENESS LIFE EXAMPLES

12. LIFE EXAMPLES

The Clothing Security Tag

As an anti-theft measure, stores tag certain items with tags that will set off an alarm if they still happen to be on the items you have purchased when you leave the store. In my case, the alarm did not go off and I left the store without even realizing that the tags had not been removed. Only when I was about to put on the underwear did I notice the tags staring wickedly at me. I returned to the store and at the customer service, I asked to speak to the manager with a decisive tone of voice. I then explained to her what had happened and punctuated how embarrassing it would have been for me if the alarm had gone off when I was leaving the shop. I would have been subjected to security control, which would have surely defamed me. I also pointed out that I had to travel 24 miles altogether to make my complaint. The manager immediately removed the tags from the underwear, gave me a shopping voucher and a bottle of wine to compensate for the inconvenience caused.

The Danube River Cruise

A few months ago, I travelled to Budapest with my family for a weekend getaway. I booked a cruise one day before the sightseeing tour along the Danube River as I knew that it would be difficult the next day to get a place on the boat. As we were about to board the boat we were told that our tickets were not valid as they were booked for the following day. I summoned the captain and explained that when I am booking a boat cruise, I simply pay the fee and do not waste my precious time to make sure that the ticket seller had inserted the correct date. I stated assertively, “Today is yesterday’s tomorrow. I booked my ticket yesterday for

tomorrow, which means that I booked the right ticket.” When he realized that I had no intention of giving in, he went aboard and had three additional seats prepared for us. It was inconvenient for them, but they complied because I was assertive. Mind you, I did not raise my voice nor did I behave outrageously. I remained calm, maintained eye contact, kept a confident posture and behaved in a decisive manner. As a last resort, my return flight schedule back home was on my phone to prove to him that I was right. However, it was not needed. Had I been passive, I would have had to forget about that cruise and I may not have been given a refund. Had I been aggressive, I would have probably evoked aggression and ended up in the same situation. Naturally, I chose to be assertive. I got what I wanted and rightfully deserved and was treated very well during the cruise.

Stale Meat

After returning home from shopping, my wife realized that the packed cold cuts she had bought were stale and an unpleasant smell of rotten meat was slowly contaminating the atmosphere in the kitchen. I drove back to the shop and requested to speak to the manager. The surly looking shop assistant tried to intimidate me by asking roughly why I wanted to see the manager. I looked at her straight in the eyes, open the plastic bag with the rotten meat, looked around at the other customers and said calmly, “Are you sure you want me to tell you the reason why I came back to the shop, here, right outside here, in public?” She immediately hustled off to summon the manager. The manager who approached me was as incompetent as his worker and asked me exactly the same question in public. I once again opened my plastic bag and repeated exactly what I had said before. By this time the stench had permeated the air. He picked up the message and the smell right away and invited me to his office. In his office, I was calm but strong and confident and expressed myself clearly and I emitted the right non-verbal signals to back me up. I pointed out firmly the medical consequences of consuming spoiled meat and told him how I felt as a customer for being treated that way. He offered to give me fresher cold cuts, but my body language told him that I was unwilling to trust him. In the end, he gave me a full refund and a bottle of wine as

compensation for the inconvenience caused. Passive people would not even bother to go back to the shop to make a complaint. Aggressive people would demand their rights loudly and viciously. Assertive people would react and make them get rid of the contaminated meat before it was sold to other customers. This is exactly what I did. I believe that if we want to change something in this world, we need to get involved. That day, both the manager and his worker learnt a lesson, a lesson of how to react when a customer wants to make a complaint.

Unpunctuality

I walked into a company one day, went to my room and waited for my student to attend self-improvement training. The session was scheduled for 45 minutes. My student, who at that time was the director of marketing came in fifteen minutes late. She apologized cordially and told me that due to urgent matters she had completely forgotten about our meeting. She then went on to ask me whether it would be possible for me to ask the receptionist to call her whenever she failed to turn up on time. It was a simple request, especially considering that my room was next to the reception desk. However, I refused politely and explained to her that it was her responsibility to remember when she should be having training sessions. My exact words were, “I’m sorry, but it is your responsibility to remember when you would be meeting me.” My arms were open, my palms exposed and there was a genuine smile of amusement on my face. She tried one more time by explaining that she usually forgot about other appointments whenever she had to deal with urgent and critical issues. I empathized with her, told her that I understood that she would have such difficult situations at work and then repeated my initial statement, “I’m sorry, but it is your responsibility to remember when you would be meeting me.” I did not raise my voice. In fact, I was calm and sincere. Eventually, she smiled and gave up and I proceeded with my training session minus twenty minutes as it took me five minutes to assert myself plus the fifteen minutes she was late. Did she become antagonistic towards me? Of course not. In fact, I noticed the deference that crept into her eyes when I asserted myself. Had I succumbed, she would have used that

against me. Had I been aggressive, she would have retaliated and resigned from the self-improvement course.

Tasteless Food

You are in a restaurant and the food you ordered is undercooked and the service is unprofessional. Passive people would stifle their anger, make a heroic attempt to consume the meal, leave without any complaints and stay away from the restaurant in the future. The aggressive diner would rage and abuse the waiter for the poor service and refuse to pay. In my opinion, the best reaction would be to summon the manager as soon as you start eating and calmly explain the reason for your disappointment. Look him in the eyes, adopt a confident posture and let him know that you will not be able to pay for a meal that you have hardly consumed. Even if he offers you another meal, do not accept as you never know what the cook or waiter would add in the next meal just to show their disapproval.

Saying ‘No’ to the Boss

Your resources are working additional hours to reach an important deadline. Your boss phones you because he needs to borrow one of your team members to solve an issue. Let him know that you would like to help him, but due to the urgency to meet your deadline, you are unable to comply. He will surely understand and respect you for rejecting. A passive manager would accommodate just to please the boss and then spend their time worrying how to make up for the lost time.

The Whiner

You are waiting in the line at the outpatients’ clinic and one of the patients is complaining angrily about how much time he is forced to wait to see the doctor. He criticizes the nurses and the whole medical system. From time to time he will try to capture your eyes, seeking reinforcement and approval. The best reaction in this case is no reaction or just non-verbally show your disapproval by folding your arms and remaining impassive.

Difficult Question

After your presentation, one of the attendees asks you a question and you do not know the answer. Unfortunately, your boss is a part of the audience and is observing you attentively. Some presenters will concoct an answer, hoping to satisfy the intruder and quickly move on to another question. Unfortunately, their accompanying non-verbal signals will give them away and make them incredible. Assertive communicators will thank the participant for asking a good, substantive question, let them know that the subject requires further research and then promise to follow up with an answer.

The ‘I’ Statement

A few years ago, I was managing a worker who had the tendency to forget about important tasks during tight periods. He was a very good specialist, but when there was a storm of issues, he simply missed some of the important ones. Passive managers would stifle their frustration and keep reminding the forgetful worker to complete his tasks. After that, they would go around the office gossiping about the worker’s weaknesses. Aggressive bosses would probably explode and say, “You are irresponsible and negligent. You are wasting my precious time because I have to keep checking whether you have done everything.”

My answer was simple and to the point, “Bob, I feel angry every time you forget to do some of your tasks because I get the impression that you expect me to remind you. I would like you to take steps to remember what you should be working on and when you should deliver.” I used I statements to state my feelings for a particular behavior and stated firmly why I felt that way. After that, I concluded with another I statement to make my expectations clear. I did not raise my voice nor did I abuse him. This is exactly what you need to do in order to assert yourself. Take

responsibility for both your feelings and judgement, and others will understand and comply.

In the past, one of my subordinates would leave work without asking for permission or simply prolong his lunch break. He thought that working online meant that he could get away with such behavior. When I called him, I simply said, “Pete, I feel irritated when I cannot connect with you during working hours and have to assign unexpected issues to other workers. I would like you to be present at work when you are supposed to be present. I would also like you to ask me in advance when you need to attend to personal matters.” Remember, use statements like, I think, I believe, I feel, as I understand, from my point of view. Do so and others will understand the seriousness of the situation.

The Broken Record Tactic

Even though you tell someone politely at work that you are unable to fulfill their request, they will keep insisting until you give in. In order to assert yourself and avoid being exploited, you should use the broken record technique. The tactic involves repeating the same sentences every time the request is repeated and depending on the situation, you can add words like: “I am sorry” or “I understand the situation” or “I value our relationship, however.”

A few years ago, a co-worker asked me to conduct a presentation for him as he would be out of the office on the day of the presentation. First of all, it was unfair to ask such a favor because I did not have enough knowledge on the topic. Even though, he was to provide the material, I knew that preparation would cost me a few precious days. The passive worker would most likely accept just to please others and maintain the friendly relationship. Afterwards, he would curse himself every day for being such a pushover.

My answer was simple, “Sorry, Jeff. I am unable to help you.” My arms were open and my palms were visible and my tone of voice was gentle and apologetic. When my colleague repeated his request once again and tried to evoke the feeling of guilt, I smiled and said calmly, “I understand your

predicament, however, I am unable to help you.” You see, I knew that he could have found a solution to the problem without burdening others. He could have put off the presentation and others would have understood him. However, for some reason, he wanted to delegate his task to me. By repeating the same sentence, I was able to keep my cool, preserve the good atmosphere and show him that I was not going to change my mind.

Should I have explained to him that it was an unreasonable request and that it would take me a lot of time to prepare for the presentation? Of course not, because he was fully aware of the inconvenience it would cause. When faced with such situations, ask yourself if you would be inconsiderate enough to delegate such duties to someone else. Once you answer that question, it will be easier for you to say no.

Personal Problem

A friend of mine noticed that one of his employees was having difficulties to concentrate at work. She had a sad expression on her face and kept leaving the office to call someone or send text messages. Her behavior was unusual as she was a diligent and conscientious worker. The passive boss would not even notice the difference in her behavior and even if he did, he would most likely refrain from taking action. The aggressive individual would tell her to get a grip on herself and focus on her work. He would go on to let her know that she should keep her private issues out of the office. Would this trigger her into action? Maybe yes. Would it make her more productive? I don't think so.

My friend reacted in a totally different way. He invited the worker to his office, said that he noticed that something was wrong and asked whether there was anything he could do to help. As he was an assertive boss, his concern was also visible in his body language. After she had relayed her story to him, he told her to take the rest of the day off and settle the problem that was haunting her. Assertive people know that they should observe the non-verbal signals that are being transmitted by others, as the body will verbalize what they would prefer to hide. In this particular situation, it was pointless to keep the distressed worker in the office just for the sake of doing so. Her present state of mind prevented

her from functioning effectively, so the most logical action was to empathize with her and give her support. The message I am sending is that bosses should try to be understanding and more flexible.

If you are troubled by a personal problem, do not be afraid to ask your boss. Remember, you do not have to reveal personal matters. Just be honest and let him know that you are going through a difficult period. If he is assertive, he will surely understand the situation. If your boss happens to be aggressive, then this is a good opportunity to practice what you have learned in this book.

A few days ago, one of my employees asked for permission to leave the office for two hours as her baby was down with flu and fever. I agreed and told her not to bother to return to work because I knew very well that she would not be able to concentrate after going through such a stressful situation. Furthermore, her baby would still have flu and fever after seeing the doctor and it would be better for her to stay at home and look after her baby. These are the times when assertive bosses show how much they care for their workers and their family. And this is what strengthens the bond at work.

Negligence

One of your workers has failed to submit his work two times in a row over the past few weeks. The aggressive boss would lash out at him publicly and fume for the next hour. The passive boss would probably complain, show his dissatisfaction and inform the worker that he had had ample time for its completion. He would not have the courage and confidence to reprimand the worker in the right way and the matter would just disappear. The assertive individual would summon the worker to his office. The mere fact that you summon someone to your office makes them realize that the situation is serious. During the conversation, the boss would calmly point out the problem and its consequences for the other members of the team and the impact it could have on the ultimate goal.

Remember, if someone fails consecutively, it is not a coincidence and steps must be taken to make them more responsible. If you fail to react, it

would mean that you accept this behavior and the worker would continue to behave like that. Consequently, other workers would feel free to emulate the negligent behavior. This could eventually lead to disorganization. An assertive approach would also be to let the worker know that they should have communicated the problem earlier instead of waiting until they had exceeded the time limit.

Now, let's take a step back and analyze how an assertive worker would behave if they realized that they couldn't reach the deadline. They would surely have the courage to admit that they had encountered a few obstacles that could cost additional time and would ask for help if necessary. By behaving honestly, they get the manager on their side. Managers prefer to get bad news early because it gives them time to jump into action and find a solution.

The Patient

When patients have to wait too long to see the doctor, some of them become irritated and may criticize the administrators, nurses and doctors. They do not stop to consider that some medical cases are more complicated and therefore require more of the doctor's time. However, when they are in the doctor's surgery, they seem to have all the time in the world. They will try to solve as many problems as possible, as well as their family problems. Getting them out of the office then becomes a challenge. The passive doctor would suppress his frustration and allow himself to be exploited. After that, he would waste more precious time to explain to the next angry patient the reason for the delay and then he would work overtime once again to satisfy everyone. Sooner or later, the passive, compliant doctor faces the burnout syndrome.

The aggressive doctor would ignore all unnecessary questions from the patients or brutally cut them short. His facial expression and other non-verbal gestures would speak for themselves. The patient will develop a distaste for the doctor and will try to avoid him in the future. Of course, such aggressive behavior is unacceptable as doctors should conduct

themselves properly and set good examples. Let me tell you how a friend of mine solves this problem and maintains a good relationship with his patients. After he has finished examining the patient and prescribing appropriate medication, the patient may want to remain in the office and discuss other topics. As he respects the next patient's time, he has devised a good technique for this situation. My friend would get out of his chair, walk around the desk and stand near the patient. The patient would automatically stand up, out of politeness. The doctor would then continue talking and walk slowly towards the door. As the doctor had created rapport earlier, the patient would follow him. The final motion would be to open the door for the patient and wish him all the best.

Please remember one more thing. Even though this is an example from the outpatients' clinic, you can use it in analogical situations at the office. Build rapport and lead them to the exit or remain passive and suffer.

Dirty Tricks

Let me tell you what happened to a student of mine, a sales director, when calling on a customer. After he had entered the office, the potential business partner greeted him cordially and asked if he would like something to drink. He smiled and said that he could do with some coffee. His host then looked at him sternly and said, "Do you think you are in a café? Do I look like a waiter?" My student was confused and mumbled a few words of apology. I know it is hard to believe in the authenticity of this incident, but it is one of the tricks that is used during negotiations. The intention is to throw the trading partner off balance, test their personality and ability to assert themselves.

In this particular situation, it was obvious that the score was 1-0 for the customer even before the negotiation match started and it had a negative impact on the final result. Even though my student was an experienced salesman, he was shocked as he had never expected to be treated like that. The negotiations lasted two hours and he had to quench his thirst with his own saliva.

After the situation, he asked me how I would have reacted. Instead of answering, I told him to role play the incident, with him playing the role of the nasty buyer and me being the sales representative. After he had repeated the biting words of his customer, I looked at him calmly, smiled and said, “That’s okay. I must have misunderstood you. So, let me present my offer.” My student was surprised by the simplicity of my assertive reaction.

Passive people would feel embarrassed, lose their composure and keep stumbling over their words during the meeting. Aggressive individuals would lose their temper, behave irrationally and miss the chance of securing the contract. Remember, when representing your company, you need to manage your emotions effectively or your company may have to pay the price for your behavior.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



**Medical Doctor, Director of Program Management
at J-SAS Software & Services, Coach, Award Winning Udemy
Instructor**

Roy Naraine graduated in the field of medicine in the year 1992. He has worked in various hospitals and outpatients' clinic. During the course of his studies, he became interested in the field of psychology. His profound knowledge of the function of the human brain allowed him to get better results when treating his patients.

For over twenty years he has been conducting self-improvement training, coaching sessions and counseling in international corporations. He has also worked as an interviewer in several companies and has been the personal adviser of many lucrative clients and company owners.

In addition, he possesses a graduate certificate in the field of project management. This knowledge, combined with his experience in the field of psychology allows him to manage software projects for a Canadian company. As the program director he manages a multi-ethnic team of IT specialists.

His yearning to make his knowledge available to everyone has driven him towards online education. Together with members of eNar Studio, he is on

his way to making this possible by launching sixteen online courses to date on Udemy platform.

Learn more about Roy Naraine at:

<http://enarstudio.com/>

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/roy-naraine-8b8b05115/>

<https://www.amazon.com/Dr.-Roy-Naraine/e/B06XRXXRJB>

One Last Thing...

If you enjoyed this book or considered it useful, I would be very grateful if you found some time to post a review on Amazon. Your feedback will allow me to make this book even better.

Thank you and all the best!