

# The Experts Teach: Assertiveness

ManageTrainLearn



Download free books at

**bookboon**.com

Manage Train Learn

# **The Experts Teach**

Assertiveness

---

The Experts Teach: Assertiveness

1<sup>st</sup> edition

© 2014 Manage Train Learn & [bookboon.com](http://bookboon.com)

ISBN 978-87-403-0767-2

# Contents

	Preface	7
1	How to Feel and Project More Confidence in Your Life by Robert Graham	8
2	Stop Being So Nice!: Customer Service Tips When People are Stressed by Jeff Mowatt	11
3	Handling Passive Aggressive Employees by Thomas Cox	14
4	Quick Assertive Communication Skills for Professionals by Joshua Uebergang	16
5	Avoiding Office Politics: How to Advance Your Career Without Bullying or Boot-licking by Jeff Mowatt	18
6	“I Don’t Know How” Is Not a Valid Excuse by Steve Pavlina	21
7	Inferiority Complex and the Self-Image by Joshua Uebergang	24

I joined MITAS because  
I wanted **real responsibility**

The Graduate Programme  
for Engineers and Geoscientists  
[www.discovermitas.com](http://www.discovermitas.com)



**Month 16**

I was a construction supervisor in the North Sea advising and helping foremen solve problems

Real work  
International opportunities  
Three work placements



 **MAERSK**

8	<b>A 2-Letter Word That's So Hard To Say by Erica Rowntree</b>	42
9	<b>What Makes You a Quiet Person? How to Overcome Passive Behavior and Communication by Joshua Uebergang</b>	44
10	<b>Free to Be Me by Steve Goodier</b>	47
11	<b>Cultivating the Positive Mindset: Using Your Best-Self Affirmation by Astrid Baumgardner</b>	49
12	<b>Hidden Gifts: What Aikido Can Teach Us about Conflict by Judy Ringer</b>	51
13	<b>Self-Esteem Bricks by Victor Antonio G.</b>	54
14	<b>Approach Anxiety by Steve Pavlina</b>	57
15	<b>Customers from Hell: Five Do's and Don'ts for Calming Cranky Customers by Jeff Mowatt</b>	67
16	<b>Nice Teams Finish Last by Thomas Cox</b>	70





17	<b>Learn to Say “No” by Colin Crouch</b>	73
18	<b>Something Only You Can Do by Steve Goodier</b>	75
19	<b>The Four Parenting Styles in Passive, Aggressive, and Assertive Behavior by Joshua Uebergang</b>	77
20	<b>Your Authentic Self – Lessons From Sex &amp; the City and Jane Austen by Astrid Baumgardner</b>	81
21	<b>Dissolving Limiting Beliefs by Steve Pavlina</b>	84
22	<b>Assertive Communication by Dennis Heath</b>	91
23	<b>Tempering Our Temper by Steve Goodier</b>	95
24	<b>Recognising a Bullying Boss by David Diamond</b>	97
25	<b>The Humility Advantage: How Less Ego Creates More Sales by Jeff Mowatt</b>	101



 Sweden  
Sverige

Linköping University –  
innovative, highly ranked,  
European

Interested in Computer Science? Kick-start your career  
with an English-taught master's degree.

→ Click here!

**li.u** LINKÖPING  
UNIVERSITY

# Preface

## Introduction to “The Experts Teach: Assertiveness”

In each of “The Experts Teach” series, we’ve gathered together some of the world’s best thinkers to share their ideas with you. Their ideas offer new, refreshing, and insightful ways to look at old themes, allowing you to discover new perspectives, develop your understanding, and change the way you think.

## Profile of Editor Eric Garner

Eric Garner is an experienced management trainer with a knack for bringing the best out of individuals and teams. Eric founded ManageTrainLearn in 1995 as a corporate training company in the UK specialising in the 20 skills that people need for professional and personal success today. Since 2002, as part of KSA Training Ltd, ManageTrainLearn has been a major player in the e-learning market. Eric has a simple mission: to turn ManageTrainLearn into the best company in the world for producing and delivering quality online management products.

## Profile of ManageTrainLearn

ManageTrainLearn is one of the top companies on the Internet for management training products, materials, and resources. Products range from training course plans to online courses, manuals to teambuilder exercises, mobile management apps to one-page skill summaries and a whole lot more. Whether you’re a manager, trainer, or learner, you’ll find just what you need at ManageTrainLearn to skyrocket your professional and personal success.

<http://www.managetrainlearn.com>

## Acknowledgements

The authors of each article in this book have given permission for us to re-publish their work and bring them to a wider audience. Unless it states to the contrary, the copyright of the article belongs to each author. Each article concludes with a bio of the author and links to their website, if available. We also publish their written reprint/publication permission with a link to the relevant web page, if available. All such permissions are valid at time of publication. If these permissions have been amended or changed without our knowledge, please email us at [eric@managetrainlearn.com](mailto:eric@managetrainlearn.com) so that we can take appropriate corrective action.

# 1 How to Feel and Project More Confidence in Your Life by Robert Graham

Every time I conduct a Sales or Public Speaking workshop, people tell me that the most important thing they could learn is to develop more confidence.

Yet it's not just during presentations that people yearn for this elusive skill. Walking into a room full of strangers at a networking event, going on a date, selling to a new prospect, addressing your boss and many other intimidating scenarios run much smoother with a healthy dose of self-confidence.

The million-dollar question is Can you develop confidence, or is your confidence level determined by nature? The answer is, though there are many people who are naturally more confident and outgoing, there are actions you can take to up your levels of self-confidence in every aspect of your life.

What is Confidence?

The dictionary says confidence is “a firm belief in one’s powers, abilities, or capacities.” The interesting thing about it is that it doesn’t pervade all aspects of your life. You may, for example, be very confident at cooking or skiing but extremely nervous about public speaking or meeting new people.

And your level of confidence isn’t necessarily related to your lack of ability. Instead it is often the result of focusing too much on the unrealistic expectations of yourself, your peers, your parents and the rest of society.

Dr. Maynard Brusman, ([www.workingresources.com](http://www.workingresources.com)), a leading consulting psychologist and executive coach, says this about building confidence:

“Confidence is essential for psychological health and happiness. Developing confidence involves discovering your core beliefs, internal self-talk including your critical voice, and core values. Increasing one’s ability to be more confident involves confronting cognitive distortions, emphasizing strengths over weaknesses, and developing skills for handling mistakes and criticisms.

The focus needs to be on developing self-compassion and a commitment to non-judgment. Failures are seen as the price of admission for success. Actively seeking challenges for personal and professional growth and experiencing success bolsters confidence.”



Why do some people have less Confidence than others?

There are many ways we sabotage ourselves, mostly on a subconscious level, with negative behaviors and thoughts.

We focus more on negatives (comments, mistakes, events) than positives

We create negative meaning out of things that are not necessarily accurate (someone looking down during your presentation could mean they are intensely listening – not drifting off)

We depend on the approval of others in order to feel good about ourselves

We put ourselves down and discount or ignore compliments

We let the past determine our future

We avoid taking risks because we fear failure

We don't expect to succeed

I once had a very intelligent young woman in my Presentation Skills workshop. When she spoke, she was so quiet, we could hardly hear her. When I asked about it, she laughed and said that she figured if she spoke quietly enough and made a mistake, nobody would hear it. And she meant it!

All day long, I worked to get her to speak louder until in her head, she felt like she was yelling. A month later, she called me excitedly to say that she had received comments from her colleagues, her family and her boyfriend on how confident she had become. And all she did was speak louder!

What can you do to gain more confidence?

The first thing to understand is that confidence is something that you create – not something that magically comes to you. The saying that perception is reality holds true in many situations. A speaker, for example, may have butterflies in his stomach when he's presenting. However, the audience often sees a smooth, confident person addressing them.

9 actions to cultivate more confidence:

1. Fake it 'til you make it. We all suffer from the "Impostor Syndrome" at times. Just pretend that you have done whatever you are doing a thousand times. People believe what they see.
2. Monitor your self-talk. You're going to have some conversation going on in your head. It might as well be a positive one.
3. Be prepared. Whether you are selling, presenting or speaking with your boss, the better prepared you are, the more relaxed and confident you'll be.
4. Keep your body language in check. Slouching, fidgeting, playing with your hair, avoiding eye contact and smiling excessively are all outward signs of a lack of confidence. Studies show that people believe what they see more than what they hear.

5. Dress for success. The world gathers information about you based on how you dress. Plus, the better you look, the better you'll feel.
6. Speak with confidence. Keep away from the dreaded "up-talking" (raising your voice at the end of each sentence so everything sounds like a question?) and "down-talking" (trailing off at the end of your sentences, giving the impression that you don't know what you are saying). For women, speaking lower and slower often conveys more seriousness.
7. Be passionate and enthusiastic. The most persuasive people are the ones that are passionate about what they say. Be less concerned with other people's reactions and more focused on conveying your conviction.
8. Take risks. Each time you do something you fear, (give a presentation, speak to a stranger, make a sales call), you gain confidence. As James Bryant Conant said, "Behold the turtle. He makes progress only when he sticks his neck out."
9. Trust yourself. The most important lesson I learned from studying Improv is to stand up in front of a group without knowing what I am going to say and trust that I'll come up with something. The more you trust yourself, the better you will do.

Confidence is like a snowball

There's no sense waiting for confidence when you can create it. If you project confidence, people will pick up on it and give you positive feedback. That feedback will make you feel more confident, enabling you to be even more sure of yourself and so forth.

Nobody put it better than the great Dale Carnegie who said, "Inaction breeds doubt and fear. Action breeds confidence and courage. If you want to conquer fear, do not sit home and think about it. Go out and get busy."

About the author

Robert Graham is the Principal of GrahamComm ([www.grahamcomm.net](http://www.grahamcomm.net)), a consulting and training company that helps clients increase their sales and deliver outstanding presentations. He can be reached at 415-652-0763 or [Robert@grahamcomm.net](mailto:Robert@grahamcomm.net).

Re-Print Conditions

We offer this article on a nonexclusive basis. You may reprint or repost this material as long as Robert Graham's name and contact information is included.

[Robert@grahamcomm.net](mailto:Robert@grahamcomm.net), 415-652-0763, [www.grahamcomm.net](http://www.grahamcomm.net).

Article source

[http://www.grahamcomm.net/articles\\_12.html](http://www.grahamcomm.net/articles_12.html)

## 2 Stop Being So Nice!: Customer Service Tips When People are Stressed by Jeff Mowatt

Let's admit it – when it comes to dealing with customers who are stressed, some jobs are easier than others. A masseuse working in a resort spa will have more pleasant customers than a lost luggage agent at a busy airport. If your customers are sitting in a chair at your hair salon, they're likely to be more relaxed than if they were sitting in an examination chair in a dental office.

That's why so many customer service training programs fall short of desired results. Over the last decade, frontline training programs have focused on enhancing customer experience. The premise is that we are now in the experience economy. Supposedly, our goal as service providers is to be friendly and upbeat. That way, we'll apparently make it more than just selling a cup of coffee; now it's an experience. Unfortunately, for many organizations this strategy backfires.

**STUDY FOR YOUR MASTER'S DEGREE  
IN THE CRADLE OF SWEDISH ENGINEERING**

Chalmers University of Technology conducts research and education in engineering and natural sciences, architecture, technology-related mathematical sciences and nautical sciences. Behind all that Chalmers accomplishes, the aim persists for contributing to a sustainable future – both nationally and globally.

Visit us on **Chalmers.se** or **Next Stop Chalmers** on facebook.

**CHALMERS**  
UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY



Click on the ad to read more

What if your customers are doing business with you more out of necessity than desire? What if your customers are tired, rushed, or angry? When that's the case, employee perkiness is likely to be perceived as annoying. That's why, when I speak at conferences and do training programs for teams, I encourage employees to go beyond friendliness to create trust. Especially with customers who are tired, rushed or upset.

#### Little Miss Personality

Picture this...a receptionist at a walk-in medical clinic greets new arrivals with a friendly, upbeat, "Hi, how are you today?" Obviously, people enter a clinic because something is wrong. That question forces the incoming patient to reply in one of three ways: Option A) The patient essentially lies, and responds with, "Fine." In which case the customer gets the impression that the receptionist must be blissfully ignorant of why people visit a clinic. Option B) The patient responds tersely, "Not good!" Here, the receptionist begins to think she should look for a job where there aren't so many cranky people. Finally, Option C) The new arrival explains at length their medical history and everything they've tried to alleviate their suffering. That means the patient has to repeat their story to the next health care provider – and the next. Not much fun for the patient who was simply answering a direct question.

"Employee perkiness is sometimes perceived as annoying."

Better strategy – the receptionist's face shows genuine concern and compassion as the patient approaches. She makes direct eye contact and gently says, "Good afternoon." Then she raises her eyebrows waiting for the patient to volunteer what brought them in. Result? Less time, the receptionist feels better about her job and the customer gets the impression the receptionist is tuned-in to patient needs. Quite an improvement when the employee focuses more on building trust than being perky.

#### What's up, Dude?

Imagine this time a young software specialist at a phone-in help-desk receives calls from customers with computer problems. Attempting to be friendly and disarming, he addresses male customers at various points of the conversation as 'buddy', 'bro', or 'dude'. The problem with these overly familiar terms is the customer who phones-in with a computer problem likely isn't happy about the software or the company that services it. He's frustrated. He does not want to be buds with the people who have anything to do with the darn computer. He feels like the systems rep is too casual and wonders if they are actually trained. The frustrated customer is now becoming annoyed.

Better Approach – the help desk employee considers his role as being a Trusted Advisor. He isn't the customer's pal. Nor is he a mere minion in a huge faceless bureaucracy. Nor is he the customer's doorman. This time the computer specialist introduces himself at the beginning of the call with his first and last name. This implies that he considers himself to be a grown-up professional, and he's fine with being held accountable. He doesn't use overly familiar terms (buddy etc), nor does he use terms that are too formal; like sir or ma'am. He simply uses customers' names when addressing them. With this approach, the customer feels like he's getting personalized service from an accountable professional. The customer gets respect and gives it in return. He feels better about the company as a whole. And in turn the help desk rep deals with more civil customers who genuinely appreciate his expertise. Everyone wins.

#### The Bottom Line

Exceptional customer service is not always about being friendly. It is always about creating trust. The good news is by adjusting a few words and phrases, you can generate significant improvements in customer loyalty. It isn't complicated. That's why I call this approach, Influence with Ease.

#### About the author

Customer service strategist and professional speaker, Jeff Mowatt is an authority on The Art of Client Service...Influence with Ease®. For Jeff's other tips, self-study resources, and training services on establishing rapport, click <http://www.jeffmowatt.com/individual/greetingcustomers.html>

#### Reprint notice:

You are welcome to reprint them as an ongoing column or as stand alone articles. Feel free to make minor edits to customize to suit your unique needs. When reprinting, please send us a copy of your publication that includes our articles. To receive automatic updates when Jeff releases a new article, please email us directly at [info@jeffmowatt.com](mailto:info@jeffmowatt.com).

<http://www.jeffmowatt.com/articles/index.html>

#### Original article

<http://www.jeffmowatt.com/articles/sonice.html>

### 3 Handling Passive Aggressive Employees by Thomas Cox

What we label “passive aggressive” behavior in the work place is always a response to a perceived lack of safety or a lack of ability to engage more constructively.

For example, one client owned a chiropractic clinic and had to fire an assistant for her behavior. The owner went on vacation, and a brand-new office manager was struggling. This assistant passively watched this office manager making mistake after mistake – mistakes that were unsurprising with someone brand new to a role, and their boss gone – and the assistant said nothing. When confronted, she shrugged, “I didnt think it was my place to say anything.”

That reflects a lack of team spirit, clearly, and an unwillingness to speak up. However it’s the boss’ job to find good people and build a sense of teamwork. It’s also the boss’ job to let someone go when they aren’t working out.

I have other examples, yet they share a common denominator – the employee is either unable, or unwilling, to be constructive.

**TAKE THE  
RIGHT TRACK**


Give your career a head start  
by studying with us. Experience the advantages  
of our collaboration with major companies like  
**ABB, Volvo and Ericsson!**

Click here  
to learn more

Apply by  
15 January

World class  
research

[www.mdh.se](http://www.mdh.se)

  
MÄLARDALEN UNIVERSITY  
SWEDEN



“Unable” means a person who really never shows courage under any circumstances to constructively confront negative behavior or speak up to defend the firm's values. This person may be in the wrong role. Sometimes they can be coached to learn new behaviors. When that happens, they can blossom into star players.

“Unwilling” means a person who can sometimes constructively confront a problem – they are just choosing not to. This typically is caused by two things – either a desire to sabotage someone, or a fear that it's unsafe here-and-now to speak up.

For the “unwilling” the boss has to first look at his own behavior. How am I shutting down the free flow of information? In what way am I contributing to a sense of a lack of safety? This self-examination is almost always best done with outside help of some kind (a coach, spouse, consultant, or trusted colleague).

Once the boss is clearly making it safe to speak up, the next step is to gently and constructively confront that passive-aggressive employee. Make it clear that, while they are safe, their prior behavior is unacceptable, and you and the firm need them to speak up constructively and proactively. (This has been covered several times here on Tom on Leadership.)

In sum, the ball is always in the boss court:

Build a positive culture of teamwork where people want to help each other

Build a candid culture of constructive conflict and confrontation where people are always safe speaking up

Gently confront people who aren't willing to support the culture – who insist on being passive aggressive – and either work with them to upgrade their behavior, or “counsel them out” of the organization – even firing them if needed

#### About the author

Tom Cox is CEO at B-Studio Business Videos, Managing Consultant at Cox Business Consulting, Inc., and CEO at GrowthMaps

<http://tomonleadership.com/>

#### Reprint information

All of Tom Cox's articles on the Tom on Leadership site are FREE for reprinting or reposting, provided you include all original links and attribute the article to the author, and include the copyright notice.

<http://tomonleadership.com/permission-to-reprint/>

#### Article source

<http://tomonleadership.com/2011/06/29/handling-passive-aggressive-employees/>

# 4 Quick Assertive Communication Skills for Professionals by Joshua Uebergang

It is crucial in professional situations, especially with money at stake, to give other people confidence in your abilities to be stable and professional in your daily dealings. This article will give you a few quick tips for building assertive communication skills in your professional life.

Communicating in everyday life and in social situations is a great and useful skill to possess, but as you may have figured out, such skills don't take you very far in the board room or with business clients. In professional situations, you will find that the communication skills you need to master take on a decidedly more formal and pointed framework.

It is crucial in professional situations, especially with money at stake, to give other people confidence in your abilities to be stable and professional in your daily dealings. Here are a few quick tips for building assertive communication skills in your professional life.

## AVOID CONTENTIOUS TOPICS

Though small talk before an important meeting can help eliminate tensions and make everyone feel at ease, avoid at all costs topics that could be divisive, such as politics, religion, sex and crude jokes. You never know beforehand if something you say will for sure insult an important client or your boss, but you certainly will after the fact. Big professionals avoid communicating low value through subjects guaranteed to lead nowhere and create tension.

It is best, then, to avoid the obviously contentious topics outright, and attempt to mitigate your ability to be offensive. It is a simple risk:reward ratio, one that rarely ever pays off but one that most often costs you dearly.

## REMEMBER THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN BUSINESS AND SOCIAL COMMUNICATION

The biggest difference between communicating socially and communicating in the business world is that a lot more ultimately rests on the outcome of business interaction. It requires more preparation, a deeper understanding of how to impart your ideas and suggestions, and it requires a certain level of salesmanship that social interaction simply does not.

In business communication, the greatest skill to master is selling not only product, but in selling faith in your competency. Make them believe you can do the job and surely they will.

## LEARN TO WRITE PROFESSIONALLY

While mastering the written word is nearly meaningless in social situations, it is a skill that is crucial in the business world. It requires you to clearly articulate the facts and figures you need to in a direct and forthright manner, and basically to cut the wheat from the chaff. Writing is the most essential communication skill you need, and it is one that can reap the most rewards for effectively mastering it. A great business writer can exude confidence and competency simultaneously and this is critical to attaining and keeping those important clientsFind Article, or simply keeping your boss happy.

You too are now ready to communicate assertively in your profession with these easy-to-use tips.

### About the author

Joshua Uebergang of Brisbane, Queensland, Australia is more commonly known as the “Tower of Power”, Joshua is an inspiring communication skills coach, author, and speaker.

### Reprint Notice:

Any article may be reprinted and distributed with no charge in your ezine, on your website, or in your print newsletter provided

You include the article in its entirety, unchanged (website links should be in clickable hyperlinked format)

Byline, author’s statement of copyright and signature must remain intact

You notify Articles Factory of intent to publish and send a courtesy copy or link

Article source should be indicated as: Source: Free Articles from ArticlesFactory.com

### Article source:

<http://www.articlesfactory.com/articles/communication/quick-assertive-communication-skills-for-professionals.html>

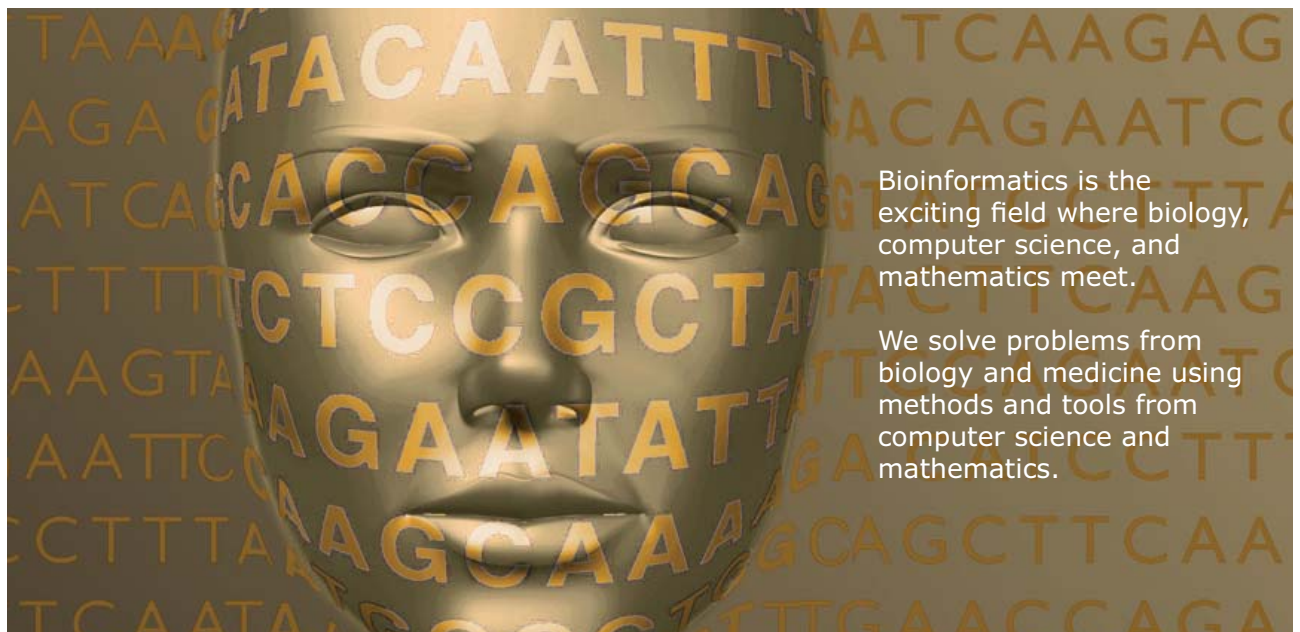
## 5 Avoiding Office Politics: How to Advance Your Career Without Bullying or Boot-licking by Jeff Mowatt

Over the 20 years that I've been advising leaders and their teams on how to enhance customer service, I've found that with proper training, customer contact workers can quickly learn to enjoy dealing with external customers – even those who are stressed. The main people who make their jobs stressful are their internal customers; their co-workers, subordinates, and supervisors. Turns out, the problem isn't usually the job itself – it's office politics. If you're not into playing politics, if you don't want to suck-up to supervisors, if you don't want to step on others to climb the ladder, here are a few questions and answers they won't tell you in the company manual.

How do I handle a colleague who is bad-mouthing me to the boss without looking like a whiner?



Develop the tools we need for Life Science  
Masters Degree in Bioinformatics



Bioinformatics is the exciting field where biology, computer science, and mathematics meet.

We solve problems from biology and medicine using methods and tools from computer science and mathematics.

Read more about this and our other international masters degree programmes at [www.uu.se/master](http://www.uu.se/master)



You don't. Or you will indeed look like a whiner. If your boss has a problem with you, he or she will bring it to your attention sooner or later. Focus on doing your job well and ignore the other person. If they write lies about what you've said or done, then you need to refute them (in writing, without exaggerating) and copy your boss on it. Stick to facts only; your opinion will only make you look desperate.

I feel awkward trying to find mentors in the office just so I can get a promotion. What's an authentic way of meeting influential people?

Join your professional association and get involved. Plumbers have plumbers associations; dog walkers have dog walking associations. They are clamoring for volunteers. You can easily distinguish yourself by showing-up, offering to serve, and being reliable. Mentors will appear. You'll develop your expertise and your professional network. Eventually, people will want you to become their mentor.

I'm older and I'm concerned I may not fit in with younger coworkers. Any suggestions?

In this case "fitting in" doesn't mean trying to become one of them. It won't work and will only make you look insecure. I've had similar questions from married employees with young families who are concerned they may not fit in with single workers who socialize after hours. It's human nature to worry about whether people like us – but it's a waste of mental energy. The real secret to being liked at work is to be reliable and deliver solid results. Treat everyone positively and respectfully. Then go home and socialize with your own family and friends.

I just got a promotion and it's awkward to delegate and discipline my colleagues who were my friends up until recently. Your advice?

You're right, it will be awkward, but that's true for any leader; whether they were buddies with the person or not. I suggest you call a meeting with your team. Openly explain that of course things will change now that you're their new boss; things would change with any new supervisor. Explain that whatever happens – good or bad with the team – it will be you as their supervisor who will now be ultimately held accountable. So, while you will ask for their input, you will make the final decision. You will also be giving each of them one-on-one feedback, both positive and areas for improvement. In turn, this role is also new to you. So you will also be asking for individual feedback from each them about ways you can improve as a supervisor. If they have concerns about your leadership, you are asking them to discuss it directly with you; not behind your back. (That won't prevent back-biting from happening, but it will make them more conscious about it when it occurs).

### Bottom line

Some reality TV programs give the impression that the only people who get ahead in their careers are those who connive, backstab, and toot their own horns. That may be true in Hollywood. It rarely works in the real world with successful organizations led by ethical people. That is the kind of place where you want to work, right? In reputable organizations, shameless self-promoters quickly wear out their welcome. Ironically, the best strategy for winning at office politics is to refuse to become embroiled in them.

### About the author

Customer service strategist and professional speaker, Jeff Mowatt is an authority on The Art of Client Service...Influence with Ease®. For Jeff's other tips, self-study resources, and training services on establishing rapport, click <http://www.jeffmowatt.com/individual/greetingcustomers.html>

### Reprint notice:

You are welcome to reprint them as an ongoing column or as stand alone articles. Feel free to make minor edits to customize to suit your unique needs. When reprinting, please send us a copy of your publication that includes our articles. To receive automatic updates when Jeff releases a new article, please email us directly at [info@jeffmowatt.com](mailto:info@jeffmowatt.com).

<http://www.jeffmowatt.com/articles/index.html>

### Original article

<http://www.jeffmowatt.com/articles/officepolitics.html>

In the past four years we have drilled

# 89,000 km

That's more than **twice** around the world.

**Who are we?**  
We are the world's largest oilfield services company<sup>1</sup>.  
Working globally—often in remote and challenging locations—we invent, design, engineer, and apply technology to help our customers find and produce oil and gas safely.

**Who are we looking for?**  
Every year, we need thousands of graduates to begin dynamic careers in the following domains:

- Engineering, Research and Operations
- Geoscience and Petrotechnical
- Commercial and Business

**What will you be?**

**Schlumberger**

careers.slb.com

<sup>1</sup>Based on Fortune 500 ranking 2011. Copyright © 2015 Schlumberger. All rights reserved.





## 6 "I Don't Know How" Is Not a Valid Excuse by Steve Pavlina

When you say something like this:

I wish I could write better, but my writing skills aren't very good.

...many intelligent, self-directed people are actually hearing this:

I wish I could write better, but I'm too lazy and undisciplined to do anything about it. I also have low self-esteem, which prevents me from believing I can correct this deficiency. You should probably avoid me and spend your time with someone more worthy.

As an adult you're responsible for your own education. If you find it deficient in some area, educate yourself into proficiency.

Many people find their early education lacking when they reach adulthood. No one really knows what knowledge and skills will be important to you later in life. So they guess and they often guess wrong.

My early education was amazing in core subjects like English, math, science, and U.S. and European history. It also did a good job of teaching service to others, self-discipline, and character building. I'm lucky to have attended 12 years of private school, where the standards and quality of instruction were significantly higher than what my public school counterparts experienced. I don't feel so lucky about all the religious nonsense that was drummed into me, but the secular subjects were taught in top-notch fashion.

As good as it was, my formal education was seriously lacking in other areas like computer programming, psychology, interpersonal communication, public speaking, how to set and achieve goals, how to build courage, and how to build and run a successful business.

Much of the technology I use today didn't exist when I was in school. The first time I used the Internet was when I started college, and that was in the pre-Web days. I certainly didn't learn how to make a website or build an Internet business while I was in school.

In order to achieve my goals in life, I had to fill in many gaps in my formal education. This required a disciplined approach to self-education. To this day I maintain this same discipline. I regularly identify gaps in my knowledge and skills that could hold me back from achieving my goals. Then I set educational goals to fill in those gaps, and I work step by step to achieve those goals. Usually this involves a combination of reading, connecting with experts and learning from them, and my own experimentation.

Never whine about your lack of skills or your weak education. Never use a lack of know-how as an excuse for not being able to achieve a goal. That's low class behavior, and it surely won't help. It's also a great way to repel successful people from your life. One of my friends refers to such irresponsible loser types as plankton. That's not a particularly compassionate label, but nor is "I don't know how" a particularly good reason for failure.

You may feel deficient in some areas. That's normal. If you feel your schooling didn't do a very good job, that's a shame, but it is what it is.

If you don't know how, learn how. Use that fancy brain that learned how to walk, talk, and read. It's still capable of further learning, is it not? Of course it is!

If you're going to get anywhere in life, you must assume 100% responsibility for your ongoing education. Maybe your parents and the school system got you off to a good start. Maybe they didn't. Whatever happened in that regard, the past is the past. You must now look to the future. Whatever you didn't learn back then, you can start learning today. A few years from now, you can have the equivalent of a Ph.D in a subject you never studied before. You can master a new language. You can become an expert on a subject in which you're merely a novice today.

Using "I don't know how" as an excuse is truly pathetic today. In the information age where you can begin searching for such answers in seconds, this tired excuse only makes you look foolish, lazy, and unworthy of success. Even young children wouldn't be stopped by such a phony obstacle.

The next time you feel inclined to say "I don't know how," say instead, "I'm learning how." At least have the sense to Google "how to \_\_\_\_." The information you need to get started is already at your fingertips.

Think about an educational deficiency you'd like to correct, and set a new educational goal right now. What exactly do you wish to learn, and how soon? Then plan out some of the steps you'll need to take. Identify books to read, courses to take, and experts to talk to. Now get to work and start learning. Start by picking one book, buying it, and reading the first chapter. No more feeble excuses!

#### About the author

Steve Pavlina (born April 14, 1971) is an American self-help author, motivational speaker and entrepreneur. He is the author of the web site [stevepavlina.com](http://stevepavlina.com) and the book *Personal Development for Smart People*. Pavlina's blog covers topics such as personal development and success; consciousness and courage; productivity, motivation and goal setting; career, wealth and business; and spirituality. (Wikipedia)

## Reprint Notice

On December 15, 2010, Steve Pavlina released all the content he had created till that date (excluding his book Personal Development For Smart People) and all content he would create in the future (unless explicitly specified) in the public domain.

See his "Uncopyright notice":

<http://www.stevepavlina.com/blog/2010/12/releasing-my-copyrights/>

Original resource:

<http://www.stevepavlina.com/blog/2012/04/i-dont-know-how-is-not-a-valid-excuse/>



**Think Umeå. Get a Master's degree!**

- modern campus • world class research • 31 000 students
- top class teachers • ranked nr 1 by international students

**Master's programmes:**

- Architecture • Industrial Design • Science • Engineering

 **Umeå University**  
Sweden  
[www.teknat.umu.se/english](http://www.teknat.umu.se/english)



# 7 Inferiority Complex and the Self-Image by Joshua Uebergang

Mitchell walks into a room full of high-flying executives. He scans the room to see the executives dressed in expensive suits, sipping champagne, and mingling amongst each other. He feels “different” to the executives.

He feels less than the executives who are dressed in suits while he wears a basic business shirt and slacks. He poorly knows the executives and finds it hard to socialize with them making him feel even less as a person. Regardless of the superficial reason for his difference, the real problem is his inferiority complex.

What is an Inferiority Complex?

A psychologist in 1912 by the name of Alfred Alder wrote a book titled *The Neurotic Character*. His research in the book founded a popular area of psychology known as the inferiority complex, a term that describes a sense of inferiority an individual feels about oneself towards others. It revolves around social status, power, ego, and dominance. You have an inferiority complex when you feel less than people. You think other people are better than you.

An inferiority complex can arise when you experience an imagined or conditioned feeling of inferiority. For most people it is a combination of imagination and subtle conditioning. You feel inferior when an event takes place. This makes you feel less than others (conditioning aspect). Your mind (imagination aspect) blows out your understanding of the event beyond what seems reasonable to another person.

Mitchell in our example feels inferior because he thinks the executives are better. His inferiority has nothing to do with not knowing the executives, being dressed differently, or having a less prestigious job. His interpretation of the situation makes him feel below standard and creates inferiority.

The conditioning aspect in Mitchell's example is his actual differences to the executives. He is wearing different clothes to the executives and he is not “a part of the group” based on his employment status. The imagination aspect for Mitchell is his clothes fall below standards (if there was a dress code, it would be part of conditioning), the executives are better than him, the executives want nothing to do with him because of his difference, plus other irrationalities he thinks make him less of a human. The big difference between conditioning and imagination hold the answer to cure your inferiority complex.

## How Your Inferiority Started: Conditioning

“The inferiority complex is all in the mind. Simply stop thinking you’re inferior because you’re not.” That is a lie. If it were that easy, millions of people at some time would not experience feelings of inferiority. The inferiority complex is society’s psychological black plague that devours too many lives.

My main motivation for writing this article is to give you accurate information to overcome the problem based on what works. This is a collection of the most useful advice on the inferiority complex I synthesized over the years, along with specific lessons I developed to overcome my inferiority complex; unlike personal development teachers I know of who solely emphasize positiveness to overcome feelings of inferiority.

I did some brief browsing on the web to see what information was available on the inferiority complex, and most of the advice offered is harmful. “Experts” were telling people “things will get better”, “be more positive”, or “it’s not so bad”. If you have the inferiority complex and someone says similar things, you understand the massive frustration caused from the misunderstanding when someone gives you such poor advice.

Positive thinking can be nicely understood through an analogy in a Bible verse. In Luke chapter five (NKJV), Jesus was talking to complaining Pharisees. Jesus replied to them in a parable so they would be more likely to understand:

No one puts a piece from a new garment on an old one otherwise the new makes a tear, and also the piece that was taken out of the new does not match the old. And no one puts new wine into old wineskins; or else the new wine will burst the wineskins and be spilled, and the wineskins will be ruined.

The garment and the wineskins examples are what positive thinking does to our self-image. A new patch over the bad garment improves the garment a little bit, yet it is still its same old self. If new wine (positive thinking) is poured into old wineskins (your poor self-image of feeling inferior), then nothing good will result. It is a battle of willpower and what is known as creative imagination.

Positive thinking can slightly improve the situation, but in the end it usually results in frustration as your willpower becomes exhausted. Willpower results in an oscillation between the problem and an absence of the problem – failing to create a permanent solution. You cannot use self-determination to cure feelings of inferiority. Whenever willpower fights creative imagination, creative imagination is the victor. I repeat for emphasis: Your creative imagination, which consists of images and feelings, will always conquer your willpower.

From personal experience and coaching others, I know at first hand that a better self-image where you do not feel inferior cannot be achieved through positive self-talk, affirmations, and the like. It is unfortunate that people continue to teach positive self-talk to overcome feelings of inferiority. Positive self-talk is often nothing more than an attempt to live deliriously from reality, ignoring what really takes place.

#### When Doing Becomes Being – How Failure and Criticism Fuel Inferiority

Everyone has heard “you suck”. Some individuals are abused so much yet they are confident with high self-esteem. What makes high self-esteem people different to those who feel like others are better?

Primary factors of conditioning that determine whether you become inferior or rise above the circumstance is your attitude towards criticism and failure. Do not forget about the creative imagination component – the stronger influence of feeling inferior – yet criticism and failure most powerfully influence the conditioning component.

Criticism and failure will always bang at your door to success – more so as you achieve your goals. I have noticed that as readers of my newsletter (ToP Tips) and articles increase, so does the criticism. I get excited with this because I know the criticism signals achievement. Any criticism and failure has nothing to do with me – in fact, it usually has more to do with the other person.

Inferiority arises when doing becomes being.

You and I will always have our critics if we avoid mediocrity. Anyone that has achieved anything notable, sooner or later receives harsh criticism. Find a dark corner where you can hide from the world if you want to avoid criticism (but then again, you will be criticized for hiding). The Greek philosopher Aristotle said, “Criticism is something we can avoid easily by saying nothing, doing nothing, and being nothing.”

People criticize you because they either want to improve your life, desire to release their frustration, or have their own problems. Failure and criticism say nothing about you; rather, let them signal personal growth. You can take criticism as a sign of progressing in life. If I had not experienced feelings of inferiority, I would not have worked on myself and personally grown. No way would I be writing this article today. I am certain I would not teach any communication skills.

You will never eliminate criticism or failure. The conditioning aspect of inferiority will never vanish. This means to overcome the inferiority complex you cannot expect to avoid failure, dodge criticism, and achieve perfection. You must learn, move on, and maintain a goal-focused attitude to overcome an inferiority complex.



Criticism and failure will never stop as long as you pursue goals. Problems arise when you let the two burglars get a foot hold within your life. You come to feel inferior by associating criticism and failure with how you see yourself. The thieves steal valuable mental goods important to your success.

You will always do things in an inferior way to what other people can do – there is no ignoring that – but a secret to overcome your inferiority complex is to stop associating yourself with your actions. Stop letting failure and criticism form your identity. Inferiority arises when doing becomes being. When you associate what you do with yourself, actions of doing become actions of being.

A young guy gets poor results at school. He associates his grades with his intelligence – leading him to believe he is dumb. Is he really dumb because he was too lazy to study? No. A guy who gets poor results at school and does not feel inferior, dissociates himself from the result. He does not let his lack of study and effort over the school year make him feel he is the outcome.

When you feel criticism is a signal of your unworthiness, only then does it stimulate inferiority, shame, and failure. Do not take criticism personally and think of yourself as a failure. Just criticism can be used as feedback to adjust what you do on the path of your success. Criticism can actually make you thrive.



**Nido**

**Luxurious accommodation**

**Central zone 1 & 2 locations**

**Meet hundreds of international students**

**BOOK NOW and get a £100 voucher from voucherexpress**

**Nido Student Living - London**

**Visit [www.NidoStudentLiving.com/Bookboon](http://www.NidoStudentLiving.com/Bookboon) for more info.**

**+44 (0)20 3102 1060**



### The Three Factors of Criticism – Don't Let These Get You Down

The reason some people feel inferior from criticism and failure, while other people flourish, is how they react to the three components of criticism: the power of the sender, intensity, and frequency. You cannot control the three components of criticism – as is true for any conditioning aspect of inferiority – but you can control your reaction to them (the imagination component).

If you are passionate about boxing and Muhammad Ali said you are a hopeless boxer, his power and status intensifies the criticism. If his criticism was delivered in an intense outburst, the criticism would make a bigger impact on you feeling inferior as a boxer. If Ali also constantly reminded you how hopeless you are at boxing, this would stimulate further inferiority. The sender, intensity, and frequency of positive and negative messages impact how we feel about ourselves.

What matters, however, is your reaction. Think of a time when the power of the sender, intensity of the criticism, and the frequency of criticism made you feel inferior. If you can – and I suggest you do – make your selected memory one related to your current feelings of inferiority. If you are a shy person, perhaps think of a time when someone told you to stop talking because you have nothing good to say.

Once you remember one or several experiences, ask yourself these questions:

What were you thinking when the person made you feel inferior?

What emotions did you experience?

What self-talk followed the person's negative feedback?

How long did these feelings and thoughts last?

How intense were these feelings and thoughts?

The thoughts and feelings you experience after the event determine whether your inferiority grows or dies.

After answering these questions, if you reacted poorly to the negative feedback given to you in these situations, you should now be aware of how your feelings of inferiority develop. This is big. If you have the inferiority complex or know someone with it, I hope you're getting excited about this insight.

The powerful lesson to learn from this is that people's criticism and other types of negative feedback have no power over you. Events do not make you inferior – it is your reaction to the events that do. The thoughts and feelings you experience after the event determine whether your inferiority grows or dies. The conditioning aspect of inferiority partly manifests through the criticism of others – if you let it. Your reaction to the event determines how you feel about yourself.

When you believe criticism signals your unworthiness, your self-worth plummets. You train yourself to feel inferior through self-criticism. You become your worst enemy. The failed events and experiences shape your identity, making you appear a failure.

Harmful feelings trail behind harmful thoughts. You start to feel inferior. You use your creative imagination poorly to evoke images of failure, misery, shame, unworthiness, and low self-esteem. All the negative messages you accepted over time mold your self-image to make you feel inferior. You eventually believe you are inferior. That is essentially how an inferiority complex develops – through poor use of your creative imagination.

#### How Your Inferiority Grows: Creative Imagination

Animals are preprogrammed with a set of functions for survival. I am amazed at the simple yet effective preprogramming given to birds. When the season changes, some birds fly thousands of miles straight to a destination they have never visited. Birds build nests without ever attending “Nest Building 101” or taking a course in materials engineering.

Like animals, we are preprogrammed with a set of functions that enable us to survive threats, gather food, and procreate. We have one huge difference to animals: we are goal-driven. Humans have the option to select goals while animals do not have this ability. Animals are preprogrammed from birth to live a certain life. They survive and procreate. Humans are different. We can create goals and set out to achieve them with our creative imagination.

I feel this to be the greatest part of all personal development. My creative imagination is something I get excited about. It gives me the ability to literally become who I want and so yours can with you.

The creative imagination is not so much about idea generation – though it is a wonderful technique to generate ideas. Your creative imagination gives you the ability to dream goals and visualize them so vividly that your nervous system cannot tell if the visualizations is fake or reality. You make your entire body think that intense visualization from your creative imagination is realism.

People unknowingly use their creative imagination to create their inferiority complex. They create scenarios and thoughts of inferiority from their imagination.

Unfortunately, many people waste their creative imagination. It is as if they have a billion-dollar check in their wallet and they do not cash it in at the bank. In fact, it is more like they have a billion-dollar gold nugget they do not convert to cash so they are burdened with the impossibility of getting through life by carrying it around. They let this great opportunity go to complete waste. Unless you awaken this inner giant, it will lie asleep, dormant, and do nothing productive.

The first common way your creative imagination is wasted is through aimless daydreaming and fantasizing. This lets it go to complete waste. Your mind aimlessly wanders off into a fantasy that cannot be created or which you have no desire to experience.

The second common way your creative imagination is wasted is using it to create bad events in your life. This is where the inferiority complex is derived. People unknowingly use their creative imagination to create their inferiority complex. They create scenarios and thoughts of inferiority from their imagination. They imagine rejection, failure, criticism, shame, hatred, scarcity, and loneliness; instead of acceptance, lessons, love, abundance, and togetherness. A huge difference exists here in the parallels of thinking.

The images you evoke of failure, unworthiness, and shame wastefully use your creative imagination to bring further bad events into your life. If you have fear, anxiety, or worry about what others think of you, you make this common mistake and waste your creative imagination.

There are three common ways psychologists say the creative imagination is wasted contributing to an inferiority complex: napoleon complex, cultural cringe, and superiority complex. Many more ways of waste exist yet these will help you understand the problem and how to better your self-image. Though a problem may not apply to you, learn from it.

# INNOVATIVE LIKE YOU.

If you're hoping for a truly modern education, one where you're encouraged to speak your mind and to think long-term, both when it comes to your own future and the future of the planet. Then the University of Gothenburg is the place for you.

**Study a Master's programme in Gothenburg, Sweden | [www.gu.se/education](http://www.gu.se/education)**



## 1. Napoleon Complex (and a Sad Email)

A part of Alfred Alder's work of the inferiority complex developed the Napoleon complex, which is a specific feeling of inferiority about one's height. Alder named the Napoleon complex after the great military leader Napoleon Bonaparte who was said to be motivated in battle from insecurities about his height.

The images you evoke of failure, unworthiness, and shame wastefully use your creative imagination to bring further bad events into your life.

People with a Napoleon complex make up for their "inferiority" through aggressive behaviors. They feel handicapped because of their smaller stature and attempt to counter this perceived problem through aggressive behavior and a superficial layer of toughness. A smaller stature is not a true handicap as it just a perceived handicap made from the creative imagination.

Diagnosing this type of inferiority lies in identifying overcompensating behaviors from a perceived inferiority. You would have the Napoleon complex and demonstrate overcompensating behavior when you aim to put-down others who are taller than you. You would have that little extra desire to do better than those who are taller than you. You would try to make taller people look bad. The worst possible symptom of this feeling of inferiority is physically hurting taller people because of their stature. This specific Napoleon complex is derived from one's personal feeling of inferiority and fear that taller people are better than shorter persons.

I received the below email in response to an earlier version of this article from a lady who lost her son to the Napoleon complex. The email is unchanged and used with her permission:

I am married to a wonderful man and I am a mother of three beautiful teenage children. Last October 31st, my 17 year old son committed suicide. It has been the most devastating experience of my entire life. I would like to stress first of all, that our home life was not what you would consider tumultuous. We had and still have a very loving home life. I would like to share with you my son's story:

Jacob's childhood was truly an awesome experience for a typical boy. He played hard and got dirty. He and Joel (our eldest son) with help from their father would pitch tents, dig tunnels, and build forts. As Jacob grew up, it became abundantly clear that he was very concerned over his spiritual affairs. I had the opportunity to teach him in Sunday-School classes and later on in his teens I would assist in teaching Confirmation classes. He was keenly aware of the many blessings we enjoyed being a Child of God. He wanted to understand the works of our Heavenly Father. When we would pray together as a family, he was very earnest and sincere for such a young man.

When Jacob turned 13, things started to change in him. He was unusually short for his age and it bothered him tremendously. I had initially thought that the “teenage idiot gene” had kicked in because he had become very short tempered, easily agitated, and extremely defensive. Because of his stature, Jacob had developed an inferiority complex. Because he was now attending middle school, I noticed he had also developed a chip on his shoulder and would easily get in anyone’s face if they picked on him. His coping methods made me uncomfortable and we constantly tried to coach him and teach him to accept himself for the talents he had. At one point, one person asked Jacob what was he worried about...many great men in history were short. He very quickly responded with the comment, “Yeah...that is because they all had to prove themselves.” In spite of his quick wit, Jacob dealt with the day to day stress of school by becoming a ghost. He rarely spoke to many kids and kept to himself most of the day.

Jacob went into the ninth grade at High School with the same issues he had in middle school. He was embarrassed at how short he was and the chip on his shoulder seemed to get bigger. Fist fights between Jacob and his brother seemed to be increasing in frequency too. The hardest part about those sibling fights was the fact that even though Jacob was considerably smaller than Joel, he would go into the fight with absolutely no fear of getting hurt. Ninth grade was very hard for us as parents to stand by and watch our son mentally mutilate his self-esteem. No matter how hard we tried to turn that tide, he would never allow himself to be consoled.

Eventually, Jacob did become taller. By the 11th grade he had filled out into a very good looking young man. He was extremely comical and made many people laugh. However, he never truly learned to like himself. He had a hard time talking to people unless he was using humor as his shield.

Ultimately, his low self-image got the better of him and he ended his life. He was more afraid of living than he was of dying.

I cried when I read the email. Inferiority is a real emotional problem not corrected by the physical defect or positive self-talk. People return to plastic surgery not to remove physical defects, but because they have emotional defects.



## 2. Cultural Cringe (a Worldwide Problem)

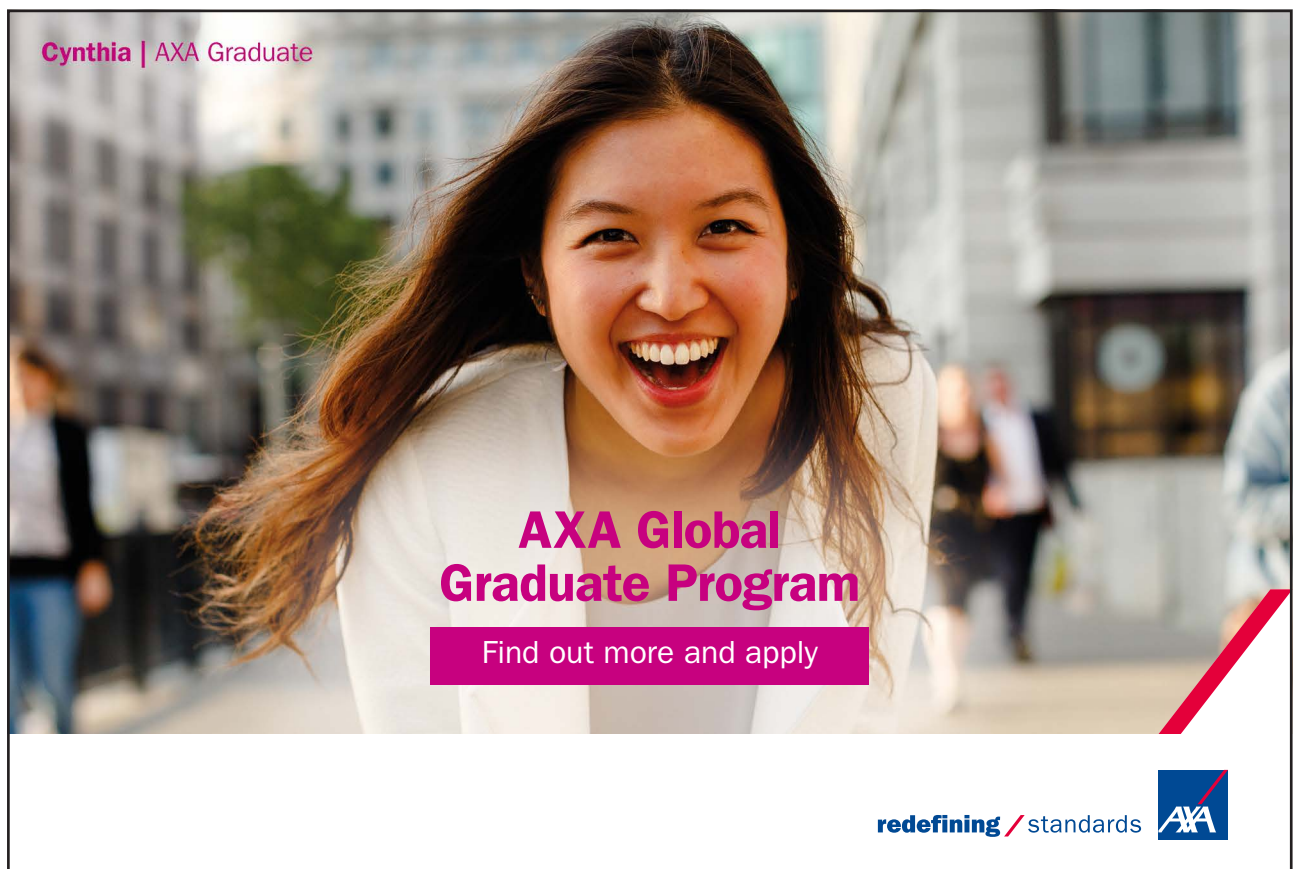
The cultural cringe is an area of the inferiority complex where people feel inferior due to their culture. Genetic appearance, pronunciation of words, or other factors of the human body vary between cultures that make the individual feel less than people in other cultures.

A few days ago I came across a lady who was experiencing the cultural cringe about her physical appearance. She had a poor self-image as she complained about the unusual features of her body. She loved how Asians looked. "If only I could look like an Asian lady," she said. Her idea that other cultures are better than hers made her feel inferior.

Feelings of inferiority damage your communication with yourself and others. The cultural cringe makes you hate certain people, cultures, situations, and events. Your subconscious will be so poisoned with imaginary beliefs that are powerful enough to destroy your happiness and relationships.

## 3. Superiority Complex (and the Biggest Myth About Fixing an Inferiority Complex)

The superiority complex is a feeling of superiority over other people. Some experts and bloggers dangerously suggest it is the solution to an inferiority complex.



**Cynthia | AXA Graduate**

**AXA Global Graduate Program**

Find out more and apply

redefining / standards AXA

Let's return to the scenario where Mitchell is in a room full of successful executives. If Mitchell had a superiority complex or attempted to feel superior, he would criticize the executives to pull down their status to feel better. Another form of the superiority complex is demonstrated when Mitchell tries to lift his status by portraying how better he is than the executives. Both of these techniques attempt to lift his status relative to the executives and fail to overcome his inferiority complex.

I was tricked to believe from books and blogs that feelings of superiority were the secret to overcome inferiority. After years of frustration, I can tell you feelings of superiority cause you more pain than what it removes.

You fail to overcome feelings of inferiority by becoming superior. You try to feel bigger, faster, smarter, wiser than peers. This only leads to frustration and inferiority. This solution is a temporary patch on a wound too big. It takes most people an experience of significant superiority, such as earning a million dollars or being popular with the opposite sex, to realize they still feel inferior.

If you try to feel superior, you still compare yourself to the false measurement stick that judged the inferior you.

If you try to feel superior, you still compare yourself to the false measurement stick that judged the inferior you. External validation is required to prove your superior self-image. If you are put out of place through ignorance or you are made to feel less superior, you attempt to grab back your non-existent podium of superiority by criticizing others and using similar behaviors to lift you status.

If a person's need to compete against another is driven from insecurity to feel superior, does a superiority complex exist? I think it does exist, but an inferiority complex can be used to explain someone with a superiority complex.

### What is Your Perception of People You Aspire To?

Everyone is superior to you in some way, but they are not superior in who they are. There is no question people are better looking, more popular, and wealthier than you. The problem is the transition from doing to being. Sufferers of the inferiority complex overcompensate for these differences.

Referring back to the Napoleon complex, most of us tend to be controlling or aggressive beyond height. All of us have our own – often strange reasons – for feeling inferior that we dare not share with anyone.

A common example of overcompensating behavior is when an attractive lady feels insulted purely because of another woman's looks. Women are very competitive in dating and can feel inferior to a more attractive lady so they criticize, tease, and display other insecure behaviors. A shallow woman tries to raise her self-esteem by being better than other women.

It disgusts me to hear both men and women pull another person down. I too often see unsuccessful, unhappy people criticize a successful, happy person. These critics are no better or inferior than the people they criticize.

What is your attitude towards people who are better than you in certain areas of your life? How do you feel towards people who are more attractive than you? How do you feel towards people who are your superiors at work? Do you feel inferior? Do you feel they are better than you? Do you need to pull them down from their podium by criticizing? Are you inspired, excited, and thrilled to see others succeed?

Take your time to think of and relive relevant experiences. Your recollections hold important understandings of your inferiority complex.

#### How to Accept Yourself No Matter How Much You Suck

A secret to overcoming the inferiority complex is accepting who you are as a person. When you accept your uniqueness, you no longer compare yourself to mystical standards. I estimate 50% of people have the inferiority complex. Our perceived standard is a joke! You are not inferior or superior to anyone nor is anyone inferior or superior to you. We are ourselves. You are you. Mitchell is Mitchell.

People say, "Just be yourself". That is awful advice. If you continue to be yourself, you continue to have poor habits, thoughts, feelings, and results.

Being yourself is different than accepting your uniqueness. A guy who knows he is unique can grow as a person and "not be himself". He accepts his uniqueness and still becomes more than he was yesterday. He becomes his best self. No matter what he does, he will always be unique. When he accepts his uniqueness, he does not compare himself to other people.

Next time you feel inferior, challenge those thoughts by investigating why you feel inferior. You will realize your comparison is based on a mystical benchmark. The people you measure yourself against are not the true measurement stick. They are not you. You are your true measurement. Compare yourself with the person you were instead of contrasting you with other people. Neuro-linguistic programming calls this technique a "self-to-self comparison".

If you are shy in conversations, do not compare yourself to the extrovert, blabbermouth, social butterfly. Compare your present shyness to your shyness one month ago. Get satisfaction from knowing you're becoming a better person. Many variables make you unique – your family, friends, co-workers, upbringing – the list goes on. It is foolish to compare yourself to others.

You can enjoy your journey of personal development without realizing your ultimate goal by seeing progression in bettering yourself. When you make your past the benchmark, you begin to heal. (Read Anthony Robbins' *Awaken the Giant Within* to learn more about enjoying your journey. Robbins teaches you how to adjust your values so you become happier and self-motivated on your journey instead of relying on an end result to be happy.)

### Self-Image: The Human Thermostat

The core secret to overcome your inferiority complex is changing your self-image. The self-image is how you perceive yourself. It is a mental picture of who you are. It does not have to be truth as you have seen in the inferiority complex where you are not inferior. The self-image is your image of yourself.



**Scholarships**

**Open your mind to new opportunities**

With 31,000 students, Linnaeus University is one of the larger universities in Sweden. We are a modern university, known for our strong international profile. Every year more than 1,600 international students from all over the world choose to enjoy the friendly atmosphere and active student life at Linnaeus University. Welcome to join us!

**Linnaeus University**  
Sweden

**Lnu.se**

**Bachelor programmes in**  
*Business & Economics | Computer Science/IT | Design | Mathematics*

**Master programmes in**  
*Business & Economics | Behavioural Sciences | Computer Science/IT | Cultural Studies & Social Sciences | Design | Mathematics | Natural Sciences | Technology & Engineering*

**Summer Academy courses**

The great Dr. Maxwell Maltz, author of *Psycho-cybernetics*, was a plastic surgeon in the mid-1900s. He operated on many individuals who felt inferior due to their “unusual” looks. Most of the individuals did not look unusual; it was their self-image that blew their looks out of proportion. They had used their creative imagination to create a dangerous false image of their physical appearance.

Dr. Maltz operated on many who despite successful plastic surgery remained feeling inferior. They returned to him requesting more surgery as they sought to look like famous individuals. He would again operate on them only to have the clients still dissatisfied with their appearance.

For some of his patients, this was not the case. Some individuals’ feeling of inferiority disappeared after plastic surgery while others even had their emotional scars cured without ever going under the knife. This made Dr. Maltz curious. Why did some people with healed “outer scars” like facial deformations that were successfully operated on still have “inner scars” of inferiority? From his research emerged modern self-help psychology. He is the founder of visualization, creative imagination, self-talk, and changing the self-image.

Your self-image... controls what you can and cannot do. If you see yourself as inferior to others, this self-image ensures you remain inferior.

Dr. Maltz discovered that each hurtful word, thought, and experience over a person’s lifetime accumulated to form a poor self-image. He began to teach people how their self-image was shaped and how they can be more careful with their own words in shaping another person’s self-image. What mattered most was what he called the “creative imagination” that contained the self-image. He discovered a person’s creative imagination shaped one’s self-image to determine feelings of inferiority. We have been working on yours throughout the article.

Your self-image has tremendous powers. Your self-image controls what you can achieve. It controls what you can and cannot do. If you see yourself as inferior to others, this self-image ensures you remain inferior. No amount of positive thinking, willpower, or self-determination cures a feeling of inferiority when an inferior self-image exists. Dr. Maltz in *The New Psycho-cybernetics*, profoundly explains the power of the self-image to shape our behavior and achieve what we desire:

The self-image controls what you can and cannot accomplish, what is difficult or easy for you, even how others respond to you just as certainly and scientifically as a thermostat controls the temperature in your home. Specifically, all your actions, feelings, behavior, even your abilities, are always consistent with this self-image. Note the word: always. In short, you will ‘act like’ the sort of person you conceive yourself to be.

A person that weighs 250 pounds can drop to 210 pounds through willpower and determination. If the weight-loss took place out of willpower, however, the person will return to his true self-image weight of 250 pounds. You can decrease the girth of your stomach through grunt force, but if your self-image has not adjusted to your new weight, your old weight will return. The room temperature can fluctuate a few degrees depending on who enters and leaves the room, yet the thermostat always returns the room to its set temperature. (For more discoveries on this fluctuating problem, read this article titled “Why Problem Solving Doesn’t Solve the Problem and the Real Solution to Permanent Change”.)

The same rule holds true to become more muscular. If your self-image is a thin-body, you will have a tough time packing on muscle. Arnold Schwarzenegger at 15-years was thin. What set him apart from other bodybuilders was his self-image. He would visualize his new muscular body each time he performed a rep at the gym while other bodybuilders would fantasize over bikini models. In 1980, Schwarzenegger claimed his seventh Mr. Olympia title and become the icon of bodybuilders.

A person that aims to lose weight through willpower uses forward goal-setting. If you use forward goal-setting, where you set a goal to achieve and work towards it, you will fail. As I have repeatedly said, positive willpower cannot overcome a negative creative imagination. Your creative imagination will always win.

Apply this to other areas of your life. Stop trying to use willpower to overcome your inferiority complex or to achieve some other goal. It cannot be done for permanent results. What you need to do for all your goals is use backward goal-setting where you set a goal to achieve and begin doing the things now that you would do upon achieving that goal.

To do this you need to awaken your creative imagination by immersing yourself in an imaginary environment where you achieved your goal. Your aim is to visualize yourself immersed in an environment so real that it feels like you achieved it.

I will run through a complete exercise you can do right now to overcome your inferiority complex. You are to primarily rely on this technique to overcome feelings of inferiority. When the technique is used over time on a frequent basis, your inferiority complex will evaporate.

#### Exercise to Cure Your Inferiority Complex and Boost Your Self-Image

The exercise is an intense visualization. The nervous system cannot tell a real event from a fake event. Studies have repeatedly shown that when we visualize, the body experiences physiological responses that mimic action. The mirror neurons in the premotor cortex of the brain become activated from visualizations in the same manner as doing the action.



This is not the exercise, but imagine you are in a real fight. Hear the yelling, swearing, and abuse. Feel the air. Taste the blood. See the people gather around you. Look at your angry opponent. By immersing yourself in the environment your physiology will appropriately respond. Your body will release doses of adrenaline as your heart rate increases along with a heightened awareness. The more real your visualization is, the more your body responds as if it were a real experience.

To demonstrate the exercise I encourage you to use on a daily basis, I will walk you through what I would do in Mitchell's situation.

### Cognitive Behavioral Therapy

Cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) is a form of therapy fast becoming popular for its effectiveness. CBT acknowledges a person's feelings and reactions originate from his or her thoughts. The therapy can systematically break down your thoughts, feelings, and images so they empower you. There are thousands of qualified CBT therapists who can help you overcome an inferiority complex.

An advertisement for SKF. It features a woman with long dark hair smiling in the foreground. In the background, a large white wind turbine is visible against a blue sky. The text 'Brain power' is written in large white letters on the left. On the right, there is a block of text about wind energy and SKF's role. At the bottom left, there is a call to action to visit the SKF website. The SKF logo is in the bottom right corner.

Brain power

By 2020, wind could provide one-tenth of our planet's electricity needs. Already today, SKF's innovative know-how is crucial to running a large proportion of the world's wind turbines.

Up to 25 % of the generating costs relate to maintenance. These can be reduced dramatically thanks to our systems for on-line condition monitoring and automatic lubrication. We help make it more economical to create cleaner, cheaper energy out of thin air.

By sharing our experience, expertise, and creativity, industries can boost performance beyond expectations. Therefore we need the best employees who can meet this challenge!

The Power of Knowledge Engineering

Plug into The Power of Knowledge Engineering.  
Visit us at [www.skf.com/knowledge](http://www.skf.com/knowledge)

**SKF**

I firstly slow down my breathing. Notice present tensions in my body and make a conscious decision to relax that part of the body. Next, I visualize myself walking confidently into the room full of executives. Shoulders are back, posture is erect, neck is straight, and my strides are slow. I make strong eye contact when others look at me. I smell the champagne and hear the chatter and smile at hearing the occasional loud laugh. I see the gray walls and people's black shoes.

I feel the wrinkles around my mouth as I smile when greeting an executive. I feel a person's hand as I give them a firm handshake. People are warming up to me as I communicate complete comfort with myself. I am poised. I love myself and have no need to compare myself to other's standards. I am proud in knowing that I am becoming a better person. I am a unique individual.

That is a brief example of what I would feel and see in my mind's eye. I encourage you to go into more depth. Create more details. Visualize what it is like to not worry what people think of you. Smell the air and touch the surfaces that are around the non-inferior you. Thorough details are extremely important. Make it so vivid that it becomes real. Use your five senses: taste, touch, sight, smell, and hearing. These focused visualizations will give you a new self-image.

Run through constructive visualizations every day. It may seem like a lot of effort, but this is your life we are talking about. You are important. You run through visualizations every day. The exercise has you control imagery you would otherwise waste.

I also encourage you to use positive thinking, which I earlier "bashed". Positive thinking is a valuable tool when used in conjunction with your creative imagination. Combine these two great tools together with the many other tips in this article and you will soon overcome your inferiority complex. After all, your inferiority complex developed by using these tools in a negative fashion.

You will never eliminate all thoughts of inferiority because it is human nature to think the occasional demeaning thought. You do not need to feel inferior, however. The difference is whether you let the occasional thought and feeling grow.

#### About the author

Joshua Uebergang, known as the "Tower of Power", is a social skills coach, author, and owner of Australian company Tower of Power where shy guys discover how to win friends and influence people. Visit his blog and sign-up free to get conversation techniques, confidence-boosting strategies, and people-magnetic tips by email, along with blog updates, and more! Go now to [TowerOfPower.com.au](http://TowerOfPower.com.au)

**Reprint Notice:**

You're allowed to reuse the articles for your company, training manuals, newspapers, blogs, presentations, or other means. I give you permission to reprint any article written by me on TowerOfPower.com.au any number of times. Full details here:

<http://www.towerofpower.com.au/permission-to-reprint>

**Article source:**

<http://www.towerofpower.com.au/inferiority-complex-and-the-self-image#more-89>

## Trust and responsibility

NNE and Pharmaplan have joined forces to create NNE Pharmaplan, the world's leading engineering and consultancy company focused entirely on the pharma and biotech industries.

Inés Aréizaga Esteva (Spain), 25 years old  
Education: Chemical Engineer

– You have to be proactive and open-minded as a newcomer and make it clear to your colleagues what you are able to cope. The pharmaceutical field is new to me. But busy as they are, most of my colleagues find the time to teach me, and they also trust me. Even though it was a bit hard at first, I can feel over time that I am beginning to be taken seriously and that my contribution is appreciated.



NNE Pharmaplan is the world's leading engineering and consultancy company focused entirely on the pharma and biotech industries. We employ more than 1500 people worldwide and offer global reach and local knowledge along with our all-encompassing list of services.  
[nnepharmaplan.com](http://nnepharmaplan.com)

nne pharmaplan®



## 8 A 2-Letter Word That's So Hard To Say by Erica Rowntree

If, like me, you run your own business, you'll know how easy it is to take on jobs that are not really yours and that you don't have time to do.

We do it because (a) we believe we should; (b) we believe it will make others grateful; and (c) because we believe we are helping. In fact, the real reason may be none of these. We may just be unable to say that 2-letter word, "No".

Over the years, my inability to say "No" has landed me in frequent hot water: jobs that I promise to do straightaway, jobs that were far too big for me to do alone; and jobs that weren't any of my responsibility in the first place.

So, over the years, I've developed 3 preliminary rules to remind me that I really should be more assertive when responding to requests. These rules are:

1. checking whether it's really something I'm contractually obliged to do. If it's not, I think twice.
2. thinking through whether I really want to do it, or whether I'm just being nice to the other person.
3. working out whose problem it is and if it's there's not mine, believing it is better for all concerned if they work it out for themselves.

Having done this, and believing that I am entitled to say "No", I then employ a range of stock responses which include:

1. "I just don't have any room in my diary right now."
2. "I'm in the middle of several projects and can't spare the time."
3. "I've had a few things come up and I need to deal with those first."
4. "I'd rather say No than only give it half my attention."
5. "I'm really focusing on other things right now."
6. "I don't have any experience with that sort of work."
7. "I'm really not the best person to do it."

I've also recently adopted the Covey technique of saying "No". This comes from Stephen Covey who in his book "The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People", tells a story of trying to off-load some work onto a busy colleague. The colleague gently took Stephen to a wallchart on which were listed her current projects.

"Stephen," she said, "I'll do whatever you want me to do, but tell me. Which of these projects would you like me to delay or cancel?"

Stephen smiled and decided he didn't want the responsibility of interfering with his colleague's workload and went off to find a less accomplished and less assertive manager to do his work instead.

I like that. Confident. No nonsense. Kind.

I still have relapses with saying "No" and I'm still learning. And, if I still can't remember my 3 rules, my one-liners, and the Covey technique, I've one last trick up my sleeve.

I just tell them that I'm learning to be assertive with my time management and would they mind terribly much if on this occasion, for just this once, I said "No".

#### About the author

Erica Rowntree is a contributing author for ManageTrainLearn, the site that will change the way you learn forever. Download free samples of the biggest range of management and personal development materials anywhere and experience learning like you always dreamed possible; <http://www.managetrainlearn.com>

#### Reprint notice

You may reprint and re-publish all articles by Eric Garner and ManageTrainLearn freely, for personal as well as business use, as long as you do not change the substantive text, add this reprint notice, and include a link to <http://www.managetrainlearn.com>

#### Article Source:

<http://managetrainlearn.blogspot.co.uk/2009/09/2-letter-word-thats-so-hard-to-say.html>

## 9 What Makes You a Quiet Person? How to Overcome Passive Behavior and Communication by Joshua Uebergang

Knowing when and how to be assertive is a major step in developing effective communication skills. Many people struggle with this, but with this article you can learn why people are passive to begin with and how you can learn assertiveness. Read on to find out how.

I use to suffer from severe passive behavior and communication. I would not say what I wanted, escape confrontation because it was uncomfortable, dodge responsibility because I could be blamed, and generally sidestepped who I truly was as a person. I compromised my character. People interacted with a mask of behavior that protected my vulnerable self.

This e-book  
*is made with*  
**SetaPDF**





**SETASIGN**

PDF components for **PHP** developers

**[www.setasign.com](http://www.setasign.com)**





Passiveness, otherwise known as submissiveness, is the opposite to aggression. Passiveness literally means detachment and acceptance. It is acted upon rather than acts on something. Passive communication involves things such as “keeping under the radar”, “not sticking up for yourself”, saying yes when you really want to say no, and overly “selfless behaviors”. While it is different to being shy or quiet, shy or quiet individuals are often passive.

Amongst my reasons for passive behavior, is the benefits of passive behavior and communication, and why it is such a severe problem in families, the workplace, and human interactions. I want to share with you the deep reasons behind why people avoid “sticking up for themselves” and many other passive behaviors in this article. I believe once you understand this behavior, a powerful world is revealed before your eyes that would otherwise have remained hidden.

#### Adults’ Contribution to Weak Behavior

Parents, teachers, and adults in general are partly responsible for passive behavior and communication in children. At a young age – and continually in life – adults condition passive individuals to continue their submissive behavior through verbal rewards. Passive individuals receive praise for their selfless actions, keeping quiet, and not voicing their concerns.

Passive behavior literally means detachment and acceptance. It is acted upon rather than acts on something.

A bully steals a toy from a young girl who does nothing about it. An adult observing the girl tells her she is nice for not doing anything and making the bully angry. A student sits in the classroom, not answering any questions. The teacher at a parent-teacher interview says to the child’s parents that the child is nice and quiet. A young boy is asked what he wants for dinner, but his brothers and sisters interrupt him by saying what they want. The young boy then says, “I’m happy with what the others want” to which his parent praise him for compliance and selfless.

These three examples are common situations people get trained to continue passive behavior. Overtime, the person’s occasional passive behavior shapes into a stringent passive personality. Soon enough, the person doesn’t defend his space, participate, or state his desires. What may appear “nice” transforms into a severe, habitual communication and behavioral problem that sucks the life from the person and his relationships. It’s no wonder many people struggle to learn assertive communication skills.

#### About the author

Joshua Uebergang of Brisbane, Queensland, Australia is more commonly known as the “Tower of Power”, Joshua is an inspiring communication skills coach, author, and speaker.

Reprint Notice:

Any article may be reprinted and distributed with no charge in your ezine, on your website, or in your print newsletter provided

You include the article in its entirety, unchanged (website links should be in clickable hyperlinked format)

Byline, author's statement of copyright and signature must remain intact

You notify Articles Factory of intent to publish and send a courtesy copy or link

Article source should be indicated as: Source: Free Articles from ArticlesFactory.com

Article source:

<http://www.articlesfactory.com/articles/communication/what-makes-you-a-quiet-person-how-to-overcome-passive-behavior-and-communication.html>



"I studied English for 16 years but...  
...I finally learned to speak it in just six lessons"

Jane, Chinese architect

ENGLISH OUT THERE

Click to hear me talking before and after my unique course download

# 10 Free to Be Me by Steve Goodier

I like what Quentin Crisp said about social mobility: “Keeping up with the Joneses was a full-time job with my mother and father. It was not until many years later when I lived alone that I realized how much cheaper it was to drag the Joneses down to my level.”

And speaking of social mobility...two women happened to be seated next to each other on a plane and struck up an earnest conversation about their respective hometowns.

“Where I’m from,” one woman sniveled, “we place all our emphasis on breeding.”

Her new companion, unimpressed and uninterested in this yardstick for measuring the value of a person, just smiled. “We think that’s a lot of fun, too – but we do find time for other pursuits.”

Some people try to impress. They want to elevate themselves by conspicuous breeding, social standing, education and life-style. They believe that to be “well-bred, well-fed, well-read and well-wed” just may help them find some happiness (and a satisfying bit of deference from others).

These symbols have little meaning for other individuals. They care little about how people see them. The only standards which concern them are those they set themselves. The person they really want to please and impress most is the one looking back from the mirror.

I believe that, more than anyone else, these people know what it is to be free. Why? Because they’re free from what others think about them. They are free from feeling like they always have to please other people. They are not programmed to behave a certain way because others expect it.

One man I know likes to say, “Be yourself. Everybody else is already taken.” But I think that author and educator Leo Buscaglia may have said it best. “The easiest thing to be in the world is you,” he said. “The most difficult thing to be is what other people want you to be. Don’t let them put you in that position.” And that’s advice worth following.

Who decides what you will do? Who decides who you will be? Who decides what is important to you? Who sets your standards? Ultimately, who do you REALLY want to impress? Somebody else ... or yourself?

The point is this: you can’t please everybody, nor should you try. So why not be sure you at least try to please the right person? That’s REAL freedom.

### About the author

Steve Goodier holds a B.A. in anthropology and sociology (New Mexico State University) and an M.Div. degree from Emory University. He is an ordained United Methodist minister, district superintendent in the Rocky Mountain Conference UMC, and the author of numerous books about personal development, motivation, inspiration, and making needed life changes.

### Reprint Information

You may reprint these articles. Please include this information at the end: By Steve Goodier –

<http://www.LifeSupportSystem.com>

### Original resource:

<http://stevegoodier.blogspot.co.uk/2012/11/free-to-be-me.html>



# FOSS

## Sharp Minds - Bright Ideas!

Employees at FOSS Analytical A/S are living proof of the company value - First - using new inventions to make dedicated solutions for our customers. With sharp minds and cross functional teamwork, we constantly strive to develop new unique products - Would you like to join our team?

FOSS works diligently with innovation and development as basis for its growth. It is reflected in the fact that more than 200 of the 1200 employees in FOSS work with Research & Development in Scandinavia and USA. Engineers at FOSS work in production, development and marketing, within a wide range of different fields, i.e. Chemistry, Electronics, Mechanics, Software, Optics, Microbiology, Chemometrics.

**We offer**

*A challenging job in an international and innovative company that is leading in its field. You will get the opportunity to work with the most advanced technology together with highly skilled colleagues.*

*Read more about FOSS at [www.foss.dk](http://www.foss.dk) - or go directly to our student site [www.foss.dk/sharpminds](http://www.foss.dk/sharpminds) where you can learn more about your possibilities of working together with us on projects, your thesis etc.*

The Family owned FOSS group is the world leader as supplier of dedicated, high-tech analytical solutions which measure and control the quality and production of agricultural, food, pharmaceutical and chemical products. Main activities are initiated from Denmark, Sweden and USA with headquarters domiciled in Hillerød, DK. The products are marketed globally by 23 sales companies and an extensive net of distributors. In line with the corevalue to be 'First', the company intends to expand its market position.

**Dedicated Analytical Solutions**

FOSS  
Slangerupgade 69  
3400 Hillerød  
Tel. +45 70103370  
[www.foss.dk](http://www.foss.dk)



# 11 Cultivating the Positive Mindset: Using Your Best-Self Affirmation by Astrid Baumgardner

We all have a “best self”. That is the side of us that comes alive when we are in the flow, doing what we do best, feeling confident and joyful and successful. You can discover what your best self is by following this simple process.

The great thing about this affirmation of best self is that it draws on actual experience. Having the affirmation is the reminder of who you are at your best. This affirmation can be a powerful way for you to make choices to live that best self.

What are some ways to do this?

First, remember what you are like at your best and use your positive affirmation to inspire you in your work, such as in a performance, as a powerful reminder of what you are like when you are in the flow.

Second, be aware of the times that you are not at your best. What message are you giving yourself? This is the time to answer with your affirmation, the reminder of what you are like when you are at flow.

Moreover, when you are not at your best, ask yourself what it would take to be your best. You can make it a goal to improve this area and then figure out the strategies for achieving that goal.

Be sure to document your successes. Keep a journal of the times that you feel great about what you have accomplished. What did it take for you to achieve that result? Remember that the next time you are stuck!

Furthermore, your affirmation is the starting point for creating a brand that reflects you at your best and tells others the most unique and the most memorable things about you.

In addition, your affirmation can inspire you to network effortlessly and effectively so that you are sharing the best of yourself with others and remaining confident while you connect with and learn from others.

Taking charge means that you are making a choice to be positive and powerful. It also means that you see your options around how to make that choice a reality. In fact, understanding that you have options is another aspect of feeling positive and feeling that you can take charge.

In short, the choice to be your best self can help you to be confident, as well inspire you to continue working towards achieving your career vision. This spirit of confidence is an integral part of the entrepreneurial mindset, which then can serve as a motivation to seek out opportunities and take actions towards big, inspiring goals.

#### About the author

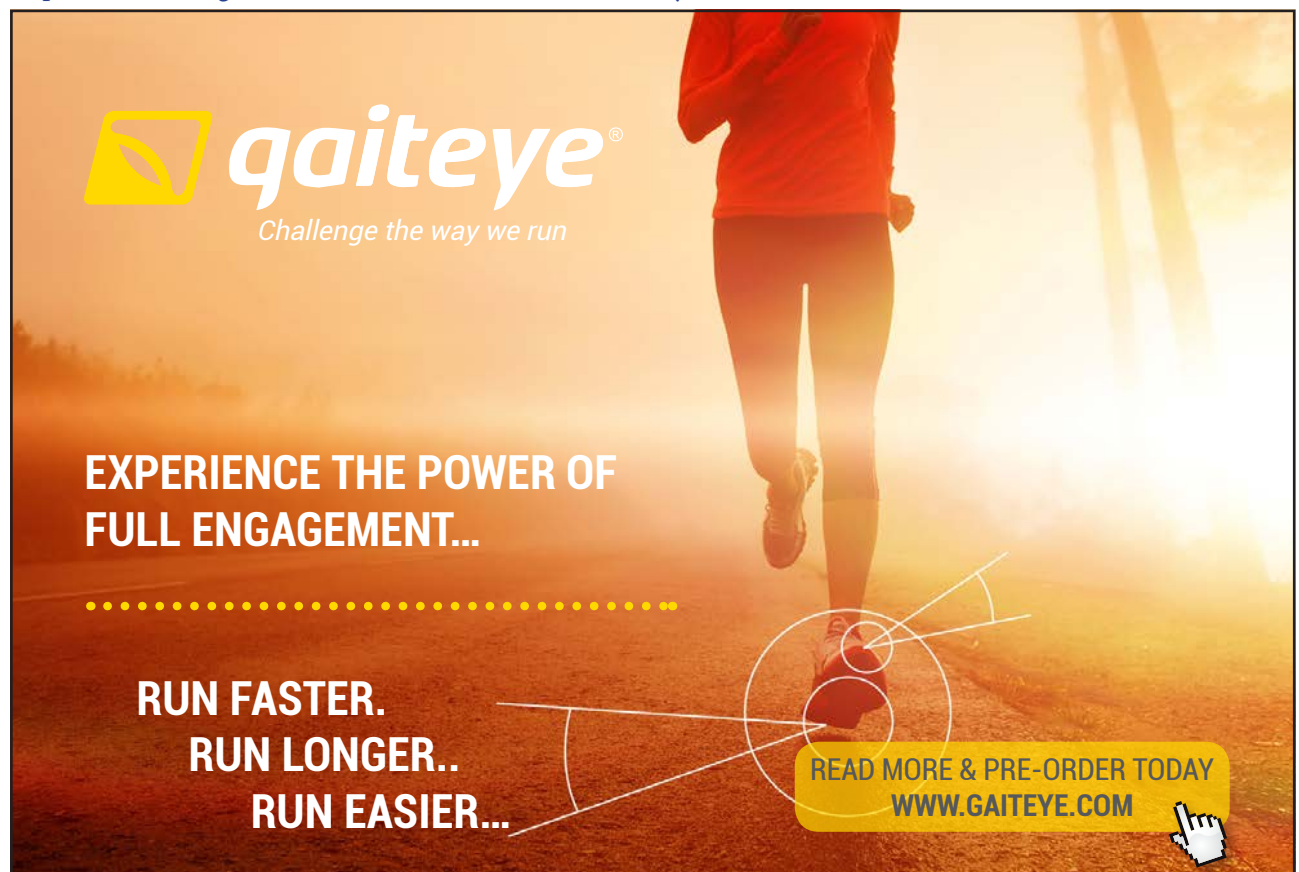
Astrid Baumgardner, JD, PCC is a professional life coach and lawyer, Coordinator of Career Strategies and Lecturer at the Yale School of Music and the founder and President of Astrid Baumgardner Coaching + Training, which is dedicated to helping musicians, lawyers and creative professionals take charge of their lives and experience authentic success. In addition to her work at YSM and her individual coaching practice, Astrid presents workshops at leading conservatories and law firms on topics including Career Planning, Goal-Setting, Time Management, Dynamic Communication, Conflict Management and Personal Branding and Networking. She is the author of numerous articles on the various aspects of how to achieve and live authentic success.

#### Reprint Notice:

I would be delighted if you should wish to reprint (for free) any part of this article in your newsletters, blogs, websites, and message boards. Please include the author attribution.

#### Article source:

<http://astridbaumgardner.com/articles/articles-3/62-use-your-best-self.html>



**gaiteye®**  
*Challenge the way we run*

**EXPERIENCE THE POWER OF  
FULL ENGAGEMENT...**

.....

**RUN FASTER.  
RUN LONGER..  
RUN EASIER...**

**READ MORE & PRE-ORDER TODAY  
WWW.GAITEYE.COM**



# 12 Hidden Gifts: What Aikido Can Teach Us about Conflict by Judy Ringer

Conflict stories are our most interesting stories. When you see two people deeply engaged in conversation, chances are that one of them is telling a conflict story. They're fascinating. And we have such strong opinions about them, especially when they are our stories. We live them again and again as we revisit the events, the feelings, the thoughts about what we should have said, and how perfect things could be if only our adversaries would change.

The moment of conflict holds such promise – the opportunity to approach life creatively, make a different choice, visit another planet – opportunities we would not otherwise be offered if it weren't for the conflict. Conflict is one way in which we come to know the world and understand each other. Conflict offers an opening to our most powerful selves. It also offers the opposite. Like two roads diverging, one leads toward connection, the other toward separation. Our habitual patterns of reaction leave us thinking we have no choice but to do what we've always done. Then, when the conflict is over, we look back, asking "why did I do that, what was I thinking?" having once again missed the opportunity to take a different path.

## Making Choices

Conflict too often provides the bricks and mortar for walls that keep out the world and those we love. Constructed of fear, judgment, defensiveness, and misunderstanding, our walls are meant to keep us safe and maintain the rightness of our opinions. The problem is that walls work two ways. Our carefully assembled grudges, justifications, and attitudes are, at the same time, barriers to what we desire most – connection to our wisdom, to our humanity, and to the source of universal intelligence that supports us all. Our real safety lies in connection, but because we are more practiced at building walls, we create a prison for ourselves, keeping out the very things we hoped the walls would enclose.

What walls have you constructed that no longer serve a useful purpose? Do reactive habits keep you from finding a new path?

## A New Way to Manage Conflict

Luckily, I've discovered a means to help me remember that I have alternatives even in the most difficult situations. A couple of decades ago, I fell in love with a martial art called Aikido and began to see the world through its lens. From the beginning, Aikido's fluid, spiraling, and powerful movements seemed to suggest possibility – a new way to manage conflict. I found Aikido's principles of centered response, utilization of energy, and non-resistant leading to be equally applicable in non-physical conflict – what we might call life's "attacks" – such as arguments, everyday hassles, and the more serious problems we all face at some point in our lives.

When you watch Aikidoists practicing, you don't see a typical adversarial battle. You see what looks like a physical exchange between two people giving and receiving energy, more like a powerful dance than combat.

As an attack comes toward her, a receiver does not strike back or otherwise block the force of the attack. Instead, she moves toward the incoming energy (shifting slightly off the line of attack) and physically unites with the attacker's power. Once she makes this connection, she controls the direction and momentum of the attack by pinning or throwing her opponent. This is the most basic principle of Aikido: do not resist an attack. Instead, the aikidoist learns to blend, control and redirect.

## Utilization of Energy

Life could be a lot easier than I make it, was my first thought upon seeing the art of Aikido. Having lived the life of a perfectionist for many years, I was accustomed to struggling with life events. But as an Aikidoist I asked, How might I use what comes at me instead of fighting or wishing it away? It made so much sense, and I loved the inclusive view it offered. I guessed correctly that it would take some undoing of old, ingrained habits of resistance before I could acquire this new way of being, and I began to look with new eyes at what I had previously thought of as negative events in my life. What does it mean to use energy?

I began to teach the Aikido metaphor as a way of transforming conflict, in order to share the view the Aikido lens offers and to demonstrate and clarify how life, work, and relationships benefit from this model. At the same time I began practicing the martial art, knowing that integrating Aikido "on the mat" would help me teach and apply its concepts "off the mat."

## The Way of Harmony: Life Applications

In life, the Aikido metaphor is realized when you transform challenges into opportunities and adapt to new circumstances with ease, moving with life's flow, instead of struggling against it. You are practicing Aikido whenever you listen with curiosity to an opposing view or search for mutual understanding, respect, and purpose. Aikido happens any time you stop, take a breath, and choose a more felicitous state of being. No matter how you approach it, whether physically or conceptually, Aikido offers a unique blend of power and grace, inviting you to find the hidden gifts in every difficult moment.

### About the author

Judy Ringer is the author of *Unlikely Teachers: Finding the Hidden Gifts in Daily Conflict* <http://www.unlikelyteachersbook.com> and the award-winning e-zine, *Ki Moments*, containing stories and practices on turning life's challenges into life teachers. Judy is a black belt in aikido and a nationally-known presenter, specializing in unique workshops on conflict, communication, and creating a positive work environment. She is the founder of Power & Presence Training and chief instructor of Portsmouth Aikido, Portsmouth, NH, USA. Visit <http://www.JudyRinger.com>

### Reprint Information

Read, download and share any one of these articles written to help you to resolve conflict, communicate purposefully, and live a life of power and presence. You're welcome to use and reprint any article for team and individual learning. I ask only that you keep the article intact and credit the author, using the "about the author" information at the end of each piece.

<http://www.judyringer.com/resources/articles/>

### Original resource:

<http://www.judyringer.com/resources/articles/hidden-gifts-what-aikido-can-teach-us-about-conflict.php>

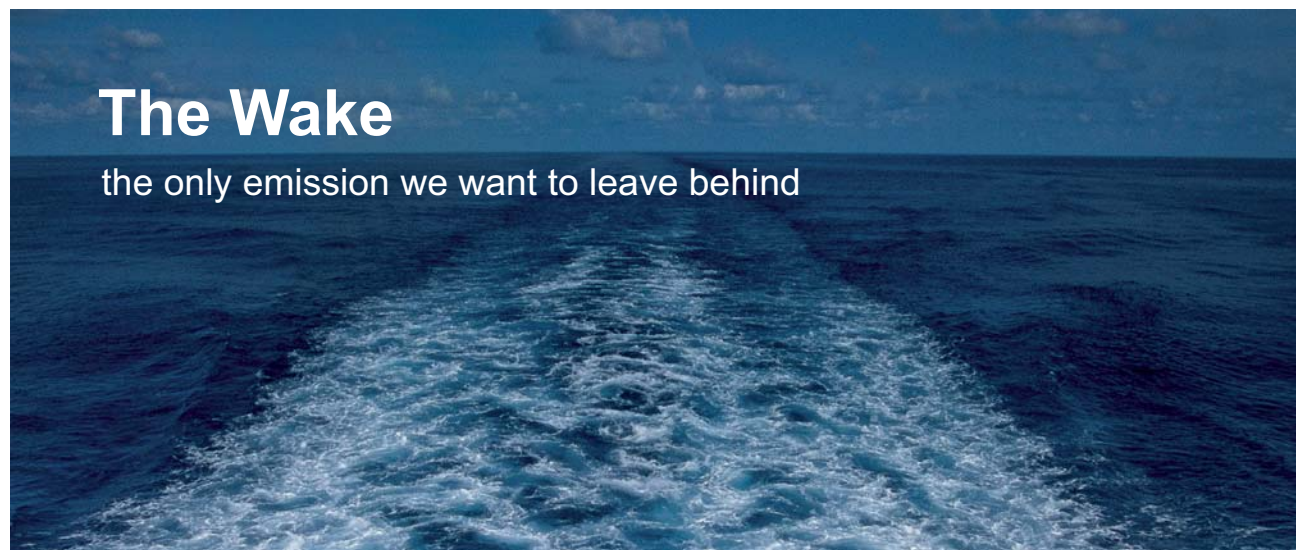
# 13 Self-Esteem Bricks by Victor Antonio G.

One of the toughest things to obtain and maintain is a positive self-esteem. Self-esteem is how we feel about ourselves, where positive is the condition we wish to maintain.

But how does one go about developing a positive self-esteem? In order to be positive one must have an optimistic view about the possibility of things we trying to achieve or accomplish.

Only through personal successes, small or big, do we enforce or reinforce our self-esteem.

I'm often reminded of the story of the three little pigs when I think of self-esteem. In the story, each pig chose the type of material they would use to build their house. One chose straw, the other wood and the last one brick. The big bad wolf was able to blow down the first two, but failed to blow down the house made of brick.




## The Wake

the only emission we want to leave behind

Low-speed Engines Medium-speed Engines Turbochargers Propellers Propulsion Packages PrimeServ

The design of eco-friendly marine power and propulsion solutions is crucial for MAN Diesel & Turbo. Power competencies are offered with the world's largest engine programme – having outputs spanning from 450 to 87,220 kW per engine. Get up front! Find out more at [www.mandieselturbo.com](http://www.mandieselturbo.com)

Engineering the Future – since 1758.  
**MAN Diesel & Turbo**



In life and in business, we run across situations or individuals for that matter who will try to blow our house down. When you lose your job the first thing you begin to question is why did this happen to you? What did you do wrong? What could you have done better? All these questions are puffs or gusts aimed at bringing down our house of self-esteem.

Some of us have self-esteem houses made of straw. This lightweight material is the result of always depending on others for help and never achieving a sense of self-reliance. A person who has never accepted responsibility or accountability for their actions completely will always have their house blown down with the slightest puff of an unfavorable circumstance. For example, people who live off of government subsidies to survive or who chose not to get an education are always in danger of getting their self-esteem house knocked down.

Those who've chosen wood are usually those who've always piggy-backed off of other's successes. People who've never gone it alone or taken any risk themselves and have always played it safe. These people assume some accountability and responsibility to the degree others will cover for them if things go wrong. There are those that can withstand small puffs and get by. But this same group people who use wood to build their houses will have it collapse at the first gust of real adversity. Good example of this group would be people who overextend themselves on debt or try to leave beyond their means. And when they lose their job, for instance, their seemingly solid house of wood begins to collapse under the weight of debt.

The question we need to ask is, how do we construct a house of self-esteem made of brick? Well like any good builder, it begins with acquiring the proper material. The best material for building comes from our past. Each brick we lay is a reminder of all the great things we've done in the past. And the mortar we lay between them is our confidence that we can do these things again.

Often times in the face of adversity, we panic and depress ourselves. We commit a great crime against our self-esteem by not remembering all the good things we've accomplished. We forget about all those times where we surmounted the problems and dealt with adversity face on.

When we surrender self-esteem in the present, it is because we've forgotten or forsaken our past. I hear many motivational speakers and pundits who say the past is the past. I disagree to the extent that remembering successes and lessons learned is worth looking back at. Looking back into the past is a reminder of how far we've come.

Adversity and personal challenges to overcome are part of the success equation. As many have said, it is how we confront these setbacks that determine our character going forward. Difficult times will come, but they won't last unless you allow them to.

Look back at your accomplishments and reflect on who you are and how far you've come. Then turn your head and look forward, over the present obstacles, and see the possibilities. Build your house with bricks of personal accomplishments and private successes and you will never have to fear the gust of change shaking your foundation.

#### About the author

Born and raised in Chicago's inner city, Victor Antonio G. has achieved a level of success few would have expected: By the age of 35 he had become Vice President in \$3B Fortune 500 company at the time and built-up an international market from \$14M to \$97M in two and half years, and went on to become President of Global Sales & Marketing to help build a \$420M company. He is currently CEO of a privately held multimillion Cable and Satellite Company.

<http://www.thelogicofsuccess.com/index.htm>

#### Reprint notice:

Copyright © 2007 by Victor Gonzalez All rights reserved. This article MAY be reproduced in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, as long as the author's name, website and email address are included as part of the article's body. All inquiries, including information on electronic licensing, should be directed to to Victor Antonio G., [www.VictorAntonio.com](http://www.VictorAntonio.com)

#### Original resource:

<http://www.thelogicofsuccess.com/self-esteem-business-speaker.htm>

I joined MITAS because  
I wanted **real responsibility**

The Graduate Programme  
for Engineers and Geoscientists  
[www.discovermitas.com](http://www.discovermitas.com)



**Month 16**

I was a construction supervisor in the North Sea advising and helping foremen solve problems

Real work  
International opportunities  
Three work placements









# 14 Approach Anxiety by Steve Pavlina

Several months ago I was speaking with my friend Morty Lefkoe about fears and limiting beliefs that I noticed among my readers. I shared with him that one of the biggest problem areas was approach anxiety. While many readers appear to be very social online, it's common for them to be pretty socially timid in person – I know this quite well from interacting with them both online and face to face.

Social timidity is frequently a result of approach anxiety. Instead of proactively approaching new people to form connections (for friendship, dating, networking, etc), these people often hold back. There can be a variety of reasons for why they hold back, but it typically boils down to fear caused by limiting beliefs about approaching people, initiating conversations, expressing interest, etc.

When I shared this with Morty, I figured there might be 5–10 common limiting beliefs that contributed to approach anxiety, such as “being rejected is bad” or “I’m not good enough.”

Morty grew curious about what limiting beliefs he might find if he investigated this further. Since his specialty is helping people eliminate limiting beliefs quickly and permanently, this was right up his alley. I’ve been recommending Morty’s method for more than two years now, and many people have found it an effective way to remove beliefs that were previously holding them back, so I figured the subject of approach anxiety would be a worthwhile area for him to explore, one that would be a good fit for his process. Morty agreed.

Morty also knew that if he could figure out the most common limiting beliefs that contributed to approach anxiety, he could use that information to create a new product that would help people with this specific challenge, so this undertaking made good business sense as well.

## Investigating Approach Anxiety

To explore this more deeply, Morty recruited volunteers who felt socially limited by approach anxiety, those who rated their fear at least a 7 on a scale of 1–10. Then he interviewed them to discover what beliefs were making them feel anxious or hesitant to connect with new people.

To Morty’s surprise (and to my own as well), he discovered a great variety of beliefs that contributed to approach anxiety. There weren’t just a handful of them – there were dozens that he was able to identify.

The main problem wasn't the quantity of beliefs, however. The bigger issue was that there was very little overlap between participants, meaning that each person had different beliefs that contributed to their experience of approach anxiety.

This meant that it wouldn't be practical for Morty to create a single product to help people eliminate this problem. Morty can still use his method to help such people one on one by phone or Skype, but he can't turn it into a product because there's too much variety in people's limiting beliefs. To eliminate a limiting belief, it must first be identified, and that identification process plays out differently for each person.

I was disappointed that we couldn't use this idea to create a new product that would help people afflicted by approach anxiety. I liked the idea of helping people to permanently and inexpensively eliminate such a problem. But I didn't want to let Morty's initial research go to waste, so I asked him if I could share the backstory about this idea and the beliefs he was able to identify with his volunteers, and he graciously agreed.

I expect this may still be helpful to many people since identifying a limiting belief is an important first step in eliminating it. Sometimes just being aware that you have a negative belief can get you started on the path to letting it go.

#### Limiting Beliefs That Contribute to Approach Anxiety

For this project Morty focused his interviews on men, so all of the subjects were male. He surely would have uncovered even more limiting beliefs if he expanded this to include women as well.

The age range of the participants was 20–38 with most in their 20s. And as I mentioned previously, Morty asked people to rate their fear on a scale of 1–10 and chose people who answered at least a 7.

Here are some of the feelings these participants reported:

- Anxiety when talking to a woman
- Fear of being criticized or judged
- Fear of talking to an attractive woman

And here's a list of limiting beliefs related to approach anxiety that Morty and his participants were able to identify:

Change is difficult.

I can't do anything right.

If a woman isn't attracted to a man initially, she never will be.

I'm a bother to people.

I'm a dangerous person.

I'm annoying.

I'm a loser.

I'm broken.

I'm inadequate.

I'm inferior.

I'm not acceptable.

I'm not attractive.

I'm not good enough.

I'm not interesting.

I'm socially awkward.

I'm ugly.

I'm unlovable / not lovable.



www.job.oticon.dk

**oticon**  
PEOPLE FIRST



I'm weird.  
It's wrong to show sexual interest in a woman.  
It's wrong to be attracted to women.  
It's wrong to be turned on by women.  
My sexual desire is bad.  
People aren't interested in me.  
People aren't interested in what I have to say.  
Relationships are difficult.  
There's something wrong with me.  
What makes me good enough or important enough is having people like me.  
Women don't want nice guys.  
Women don't want to be bothered.  
Women don't want to talk to guys.  
Women want more financial security than I could provide.  
Women want men who are assertive and get what they want.  
Women want attractive men.  
Women want interesting men.  
Women want men who are confident / flirtatious.  
Women want men who are witty / make them laugh.  
Women want men who treat them badly.  
Women want men with exciting lifestyles.  
Women want men with money and stability.  
Women want popular guys.  
Women want security / to be protected physically.  
Women want successful men.

This is an interesting collection to be sure, but it's far from exhaustive. I'm sure you can identify many more, especially if we consider limiting beliefs that women have as well.

We can loosely categorize this list into beliefs about oneself, beliefs about others, and beliefs about interactions.

### Overcoming Limiting Beliefs

Many of the self-related beliefs are linked with low self-esteem and a low sense of attractiveness. Eliminating the negative belief is one way to fix those problems. Another way is to shift your focus onto your overall lifestyle, and take more action to create a life that fulfills you. When people are pleased with their lifestyles, it shows. It's easier to attract people you like when you're enjoying the other parts of your life. It's also easier to attract compatible partners when you're already living a life you enjoy.

As for the beliefs about others, the main issue there is overgeneralization. Everyone has different standards for what they find attractive and what they don't. These patterns certainly aren't universal.

With billions of people on earth, we can find many people who may fit those patterns and many who don't. And in any given week, people can oscillate between matching and not matching these patterns. Sometimes people feel social and would be glad to be approached by almost anyone. At other times people turn inward and prefer more solitude.

One pattern I see here is the implied limiting belief that if you approach someone who doesn't want to connect with you (for whatever reason), and you get rejected as a result, then you made a mistake and never should have approached in the first place.

Of course there isn't much real danger in trying to initiate and deepen connections, but that doesn't make the fear any less real. The fear may be rooted in false beliefs and erroneous assumptions, but it can still exert control over one's behavior.

There is a matter of calibration involved here, so as you gain experience, you can increase your hit rate, but this doesn't mean that getting a rejection now and then is a terrible thing to be avoided at all costs. It's really no big whoop. You basically have to risk some rejection in order to build experience. The more experience you have, the easier it is to read people and get a sense of who's open to connecting with you and who isn't. Making a mistake here isn't the end of the world.

The good news is that when these limiting beliefs were eliminated, the fear went away too. And when the fear goes away, that's where the fun begins.

### Finding Counterexamples

One of my favorite methods for eliminating limiting beliefs is to deliberately seek out counterexamples. If I can find even one or two counterexamples for a belief, then the belief tends to collapse. My mind can no longer pretend that it's true.

A long time ago I had the belief that women aren't interested in sex as much as men are. I also had some related beliefs about sexuality being bad or sinful. I can credit 12 years of Catholic school for installing such notions. This certainly isn't uncommon.

Then I saw the movie *Kinsey*, which opened my eyes to the notion that sexual desire is a very individual thing. That helped put a dent in my overgeneralized beliefs.

Later I met women who were comfortable talking about sex openly, and they shared thoughts, feelings, and attitudes that contradicted my old beliefs. It took me a while to make the 180-degree turn from my Catholicism-installed falsehoods, but I eventually collapsed those limiting beliefs.

I also had to be careful about installing opposite beliefs like “women love sex more than men do” since that’s an overgeneralization as well. I find it more helpful to accept the notion that this is a very individual thing.

### Accepting Variety

Overgeneralizing is an attempt to treat everyone the same, as if you can come up with a single pattern or strategy that works well with everyone. Generalizing works okay in some areas of life, but in other areas there’s too much variety, including in the area of human relationships.

Our brains automatically and unconsciously seek out patterns in specific data, but sometimes they make mistakes, and we need to consciously adjust their conclusions.

Deep down we may indeed have similar needs and desires, but we have different ways of satisfying those needs and desires. So what one person finds attractive, another person finds creepy, boring, or repulsive.



The advertisement for Linköping University features a light gray background. In the top left corner is the Swedish flag and the text "Sweden Sverige". The main text reads "Linköping University – innovative, highly ranked, European". Below this, it says "Interested in Computer Science? Kick-start your career with an English-taught master's degree." A dark blue button with a white arrow and the text "Click here!" is positioned below the text. In the bottom left is the "li.u LINKÖPING UNIVERSITY" logo. On the right side, two young women with long brown hair are smiling and leaning against a red door frame.





If you can accept this, you'll see that it's silly to expect everyone to like you as you are. Some people will. Some people won't. Such are the vicissitudes of life.

Instead of trying to get someone to like you or worrying about saying or doing the right things to create attraction, it makes more sense to express your personality and preferences openly to the degree that's possible, and then let other people self-select if they feel they match you.

Alternatively, you can focus on initiating connections with people you find attractive, while accepting that your interest may not be mutual. If the other person doesn't feel the same, it doesn't mean you aren't awesome. It just means the other person doesn't agree that you'd be a good match. Certainly that isn't the end of the world. There are billions of other people you can seek to match with.

For the past several years, I've mainly been using the expressiveness strategy because I've had so much social input coming my way. All I really had to do was to express myself openly and shamelessly, and then I could select among the people who seemed to resonate with what I shared. If people didn't like me, they usually filtered themselves out of my reality, and if they didn't, then it was easy for me to decline to interact with them. If people initiated interactions with me as a result of what I shared, then I could choose to accept some of those invites, and at least I was guaranteed to have an interaction with someone who was interested in connecting.

This worked well for attracting people who are interested in me, but it doesn't give me as much opportunity to connect with people that I find equally interesting. So for the past several months, I've been closing most of those open doors (like my Facebook page, the forums, and my contact form), so fewer people can approach me to connect. This gives me more opportunity to initiate my own connections with people I'd like to get to know better and to be more selective.

With my old socialization strategy, I would sometimes stray into my own version of approach anxiety, but of a different sort than the one discussed earlier. I actually worry more about being approached. Will the person be interesting? Will they be honest about their intentions? Are they just trying to get something from me?

As my social interactions became increasingly patterned, I felt I was at risk of developing limiting beliefs like "Everyone needs something from me" and "People are energy vampires." I thought it best to turn off the flood of incoming connections for a while, so I could have more space to consciously think about what kind of social life I'd like to create and experience.

The benefit of getting limiting beliefs out of the way is that it creates more room for conscious choice.

## Training Up

Another favorite way to tackle limiting beliefs is with progressive training. I see limitations as a weight to be lifted. The more you train the relevant muscles, the easier it is to lift and finally dispose of the limitation.

As a child I was very shy. In kindergarten I used to play in the sandbox alone most of the time. If I had any friends, it was just one or two close friends that I played with. I didn't feel very comfortable socializing with other children, especially in large groups.

In grammar school what I hated more than anything else were speech contests. These were mandatory every year in my school, but I never felt comfortable presenting in front of the class. I got nervous, my hands would shake, and I was pretty bad at it too.

I improved a little from this forced practice, but I still didn't like that I got nervous when I spoke in front of the class.

Eventually I decided to conquer this fear, and I thought that progressive training would be a good strategy. I started volunteering to speak tech conferences. Then I joined Toastmasters and later the National Speakers Association to keep making progress.

This approach took time, but it worked. The more practice I got, the more comfortable I became with speaking, and the less nervous I was. Now I feel just as comfortable in front of a group as I do playing video games with my kids. What used to be anxiety producing now gets channeled into enthusiasm and fun. I now find myself looking for ways to make it more challenging; if it feels too easy, it isn't as stimulating for me.

## Enlisting Social Support

Another important thing to realize is that you can be afraid and still take action. This is hard to do on your own, but it's much easier to do when you have some social support. Without social support it's too easy to succumb to fear and make excuses. But when you've committed yourself to people who will hold you accountable, it's harder not to act.

For example, if you agree to give a speech, you'll usually find that you can still follow through even if you're really anxious about it. People do this all the time. They get up to the mike, and for the first several minutes they're nervous. You can see their hands shaking. Or their voice cracks and they can barely catch their breath. They're clearly having an emotional reaction, but they still do it.

What may surprise you is that many pro speakers with decades of practice still get nervous when they speak. But they've learned that if they agree to speak anyway, they're going to follow through even if they're nervous.

Think about how you can apply this idea of social support to other forms of social interactions that may be troubling you. Can you invite a few friends to encourage you along the way and to hold you accountable?

I've seen how well this works at some of my workshops. People who can't get themselves to start up a conversation with a stranger can suddenly take action when they have two accountability partners encouraging and supporting them.

### Further Help

Although we don't have a singular solution that works for everyone, approach anxiety is a problem that can be overcome.

If you want more information about how Morty can help you with such challenges, feel free to call him at 415-884-0552, and ask about working one on one with him. For help in overcoming other limiting beliefs, be sure to read my blog post about this. You can also test Morty's method to eliminate a limiting belief for free.

**STUDY FOR YOUR MASTER'S DEGREE  
IN THE CRADLE OF SWEDISH ENGINEERING**

Chalmers University of Technology conducts research and education in engineering and natural sciences, architecture, technology-related mathematical sciences and nautical sciences. Behind all that Chalmers accomplishes, the aim persists for contributing to a sustainable future – both nationally and globally.

Visit us on **Chalmers.se** or **Next Stop Chalmers** on facebook.

**CHALMERS**  
UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY



Click on the ad to read more

However you decide to tackle the challenge of approach anxiety, try not to be so hard on yourself. It's not the end of the world if someone doesn't want to connect with you. No matter how weird or broken you think you are (or how cold you think other people are), many people would enjoy your company.

People can provide value to each other in the simplest of ways, such as by listening to each other, sharing a meal, and holding hands as they go for a stroll. If you can smile, you can provide something that millions (probably billions) of people would receive as valuable and worthwhile.

#### About the author

Steve Pavlina (born April 14, 1971) is an American self-help author, motivational speaker and entrepreneur. He is the author of the web site [stevepavlina.com](http://www.stevepavlina.com) and the book *Personal Development for Smart People*. Pavlina's blog covers topics such as personal development and success; consciousness and courage; productivity, motivation and goal setting; career, wealth and business; and spirituality. (Wikipedia)

#### Reprint Notice

On December 15, 2010, Steve Pavlina released all the content he had created till that date (excluding his book *Personal Development For Smart People*) and all content he would create in the future (unless explicitly specified) in the public domain.

See his "Uncopyright notice":

<http://www.stevepavlina.com/blog/2010/12/releasing-my-copyrights/>

Original resource:

<http://www.stevepavlina.com/blog/2012/01/approach-anxiety/>

# 15 Customers from Hell: Five Do's and Don'ts for Calming Cranky Customers by Jeff Mowatt

Perhaps you've noticed that customers are becoming increasingly hostile. Case in point was the highly publicized incident where a patron in a fast food restaurant became so enraged that he attacked the restaurant manager. The customer spilled his coffee on his breakfast and when the manager refused to replace the meal, the ensuing argument led to violence that ended with the customer being arrested.

It seems in our fast-paced frenetic world customers are now more tired, rushed, stressed, and downright fed-up. That's why in my customer service seminars both managers and frontline employees frequently ask me how to handle the proverbial customer from hell. Here are five Do's and Don'ts for calming cranky customers.

1. Do consider the big picture. Don't focus on the single transaction

The fast food fisticuffs could have been avoided if the restaurant manager (better yet the frontline employee) would have cheerfully replaced the patron's meal for free. The incremental cost to the restaurant would have been nominal, and the loyalty and subsequent return on investment would have been substantial. Instead, the manager took the low road and focused on the cost of the meal and the fact that it wasn't the restaurant's fault. Guy should have been litigator; he certainly wasn't a business person.

2. Do acknowledge feelings. Don't say, "Calm Down." Ever.

Can you think of a single example in the history of the world when telling somebody to, "Calm down" did anything other than make things worse? Me neither. It's never appropriate to tell someone how they should feel. On the contrary, you'll improve their demeanor by validating their feelings with empathic statements like, "That sounds frustrating."

3. Do ask the four Ws. Don't ask "Why"

When a customer has a problem and you need the pertinent details, ask the four Ws: who, what, where, and when. But avoid asking Why. Generally, the response to why something went wrong is that someone was inept. Imagine asking a customer, "Why didn't you read the instructions?" This is not constructive and just makes things worse.

#### 4. Do apologize for foul-ups. Don't over-explain

Over the 20 years that I've written and delivered customized customer service seminars, I've discovered that the main reason customers become irritated is simple – the organization broke a promise; one that was either expressed or implied. Telling a customer, "I'll call you back", then neglecting to do so is called lying. If we normally complete a project in 3 days, and this time it takes 3 weeks, we are now breaking an implied promise. In both cases the customer didn't get what they expected so we need to apologize. It's also helpful to give them something extra to make up for the customer's hassle factor. If there are extenuating circumstances then give the customer a brief explanation. But keep it short. Going into lengthy details about why you couldn't keep your end of the bargain sounds like trying to rationalize poor service. It only makes matters worse.

#### 5. Do be respectful. Don't become a doormat

Some customers are not in their best when they get angry. They can shout, swear, cry, or become abusive. That does not give us license to react in kind. We do need to be respectful. We don't need to kowtow. Imagine a customer, upset about a late delivery, is swearing at a supplier on the phone. In that case the supplier would do well to respond with something like, "Sir, I want to help you. Using that language however, is preventing me from focusing on resolving this issue. So I'm going to ask you to stop using that language so we can focus on fixing the problem." If the customer continues with the verbal abuse, close the conversation with, "Sir, as I explained earlier I want to help you, but I can't help you when you're using that kind of language. I'm going to hang up now, but please call back when you can talk to me without using that language. Goodbye." Then go immediately to your supervisor and give them the details of the conversation. That way, they'll be forewarned when the customer calls back demanding to talk with the manager.

Bottom line – have some empathy

Who among us can claim that as a customer, we've never been terse or worse with a service representative who was in no way responsible for the foul-up? Some customers are cranky because stuff happens in their lives that has nothing to do with you. So before becoming too self-righteous or casting proverbial stones at those miserable customers, we'd do well to put ourselves in their shoes.

It's also worth remembering that if work was supposed to be fun they wouldn't need to pay us. Dealing with upset customers sometimes comes with the territory. Fortunately, by learning to handle difficult customers well, you'll make them even more loyal than before the foul-up. That makes the job less stressful and more rewarding for everyone.



#### About the author

Customer service strategist and professional speaker, Jeff Mowatt is an authority on The Art of Client Service...Influence with Ease®. For Jeff's other tips, self-study resources, and training services on establishing rapport, click <http://www.jeffmowatt.com/individual/greetingcustomers.html>

#### Reprint notice:

You are welcome to reprint them as an ongoing column or as stand alone articles. Feel free to make minor edits to customize to suit your unique needs. When reprinting, please send us a copy of your publication that includes our articles. To receive automatic updates when Jeff releases a new article, please email us directly at [info@jeffmowatt.com](mailto:info@jeffmowatt.com).

<http://www.jeffmowatt.com/articles/index.html>

#### Original article

<http://www.jeffmowatt.com/articles/customersfromhell.html>

Click here to learn more

# TAKE THE RIGHT TRACK

Give your career a head start by studying with us. Experience the advantages of our collaboration with major companies like **ABB, Volvo and Ericsson!**

Apply by 15 January

World class research

[www.mdh.se](http://www.mdh.se)

MÄLARDALEN UNIVERSITY SWEDEN



Click on the ad to read more

# 16 Nice Teams Finish Last by Thomas Cox

Think your team is great because you all get along so well? It could be a sign your team is underperforming.

As Brian Cole Miller describes in his new book *Nice Teams Finish Last*, niceness is often a cover for fear of straight talk, for low trust and low comfort, and you can boost performance by getting past nice.

Brian described his model – developed over his 25 years of working with and building teams – as a continuum between Nice, Bold, and Fierce.

In Brian's book, Nice refers to “if you can't say something nice, don't say anything.” Don't step on toes, don't rock the boat. It's a kind of Nice that includes withholding honest feedback.

(continue reading)

Think of the last time you were in a team meeting and you've got a relevant thought and you're about to share it, and you stop yourself – you bite your tongue – and you wait until after the meeting is over to share it with one of your closer co-workers. That's a perfect example of Nice undercutting the performance of the team. I was afraid and I held back. That's the “Nice” scenario.

Contrast that with another scenario – where you're meeting with Joe, and Joe interrupts you to say “that's a stupid idea” – and because of the close trusting relationship you have with Joe, your immediate emotional response is to think “this is wonderful – either I'm going to find out that I didn't express my idea very clearly, or else Joe just spotted a flaw I need to know about – I can't wait to hear this.” And you're smiling, feeling good about Joe, and leaning in to listen deeply, and your relationship with Joe is getting stronger by the minute because Joe is giving you the benefit of his candid thinking, and he's trusting you to handle it well, and take it in a positive way. And you are. Not only do you get Joe's best thinking quickly and without hedging, the experience leads you to trust each other even more. Call this the “Bold” scenario.

Then contrast both of these with a third scenario, where I'm meeting with Jim, and Jim interrupts me to say “you're being stupid again” – and because this team is all about “brutal honesty” I fire back, or maybe I sit there and pretend to take it. Maybe I fire back with some “honest” criticism of him. Because we're a low trust fake-candid team, I don't really listen with an open mind to Jim – call this the “Fierce” scenario.

Here are the keys to moving off Nice and avoiding Fierce:

Assume Innocence – the other person has a positive intention

Build a Bridge – understand and acknowledge the other person's position

Speak my Truth – be as specific as possible about the things you saw, while stating your perspective with courage

Invite a Dialog – having spoken your truth, truly and deeply listen with an open mind

Brian put this into a compact table that I partially reproduce here:

Types of Teams – Nice, Bold, and Fierce – and their Norms

	Nice	Bold	Fierce
Motives	Assume malice and create workarounds	Assume innocence and trust freely	Assume malice and attack pre-emptively
Outreach	Build bridge after bridge; never cross	Build a bridge and cross quickly	Build walls and prepare attacks and defenses
Speak Truth	Say something that might be true, but don't be too attached to it	Say clearly what is true for you, and clarify your rationale and motives	Say clearly what is THE truth, and bludgeon others into hearing and agreeing
Dialog	Smooth over, backtrack, keep softening the message so nobody gets upset; manage other people's feelings	Invite dialog – actively seek responses to what was true for you; listen for what is true for others	Demand understanding. Insist that others hear you first.

As you see, the sweet spot of Bold, between Nice and Fierce, is both pleasanter and more functional. Leaders are well advised to head in this direction.

To get to Bold, you need enough of a sense of trust and safety to be open.

There are clear warning signs of low-performing Nice teams: “Venting” where we confess other people's sins; “gripe sessions” where we say in private what we would not say in public; “workarounds” where we don't want to confront someone about their behavior so we add steps to the process to avoid her.

#### About the author

Tom Cox is CEO at B-Studio Business Videos, Managing Consultant at Cox Business Consulting, Inc., and CEO at GrowthMaps

<http://tomonleadership.com/>

#### Reprint information

All of Tom Cox's articles on the Tom on Leadership site are FREE for reprinting or reposting, provided you include all original links and attribute the article to the author, and include the copyright notice.

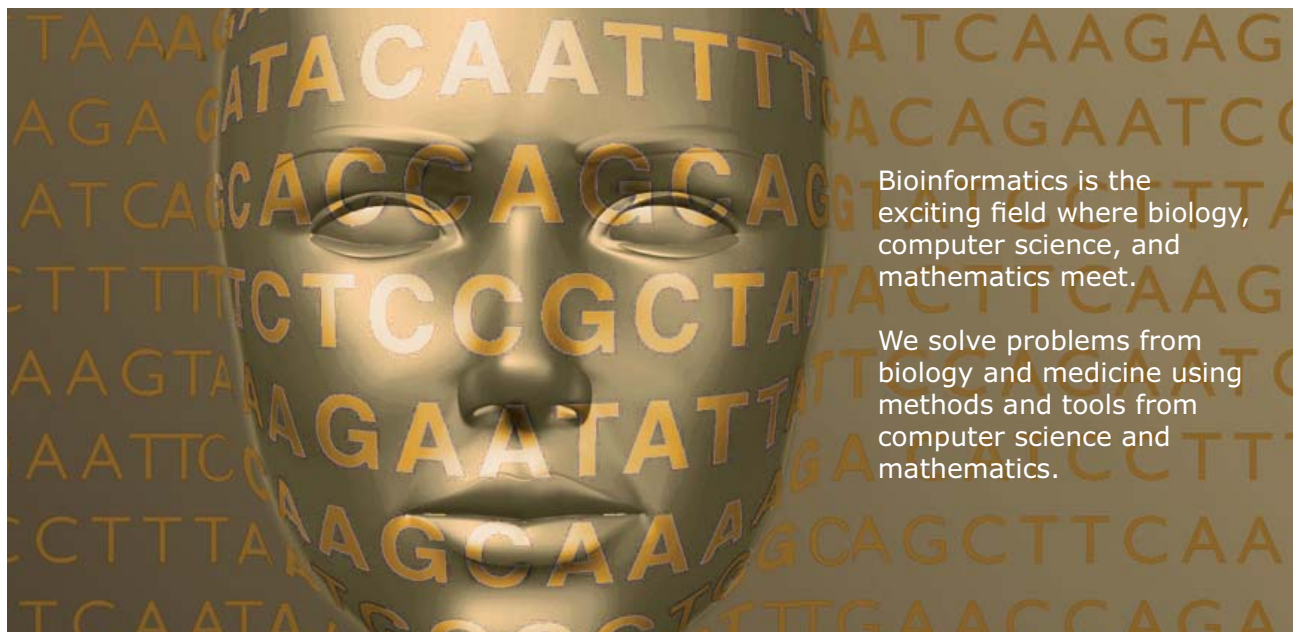
<http://tomonleadership.com/permission-to-reprint/>

#### Article source

<http://tomonleadership.com/2010/07/02/nice-teams-finish-last/>



## Develop the tools we need for Life Science Masters Degree in Bioinformatics



Read more about this and our other international masters degree programmes at [www.uu.se/master](http://www.uu.se/master)



# 17 Learn to Say "No" by Colin Crouch

People often agonise over saying "No" to others about things they are pressured into doing that they don't really want to do. This is often because they fear the consequences of saying "No", in upsetting others, and so prefer to take the easy route against their better judgment and say a reluctant and embittered "Yes". The solution to saying "No" without feeling bad lies in handling the situation skillfully and assertively. Here's how.

## 1. Saying No without Guilt

We all find ourselves occasionally in situations where we say "Yes" to others when we really want to say "No": the boss who uses the willing workhorse; the mother-in-law who invites herself to stay; the friend who insists on buying you another round.

You may think you are being "nice" by going along with their request but the chances are they won't see it that way and will simply impose on you again. You have exposed your weakness for them to exploit.

Reacting angrily to what you might see as an unreasonable request is equally inappropriate. It may result in you being seen as hostile. In the workplace an angry refusal to do a piece of work may brand you as being un-cooperative.

The only viable solution that does not upset others or make you feel bad is the assertive one.

## 2. Assertive No's

The following are some tips on how to give firm and assertive "No's" when others make demands which we want to turn down.

1. Check any contractual obligations you may have, such as a duty to work occasional overtime. Only say "No" if you are not obliged to comply.
2. Make up your mind to say "No".
3. Think through your fears about their possible reactions. Be rational about them.
4. Be determined to use a clear assertive style: no ifs and buts, no excuses, no apologising.

5. Thank the person for considering you for the request; say you are flattered and honoured.
  6. Don't feel you have to find solutions to their problem; don't dwell on it afterwards or feel responsible for their problem.
  7. If all else fails, tell them you're learning to become assertive and want to practise saying “No”!
3. Don't Apologise...

The best way to say “No” to requests you don't want to meet is to be decisive, make it clear what you're saying and leave no door open for them to sneak back in. Make it clear that the issue is not up for debate.

The following is an e-mail sent by a manager who had been pressured to join a project which she didn't want to do...

“I'd like you to know that I'm honoured that you should have thought about asking me to do this job and under other circumstances I would have loved to be able to say “Yes”. It sounds like an interesting project. I'd like you to know that it was kind of you to have considered me. Please let me know how things progress. I'm sure it will be an outstanding success.”

Being able to say “No” to others successfully is a combination of the right attitude, the right actions, and the right words. If you are in tune with your own assertiveness, you'll get these right every time.

#### About the author

Colin Crouch is an article contributor of ManageTrainLearn, the site that will change the way you learn forever. Download free samples of the biggest range of management and personal development materials anywhere and experience learning like you always dreamed possible; <http://www.managetrainlearn.com>

#### Reprint notice

You may reprint and re-publish all articles on ManageTrainLearn freely, for personal as well as business use, as long as you do not change the substantive text, add this reprint notice, and include a link to <http://www.managetrainlearn.com>

#### Article Source:

<http://www.managetrainlearn.com/page/do-you-speak-assertively>

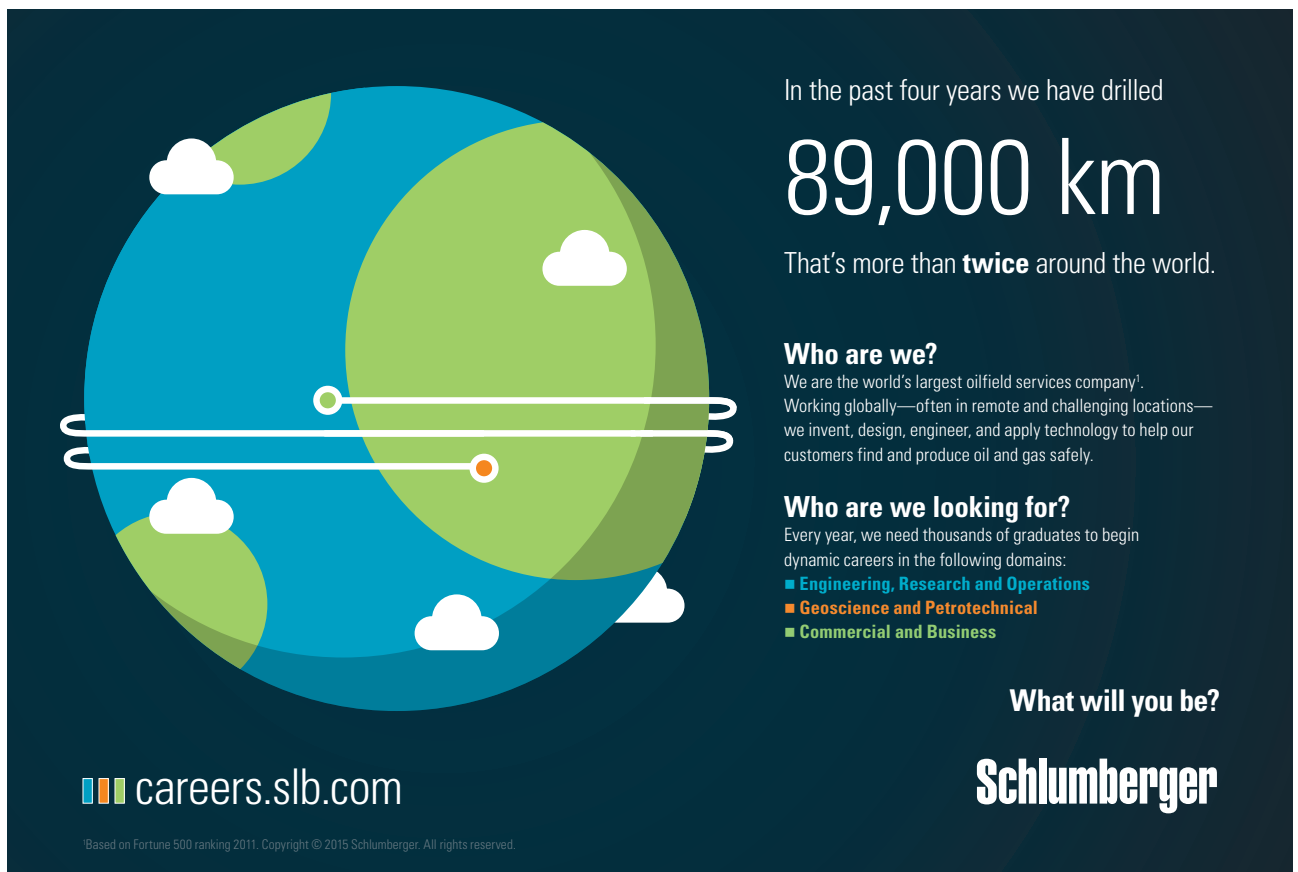


# 18 Something Only You Can Do by Steve Goodier

Tallulah Bankhead quipped, “Nobody can be exactly like me. Sometimes even I have trouble doing it.” But the truth is...we DO have trouble being ourselves, don’t we? Especially in a world that wants us to conform. “To be nobody but yourself in a world that is doing its best day and night into making you like everybody else,” said poet E.E. Cummings, “is to fight the hardest battle there is and never stop fighting.”

One of the deepest cravings of young people, especially teens, is to be liked by their peers. Like all of us, they want to be accepted and they want to be valued. It’s during those critical teen-age years that they begin to play a game that is sometimes called “Follow the Follower.” The game is not the same as “Follow the Leader.” Following the follower is about conforming...talking, dressing, acting and even thinking like one another. The goal is to fit in.

In adulthood, we are supposed to discover who we really are and do our best to grow into that person. We find our value, not in acceptance by others, but because we believe in our worth. It doesn’t always happen. But it’s a wonderful day when we can say in honesty, “I know who I am and I’m glad I am me.”



In the past four years we have drilled

## 89,000 km


That’s more than **twice** around the world.

**Who are we?**  
We are the world’s largest oilfield services company<sup>1</sup>. Working globally—often in remote and challenging locations—we invent, design, engineer, and apply technology to help our customers find and produce oil and gas safely.

**Who are we looking for?**  
Every year, we need thousands of graduates to begin dynamic careers in the following domains:

- Engineering, Research and Operations
- Geoscience and Petrotechnical
- Commercial and Business

**What will you be?**

 careers.slb.com

**Schlumberger**

<sup>1</sup>Based on Fortune 500 ranking 2011. Copyright © 2015 Schlumberger. All rights reserved.



The lovable children's author Dr. Seuss got it right when he wrote, "Be who you are and say what you feel, because those who mind don't matter and those who matter don't mind." It takes strength to swim against the tide. It takes courage to speak your convictions. And it takes trust to act on your own intuition. It's hard and rewarding work to grow up and become who you really are. But in the end, whatever real success you find in life will be a result of your being true to yourself rather than an imitation of somebody else.

I'll never have to give an account for not being more like my favorite celebrity, that shining star in my chosen field or anybody else. And at the end of my life, the question I never want to be asked is, "How come you weren't more like YOU? You had such great potential. You were a wholly unique person -- unrepeatable and irreplaceable. Why you weren't more like YOU?"

It took me far too long to realize that, in a world that wants me to conform, my greatest job is to be myself. It's a challenging and rewarding job and nobody can do it as well as me.

#### About the author

Steve Goodier holds a B.A. in anthropology and sociology (New Mexico State University) and an M.Div. degree from Emory University. He is an ordained United Methodist minister, district superintendent in the Rocky Mountain Conference UMC, and the author of numerous books about personal development, motivation, inspiration, and making needed life changes.

#### Reprint Information

You may reprint these articles. Please include this information at the end: By Steve Goodier – <http://www.LifeSupportSystem.com>

#### Original resource:

<http://stevegoodier.blogspot.co.uk/2013/05/something-only-you-can-do.html>

# 19 The Four Parenting Styles in Passive, Aggressive, and Assertive Behavior by Joshua Uebergang

Here's the most common parenting question I get asked, which is a major parenting misconception: Is there one correct way to raise a child? The answer is there is no one right way to raise a child. Like buying a car, becoming friends with your neighbors, or hanging out your clothes to dry, there is no single way to raise a healthy-minded, love-filled, successful child.

Having said that, there are four parenting styles you need to be aware of when raising a child, which explain the best parenting styles for a child. How you use a parenting style is up to your judgment. No single correct way to use the styles exists because there are too many variables in parenting and your child.

The four parenting styles based on research in parenting are:

- Low love and low limits
- Low love and high limits
- High love and low limits
- High love and high limits

The love and limit parenting variables describes how a parent disciplines their child. Rarely does a parent remain in one category because the parenting style changes with time due to aspects like parental experience, moods, and maturity of the child. Parenting skills also evolve over time. The model helps you find the balance of love and limits to suit you and your child's situation.

Firstly, love is not how much the parent loves the child, but the visibility of love in the discipline process. A dad yelling at his son shows a low love parenting style even though he may greatly love his son. If you have a high love parenting style, you will reason, talk, and spend more time with your child.

The second variable, limits, describes the boundaries placed around a child and how these boundaries are enforced. A low limits style involves little control and few limits for a child, while a high limits style involves clear boundaries and limits.

Limits describe whether a parent uses passive, assertive, or aggressive discipline. Passive discipline tends to be hands off parenting; assertive discipline is self-assured and shows respect for others creating a win-win outcome for the parent and child; while aggressive discipline is said to be “old school” with techniques such as smacking, using a wooden space, and yelling.

Of the four parenting styles, you use the one that feels right.

Of the four parenting styles, you use the one that feels right. If your parents used a high limit style and you feel this put you in-line, you will likely adopt similar disciplining techniques. On the contrary, if you felt your parents’ high limit style was distasteful because you hate how they told you what you can and cannot do, you may use a low limit style. It is common to copy your parents’ style or swing to the opposite extreme. However way you were raised, your parents’ style will influence the style that feels right to you.

There’s a problem with what feels right. What feels right may not be what’s best for you and your child. Letting your child do as he or she pleases (a low love and low limit style) may feel good, but it does harm. Research concludes that a low love and high limit parenting style is better than a low love and low limit style because children develop poor behavioral patterns from the low discipline parenting style.



**Think Umeå. Get a Master's degree!**

- modern campus • world class research • 31 000 students
- top class teachers • ranked nr 1 by international students

**Master's programmes:**

- Architecture • Industrial Design • Science • Engineering

 **Umeå University**  
Sweden  
[www.teknat.umu.se/english](http://www.teknat.umu.se/english)



It's easy as a parent to use the low love and low limit style. You avoid any action and dodge possible counteractions when disciplining a child by doing nothing. The low/low parenting style has you play a passive role in shaping your child's behavior and future. If you adopt a passive style of parenting, many factors like culture and the child's peer group – which influences every child to varying degrees – will determine the child's mental and emotional growth.

In one popular episode of Dr. Phil, Phil McGraw was trying to solve a family's discipline problems. The mother he talked to on the show avoided disciplining her children because she was afraid they could perceive her as a "bad mother". She had a low/low parenting style. Dr. Phil got through to the mother by saying something along these lines: "That is an extremely selfish act not disciplining your children when they behave poorly. You are only caring about yourself." The mum completely agreed and began to change her parenting style.

### Parenting Tips for All Styles

Follow these parenting tips from the United States Department of Education, regardless of your parenting style, to better your parenting skills:

- Set a positive example for your child because you are a role model
- Show respect, avoid humiliation, and be polite
- Say "I love you" on a regular basis with pats, hugs, and kisses
- Praise your child while avoiding criticism as much as possible

Avoid the low love and low limits parenting style in passive parenting for your child's benefit – and not selfishly use the parenting style because it is easy on you. It is your responsibility as a parent to set boundaries and be involved in your child's life.

With regards to the high limit style, be careful because it is controlling and not recommended if more assertive and loving styles are available. No one likes to be put on a psychological collar, dragged around, and poked by the person controlling them. Refrain from unnecessary control when effective communication skills can be used otherwise you erect a barrier to communication that makes the person shut you out.

What are you to do then? Researchers and therapists have found the best parenting style that suits various children is a high love style with the right limit style (something you need to figure out). In a situation where the child is under physical danger, you need to be aggressive and set high limits. There are times when aggressive communication is important. I thoroughly explain when and how to be aggressive, passive, and assertive in the sixth chapter of my Communication Secrets of Powerful People program.

In a situation where your child is inappropriately noisy, an assertive approach is recommended because aggression is unwarranted and you need to quieten him or her down. There are many assertive skills and techniques you can use. One simple technique is to provide two options. You can say, “Children, be quiet or go outside, please.” Presenting options prevents a child from feeling controlled while giving you what you want.

Another assertive technique is to state the behavior, effect, and feeling. You could say, “Your squealing (the behavior) is making noise in the house (effect) and has made me distressed (the feeling, which should be a tangible effect for children).”

Lastly a passive or low limit approach where you do nothing could be used when the child spills a drink – provided it was an accident. Clean the mess, but do not yell or punish the child for a simple accident. Sometimes you need to compromise your own needs to create a win-win result. (To discover more about using love and limits, in addition to my program, you may also want to purchase Ronald Huxley’s *Love & Limits: Achieving a Balance in Parenting*.)

Vary your use of limits with the situation. No single style exists to raise a great child. Be loving and be ready to adjust your limiting style to use passive, assertive, or aggressive behavioral discipline. Follow this advice on the four parenting styles to raise a happy, confident child ready for the world.

#### About the author

Joshua Uebergang, known as the “Tower of Power”, is a social skills coach, author, and owner of Australian company Tower of Power where shy guys discover how to win friends and influence people. Visit his blog and sign-up free to get conversation techniques, confidence-boosting strategies, and people-magnetic tips by email, along with blog updates, and more! Go now to [TowerOfPower.com.au](http://TowerOfPower.com.au)

#### Reprint Notice:

You’re allowed to reuse the articles for your company, training manuals, newspapers, blogs, presentations, or other means. I give you permission to reprint any article written by me on TowerOfPower.com.au any number of times. Full details here:

<http://www.towerofpower.com.au/permission-to-reprint>

#### Article source:

<http://www.towerofpower.com.au/the-four-parenting-styles-in-passive-aggressive-and-assertive-behavior>



## 20 Your Authentic Self – Lessons From Sex & the City and Jane Austen by Astrid Baumgardner

I have a confession to make. I – concert music lover, double literature major, French speaker, gourmet cook, world traveler, classical pianist – love Sex and The City! There is something about the smart, provocative dialogue and the genuine pathos of our four hapless heroines as they go through life trying to find love and fulfillment. I am particularly drawn to Carrie Bradshaw – beautiful, quirky, talented, generous, loving. How I often wanted to scream “Carrie, be yourself! What are you doing masquerading around as this superficial glamour chick, playing all those games and falling for men who just don’t appreciate you for the wonderful person that you are?”

Well, finally, after many ups and downs, she finds the right guy-although she has to endure more humiliation as she goes for the glitzy, high-profile wedding and the Vogue spread which again turns out to be not what she is really about. She ends up marrying her true love in a simple ceremony in a sweet vintage outfit surrounded by her nearest and dearest friends.



**Nido**

**Luxurious accommodation**

**Central zone 1 & 2 locations**

**Meet hundreds of international students**

**BOOK NOW and get a £100 voucher from voucherexpress**

**Nido Student Living - London**

**Visit [www.NidoStudentLiving.com/Bookboon](http://www.NidoStudentLiving.com/Bookboon) for more info.**

**+44 (0)20 3102 1060**



So who gets it right?

For that, let's look to Jane Austen's *Emma* (the source of the plot of the movie *Clueless*) and specifically, Mr. Knightly, the heroine's suitor. Mr. Knightly is a 19th Century gentleman farmer who speaks his mind, particularly to our heroine who has not quite figured out who she is. He attends society dinner parties and tends to the affairs of his local government without having to play into the hilarious stereotypes that Jane Austen subtly presents to us because he is not afraid to be himself. Indeed, his neighbors and our heroine are drawn to him just because he is who he is. It is so refreshing to see a character go about his life with utter confidence in himself, conventions be damned! He has no need to explain himself; he just is. Read the book and you will see why he is such a compelling character.

Two very different examples show us that you can sniff out authenticity just about anywhere you look if you have your radar out for it. (A great recent example is the movie *The Education*!)

And why is authenticity important?

When you are able to be your authentic self and act in a way that is consistent with who you really are, you are much more likely to find fulfillment. There is no need to compare yourself to others because those judgments (both of others and of yourself) just do not matter. You radiate positive self-confidence and are able to attract others without thinking about. To me, that's why authenticity is one of the key ingredients to success.

Think of a time when you felt totally yourself.

In a relationship: How freeing to be able to stop playing games and just be, not worrying about what the other person thinks because you trust that you are exactly right! That feeling translates into a much deeper quality relationship, doesn't it?

In your art: Your most cherished performances or creations inevitably happen when you tap into that authentic best self and you are free in that moment to share your gift without fear of judgment, right?

At work: What about when you throw yourself into project and give it your all-out best, using talents that express exactly who you are? Whether you are the junior member of the team or the project leader, you don't have to worry if you are good enough because you have that inner confidence that comes from sharing your gift naturally. You even have the confidence to ask for help if you need it.

That's why so many people find true fulfillment and success when they are able to tap into their authentic selves and begin to live in a way that is in alignment with that authentic self.

Back to Carrie and Mr. Knightly. Why am I so drawn to them? Because from the time I first read Holden Caulfield's rants against the "phonies" in *Catcher in the Rye*, I was struck by how much better life can be when you can be yourself. It took me a while to be able to discover my authentic self and then figure out how to live it, but the rewards are well worth it.

So this month's question is: What does it mean for you to be authentic?

The answer is not an easy one so let's start with some simple steps:

#### ACTION STEPS

1. You can start by identifying your favorite characters or personalities or even people whom you know and admire. Think about why they resonate for you. What about these people is appealing? What does that say about you?
2. What's your favorite thing about yourself?
3. What can you do this month to live that quality?

\* You may want to start keeping a Success Journal as you reflect on these questions since they will provide you with invaluable clues about yourself.

I would love to hear what you come up with so please email me at [astrid@astridbaumgardner.com](mailto:astrid@astridbaumgardner.com).

Here's to your authentic success!

(C) Astrid Baumgardner 2010

#### About the author

Astrid Baumgardner, JD, PCC is a professional life coach and lawyer, Coordinator of Career Strategies and Lecturer at the Yale School of Music and the founder and President of Astrid Baumgardner Coaching + Training, which is dedicated to helping musicians, lawyers and creative professionals take charge of their lives and experience authentic success. In addition to her work at YSM and her individual coaching practice, Astrid presents workshops at leading conservatories and law firms on topics including Career Planning, Goal-Setting, Time Management, Dynamic Communication, Conflict Management and Personal Branding and Networking. She is the author of numerous articles on the various aspects of how to achieve and live authentic success.

#### Reprint Notice:

I would be delighted if you should wish to reprint (for free) any part of this article in your newsletters, blogs, websites, and message boards. Please include the author attribution.

#### Article source:

<http://astridbaumgardner.com/articles/articles-3/34-your-authentic-self-lessons-from-sex-a-the-city-and-jane-austen.html>

## 21 Dissolving Limiting Beliefs by Steve Pavlina

As one of our final steps before we do the passive income walkthrough, I want to address limiting beliefs, which could seriously hold you back from achieving your goals if we don't take steps to address them.

### Types of Limiting Beliefs

Limiting beliefs come in a variety of forms. Here are some of the most common.

#### If-then beliefs

If I try to start a new passive income stream, I'll fail, and that would be bad.

If I express interest in someone, I'll get rejected.

If I succeed in a big way, my friends won't like me as much.

# INNOVATIVE LIKE YOU.

If you're hoping for a truly modern education, one where you're encouraged to speak your mind and to think long-term, both when it comes to your own future and the future of the planet. Then the University of Gothenburg is the place for you.

**Study a Master's programme in Gothenburg, Sweden | [www.gu.se/education](http://www.gu.se/education)**



### Universal Beliefs

People are inherently selfish.  
Children always misbehave.  
Money is the root of all evil.

### Personal and Self-Esteem Beliefs

I'm not good enough.  
I don't matter.  
I'm not lovable.

### How Limiting Beliefs Show Up

Limiting beliefs are usually subconscious. They operate below the level of awareness most of the time. You'll typically notice them by their side effects first, often when setting ambitious goals and trying to pursue them.

Suppose you want to create your first stream of passive income. If you've been following this series since April, then you've already set a goal with a specific dollar amount. Maybe you're aiming for \$100/month for your first stream.

Now if we look at this from a strictly objective perspective, this is an achievable goal. There's nothing spectacular, miraculous, or magical about it. It's been done many times before, and in certain circles it's a rather mundane and commonplace event. This goal is not a special snowflake.

But how many people who set this goal will actually achieve it? Is there some doubt as to whether you'll be one of those who'll succeed?

Many people are in fact going to succeed. For many of them, however, it won't be a smooth ride. They'll succeed not because their ideas are any better or their passion is any greater than most. They'll succeed because they're willing to change their beliefs and self-image to align with their goals instead of letting their past mental patterns get in the way of their goals.

A significant part of this shift in thinking involves letting go of mental clutter in the form of limiting beliefs. With the passive income series, you may encounter beliefs within yourself such as:

It's too hard to earn passive income.  
I'm supposed to go out and get a real job.  
I'm not smart enough to make this work.  
Passive income is too strange for me.  
I should just do what everyone else does.  
Having a regular job is safe and secure.

Many people who succeed in creating passive income streams start out with limiting beliefs like these. After all, it's how modern society conditions us to think.

When you start working on a new goal, your limiting beliefs will rarely express themselves openly. Usually they'll show up by influencing your thinking and behaviors in ways that tear you away from your goal, effectively starving it of attention.

For instance, you'll start thinking about passive income ideas, and as soon as you come up with a decent idea, your mind will begin coming up with reasons why it won't work. You'll talk yourself out of it.

Or you'll share your idea with your most pessimistic friend, subconsciously knowing that your friend will try to talk you out of it. You could have shared the idea with your most optimistic friend instead, who may have encouraged you to go for it.

Or you'll begin working on your idea, and suddenly you'll be struck by the irresistible urge to go out and see a movie or buy a new game.

Or you'll allocate a few hours to work on your goal, and somehow those hours will get chewed up by web surfing...or perhaps some unexpected crisis like, "Oh no...we seem to be out of chocolate! Guess I'd better head to the store... This goal stuff will have to wait a bit longer."

You've consciously decided that the goal is important to you, but you can observe the pattern that your mind isn't fully cooperating with you. It keeps nudging you towards distractions when you need to get some real work done.

The culprit in such situations is quite often limiting beliefs.

### Why Do We Have Limiting Beliefs?

Many limiting beliefs are installed in early childhood, and they do serve a purpose of sorts. They act as mental shortcuts to keep us safe. But the downside is that our brains overgeneralize in these cases, installing patterns that overlook subtle nuances. Hence these patterns are often inaccurate. But to manage our survival, they don't need to be perfectly accurate. They just need to be good enough, especially when fast decisions are required.

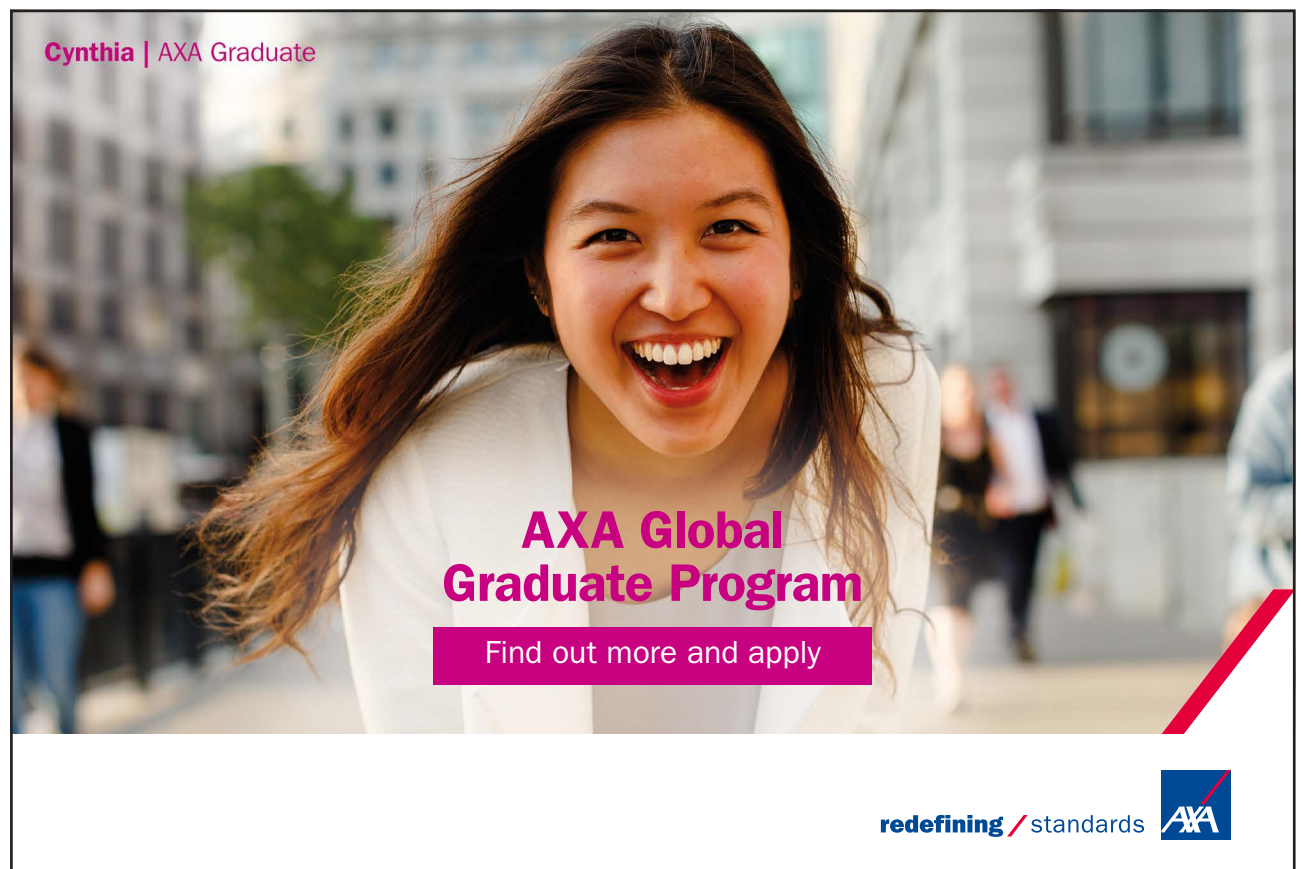
Partly this is due to how our brains evolved, with our human neocortex wrapped around the much more ancient limbic brain. The limbic brain handles our emotions, behavior, motivation, and long-term memory. The neocortex handles conscious thought, higher reasoning, and language.



These different brain areas evolved to help us survive, but many goals are not necessary for survival. Passive income certainly isn't. Your brain isn't naturally wired by default to help you achieve your passive income goal. But fortunately your brain is very flexible and can learn to cooperate with this goal.

When we tackle certain non-survival goals, we can't simply rely on our default mental programming. That programming is good enough to keep us alive, but more often than not, it doesn't perform very well when it comes to loftier ambitions. So we need to refine this programming in some areas, tweaking it to remove unnecessary limitations. We don't want our brains to trigger a fear response, for instance, when we want to switch careers. We want to be able to make sensible decisions based on our knowledge and skills, not on emotional triggers from childhood.

For instance, can you get up on a stage and do public speaking without suffering undue nervousness? Can you comfortably speak off the cuff in front of a group even if you haven't prepared anything? If you can't do that, it's because your limbic brain is triggering fear and danger signals that are paralyzing you. Physically you could do it since all you need to do is get up and talk. Speaking is just talking. It's really not that complicated.



**Cynthia | AXA Graduate**

**AXA Global Graduate Program**

Find out more and apply

redefining / standards AXA

Similarly, can you go create a new stream of passive income if that's what you want? The action steps are pretty easy. But will your limbic brain, in charge of emotion and motivation, cooperate with your decision? You may often find that it won't. It triggers a phantom threat to your survival and makes you avoid actions that could put you in danger, even if the danger is imaginary. As this bubbles up to your neocortex, you're forced to generate all manner of excuses to explain your inability to take action.

Playing it safe and avoiding areas where predators might be found makes sense. It's okay if we overgeneralize in some survival situations since one mistake there could be fatal, especially during childhood. But lesser risks like embarrassment or a financial setback aren't in the same ballpark as genuine threats, even though they can trigger similar responses in your thoughts and behaviors. You can afford to endure some failure in your work and financial life for the sake of learning and growth; in fact, it's quite beneficial to do so.

Like it or not, you're still a mammal, and so you've inherited some of that mammalian mental baggage. On the bright side, you owe this part a lot of credit for enabling you to exist in the first place. On the other hand, you'll need to compensate for this baggage, assuming you'd like to live a richer life than most other mammals.

#### Conscious Thinking vs. Unconscious Beliefs

You have a few basic options for dealing with unconscious limiting beliefs.

Your first option is to ignore them. Let these mental subroutines continue to run as they will. If you do this, you'll most likely live an okay and mostly average life, assuming your limiting beliefs aren't too extreme. You won't get anywhere close to your potential as a conscious human being, but you can still be a proud and worthy mammal. If it's okay to continue your life on pretty much the same terms as you've been living it, then there's no real mandate to deal with your limiting beliefs. They'll exert a lot of control over how your life turns out, but if you don't mind experiencing more of the same, that's your choice to make. This is essentially the same as accepting that your past programming is the real you.

Your second option is to try to overpower your limiting beliefs. You can attempt to use your force of will to resist by pushing yourself to take action again and again. You may put systems in place to force yourself to get moving and keep moving, such as by increasing the negative consequences of quitting. This can be done, but the effects are usually very short-lived, and it can be mentally exhausting to keep it up. This strategy essentially means that one part of your brain is fighting another.

The third option is to dissolve your limiting beliefs. Instead of resisting them, you can release them. By dissolving a limiting belief, you can remove it permanently so that it no longer subconsciously affects your thinking. Essentially this means that you're deleting the old subroutines that got installed in early childhood since as an adult, you no longer need them. In place of the old beliefs, you could try to install new ones, but you could also leave the slate blank and allow your brain's own logical thinking to fill in the gap.

As an adult you no longer need childhood beliefs to keep you safe. You can use your fully developed neocortex to make more intelligent decisions. You can base your decisions on your knowledge, life experience, skills, and outcome predictions. These mental skills were less developed when you were a child, and so you needed your limbic brain to protect you. But in adulthood you can use your life experience and knowledge to determine that lions may still be dangerous while public speaking generally isn't.

It would be terrific if our brains automatically did this garbage collection as we got older. To some extent they do, but it seems to be a very gradual process. We also tend to become less emotional as we age, which can reduce the effects of childhood conditioning. But we can still speed this process along by doing some manual garbage collection to clear out the clutter of limiting beliefs that we no longer need. I really think it's wise to do this, especially during our 20s and 30s, so these beliefs don't restrict the kinds of goals we can set and accomplish in life.

### Dissolving Limiting Beliefs

I could walk you through the steps to dissolve a limiting belief, but Morty Lefkoe has already put that process online, so it's easiest to simply refer you to there since you can test it for free. You'll understand it best if you experience it first-hand, and you gain the side benefit of eliminating one of your own limiting beliefs for good.

If you suspect you have limiting beliefs that are holding you back, especially with respect to our passive income series, Morty's process will help you identify and dissolve them. For each belief, the process takes about 20 minutes, and all you really need to do is watch a video.

In less than 24 hours, I'm heading to the airport for another travel adventure, and I probably won't be blogging much while I'm gone. When I get back, I'll be just about ready to begin the walkthrough of creating a new passive income stream from scratch.

While I'm away, this would be a good time to get those pesky limiting beliefs out of your way, so you don't have to worry about them coming back to haunt you later. Then if you wish to follow along in creating your own new stream of income while I blog about creating mine, you won't be fighting yourself in your own mind. You can simply flow along with the action steps as I do them myself.

Also think of how nice it will be to go off on your own travel adventures with all your trip expenses covered by your income streams, so that you continue to earn just as much income while you're away. No need to ask anyone's approval or permission – you can just go. Remember that this isn't some crazy fantasy. If you can dissolve those limiting beliefs that are getting in your way and get into the flow of action, this is all very doable. Just don't tell your boss what you're up to. ;)

#### About the author

Steve Pavlina (born April 14, 1971) is an American self-help author, motivational speaker and entrepreneur. He is the author of the web site [stevepavlina.com](http://stevepavlina.com) and the book *Personal Development for Smart People*. Pavlina's blog covers topics such as personal development and success; consciousness and courage; productivity, motivation and goal setting; career, wealth and business; and spirituality. (Wikipedia)

#### Reprint Notice

On December 15, 2010, Steve Pavlina released all the content he had created till that date (excluding his book *Personal Development For Smart People*) and all content he would create in the future (unless explicitly specified) in the public domain.

See his "Uncopyright notice":

<http://www.stevepavlina.com/blog/2010/12/releasing-my-copyrights/>

Original resource:

<http://www.stevepavlina.com/blog/2012/07/dissolving-limiting-beliefs/>



**Scholarships**

**Open your mind to new opportunities**

With 31,000 students, Linnaeus University is one of the larger universities in Sweden. We are a modern university, known for our strong international profile. Every year more than 1,600 international students from all over the world choose to enjoy the friendly atmosphere and active student life at Linnaeus University. Welcome to join us!

**Linnaeus University**  
Sweden

**Lnu.se**

**Bachelor programmes in**  
Business & Economics | Computer Science/IT | Design | Mathematics

**Master programmes in**  
Business & Economics | Behavioural Sciences | Computer Science/IT | Cultural Studies & Social Sciences | Design | Mathematics | Natural Sciences | Technology & Engineering

**Summer Academy courses**

## 22 Assertive Communication by Dennis Heath

An essential component of effective leadership is assertiveness. But what is assertiveness and where is the boundary between assertive and aggressive. This article written by Dennis Heath, an experienced Executive Coach, seeks to define assertiveness and demonstrate its use in the corporate context.

One of the most common areas for development that arises when coaching executives is the need for more assertiveness. The problem is that “assertive” is often confused with “aggressive” or dictatorial.

Those that subscribe to an aggressive style to produce results may well deliver the goods in the short term. However, over the long term, team members will feel disrespected, become demoralized and look for opportunities outside the organisation. The longer term outcome is a steady decline in results as attrition rates climb, which also affects members of related departments as they see their colleagues being victims of aggressive or bullying behaviour. Such behaviour is a common career derailer, particularly for those in senior positions or those who are highly ambitious.

At the other end of the spectrum are passive managers. Managers who fail to assert themselves have a similar, negative impact on morale and productivity. Passive managers can be indecisive, poor mentors, uninspiring and equally as damaging as Mr. Aggressive. Team members working for a passive manager may find it hard to gain support for their ideas and initiatives, be uncertain about where their focus should be and concerned about the ability of their manager to represent their needs and concerns at senior level.

Assertive managers are able to lead, direct and motivate without the need to bang the table, play the dictator or criticize their direct reports. Some managers however, hesitate to embrace assertiveness because they mistakenly equate it to aggressive behaviour. Assertiveness and aggression are two entirely different things. Whilst aggression is emotional and counter-productive, assertiveness is all about clarity of communication and intent. An assertive statement or request has five key elements:

1. It is not open to misinterpretation.
2. There is absolute clarity of what the speaker requires from the listener.
3. It is free of negative or aggressive emotion.
4. Body language is congruent with the spoken words.
5. Words used and body language show respect to the receiver.

As well as enabling a manager to give clear, unequivocal direction and leadership, assertiveness has an important role to play in giving positive motivational messages to team members. Compare the following two statements:

“Jim, well done on the ABC company project”.

“Jim, I’m really impressed with the way you concluded the ABC project. Your powers of diplomacy at senior level with the customer were exemplary. Well done”.

Which one will have the greater impact on Jim? The first statement is congratulatory but is more of a throw away comment. It is praise and therefore somewhat motivational, but look at the power of the second statement. It conveys a greater level of appreciation but more than that, also points out a particular skill that Jim has demonstrated. Does Jim know exactly what he excelled at by the second statement? What skill is Jim going to focus on developing further? How much confidence will he have in his powers of diplomacy the next time he is put in critical situation with a customer? This is an example of the positive, motivational power of assertive communication.

On the other side of the coin, managers sometimes need to correct team members’ errors or tackle poor performance. Assertive communication is key in giving constructive feedback to improve performance and provide direction. Consider the two following statements:

“Bob, that report you produced was just a load of waffle. It’s no use to me. Do it again”.

“Bob, the report you produced needs more facts and statistics to be impactful. I would like you to redo it split into three chapters, history of the business to date, current situation and projections up to 2008. Include graphs of revenue and profit in each chapter. I need it to be completed by next Friday. I hope everything is clear but if not, please let me know?”

The first statement merely tells Bob he’s done a bad job and has not met expectations. It tells him nothing about what needs to be done to correct his error. The second statement points out exactly what has gone wrong, what needs to be done and how to put things right. Which statement is the more respectful towards Bob? Which statement is going to help Bob with report writing in the future?



Another situation where assertiveness is essential is the ability to say “no” to requests from colleagues. A frequent complaint from my clients is that they are constantly interrupted by people wandering into their office and wanting time to discuss an issue there and then. Typically they react in one of two ways. One is to say, in an impatient tone of voice, “I’m sorry I’m up to my eyes here. No time. It will have to wait”. [Aggressive]. The other approach is to say, “OK. What’s the problem?” [Passive] In the first instance the person wanting attention goes away feeling that they are unimportant and somewhat offended by the unconditional rejection. In the second, the manager relents and is diverted from the task they were focused on, ending up with impromptu discussions that steal time from priority work.

The assertive manager handles interruptions by saying, “I have some priority tasks I need to deal with right now and I should be finished by lunchtime. If you come back at 2pm we’ll shut the door and you’ll have my full attention. Is that OK?” The assertive response shuts down the interruption but at the same time shows respect for the individual and the issue they want to discuss. Of course, the response that comes back might be, “But it will only take a minute.” The assertive repost is to restate the initial invitation to come back at 2pm making sure that tone and expression match the positive intention of the words.

An advertisement for SKF. It features a woman with long dark hair smiling in the foreground, with a wind turbine in the background against a blue sky. The text 'Brain power' is in large white letters. To the right, there is a block of text about wind energy and SKF's role. At the bottom left, it says 'Plug into The Power of Knowledge Engineering. Visit us at www.skf.com/knowledge'. The SKF logo is at the bottom right.

# Brain power

By 2020, wind could provide one-tenth of our planet's electricity needs. Already today, SKF's innovative know-how is crucial to running a large proportion of the world's wind turbines.

Up to 25 % of the generating costs relate to maintenance. These can be reduced dramatically thanks to our systems for on-line condition monitoring and automatic lubrication. We help make it more economical to create cleaner, cheaper energy out of thin air.

By sharing our experience, expertise, and creativity, industries can boost performance beyond expectations. Therefore we need the best employees who can meet this challenge!

The Power of Knowledge Engineering

Plug into The Power of Knowledge Engineering.  
Visit us at [www.skf.com/knowledge](http://www.skf.com/knowledge)

**SKF**

Body language is also an important component of assertiveness. As any seminar on communication skills will tell you, 70%+ of what people receive from our messages is through body language. In assertive communication both verbal and body language must match to be effective. Keep in mind the following when it comes to assertive body language:

- Friendly facial expression to show respect to the listener. [But be careful not to smile widely when dealing with a serious situation.]
- Maintain eye contact to show that you are actively listening to the other person.
- Adopt a relaxed but upright stance when making your assertive statement.
- Keep your hands in an open position, arms not crossed nor hands clasped in front of you conveying a defensive or apologetic signal.

Whether you are communicating up the hierarchy, downwards or with peers in the organisation, assertiveness in appropriate situations will win you friends and supporters. With practice and when used wisely, assertive behaviour can motivate, reduce communication errors, save time and make for a happier and more productive working environment.

#### About the author

An original article by Dennis Heath, an Executive Coach and Managing Director of WayAhead Leadership Solutions Pte Ltd, first published in the Singapore Straits Times in 2003 under the title “Hit Your Peak Performance”. The WayAhead web site can be found at: <http://www.wayahead.com.sg>

#### Reprint Notice:

Any article may be reprinted and distributed with no charge in your ezine, on your website, or in your print newsletter provided

You include the article in its entirety, unchanged (website links should be in clickable hyperlinked format)

Byline, author's statement of copyright and signature must remain intact

You notify Articles Factory of intent to publish and send a courtesy copy or link

Article source should be indicated as: Source: Free Articles from ArticlesFactory.com

#### Article source:

<http://www.articlesfactory.com/articles/self-help/assertive-communication.html>

## 23 Tempering Our Temper by Steve Goodier

A young girl came into the house with a tear in her pants. Her mother was exasperated, as this had happened too many times before. At her wits end, she said to her daughter, “Now you go into your room, take off those pants, and sew up that tear!” The poor child had never held needle and thread in her life.

So understandably, a little while later her mother saw the pants crumpled on the floor of her daughter’s bedroom -- still torn. She looked around for her daughter. Spying the basement light on, she called down the stairs, “Are you down there running around with your pants off?”

A big voice boomed up, “No ma’am. I’m reading the gas meter.”

Of course, what parent can’t relate to her exasperation?

On the other hand, I DO have trouble understanding the guy in Los Angeles who was arrested for negligent discharge of a weapon after shooting his toilet bowl five times with a handgun (and yes, this is true). Why did he assault the commode? He apparently exploded when he couldn’t extract a hair brush his daughter flushed down.

He might benefit from the advice of one of America’s great presidents, Thomas Jefferson, who cautioned, “When angry, count to ten before you speak; if very angry, count to 100.” I think it applies to discharging weapons, too.

Maybe another technique works better for you. One husband asked his wife, “When I get mad at you, you never fight back. How do you control your anger?”

She smiled at him. “I clean the toilet bowl.” (Uh-oh, toilets again.)

“How does that help?”

“I use your toothbrush,” she said sweetly.

It’s not that anger is a bad thing in itself. A good bit of fire in the belly may be needed to right the world’s wrongs. But this isn’t about righteous indignation. It’s about tempering our temper.

I've seen marriages destroyed, careers derailed and relationships of all kinds decimated by uncontrolled rage. It's no wonder all of the world's great religions have something to say about it. To name a few, the Buddha said, "You will not be punished for your anger, you will be punished by your anger." The prophet Muhammad said, "He is not strong and powerful who throws people down, but he is strong who withholds himself from anger." And in Christian scripture Jesus instructs, "If someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also." You get the idea.

I like the motto Mahatma Gandhi hung on his wall at Sevagram:

"When you are in the right,  
You can afford to keep your temper;  
When you are in the wrong,  
You can't afford to lose it."

I'm sure I could never say it better.

#### About the author

Steve Goodier holds a B.A. in anthropology and sociology (New Mexico State University) and an M.Div. degree from Emory University. He is an ordained United Methodist minister, district superintendent in the Rocky Mountain Conference UMC, and the author of numerous books about personal development, motivation, inspiration, and making needed life changes.

#### Reprint Information

You may reprint these articles. Please include this information at the end: By Steve Goodier –

<http://www.LifeSupportSystem.com>

Original resource:

<http://stevegoodier.blogspot.co.uk/2011/08/tempering-our-temper.html>

## 24 Recognising a Bullying Boss by David Diamond

I recently received the following in an email:

“I have just moved to a new department where I started working for a new boss. I think I am being bullied by her. How can I tell if I am right and, if I am, what can I do about it?”

Well, let's start by examining what bullying is. Bullying is any form of misuse of power. It's what happens when someone takes away your right to choose your own actions, words, or feelings. Bullying happens when you allow two things to happen. First, you give someone power over you. Second, you allow them to use their power to diminish you in a way that you find unacceptable. Does this fit in with what is happening to you?

Yes. I do feel threatened by my boss. She is physically intimidating and likes to make her points by invading my personal space, often coming very close to me in a threatening way. She can be very aggressive and has thrown things when angry. She insists that I meet her deadlines and, even when I work late and produce what she wants, she'll find fault. She's often sarcastic about my work, especially in front of others.

### Trust and responsibility

NNE and Pharmaplan have joined forces to create NNE Pharmaplan, the world's leading engineering and consultancy company focused entirely on the pharma and biotech industries.

Inés Aréizaga Esteva (Spain), 25 years old  
Education: Chemical Engineer

– You have to be proactive and open-minded as a newcomer and make it clear to your colleagues what you are able to cope. The pharmaceutical field is new to me. But busy as they are, most of my colleagues find the time to teach me, and they also trust me. Even though it was a bit hard at first, I can feel over time that I am beginning to be taken seriously and that my contribution is appreciated.



NNE Pharmaplan is the world's leading engineering and consultancy company focused entirely on the pharma and biotech industries. We employ more than 1500 people worldwide and offer global reach and local knowledge along with our all-encompassing list of services.  
[nnepharmaplan.com](http://nnepharmaplan.com)

nne pharmaplan®



And how does this make you feel?

Weak, belittled, humiliated. My confidence is at rock bottom and I just feel I can't do anything right. I'm now starting to agree with her about my work which was always very good before I moved to her department.

Everything you say suggests that you are right to believe your boss is bullying you. The important thing for you, your work, and your personal integrity is your response.

The first thing to realize is that, when you are being bullied, you and your bully don't see things the same way. You see the boss-subordinate relationship as a win-win one. Your boss almost certainly sees it as a win-lose one. All bullies are insecure. Because their world view is win-lose, they actually think you are out to beat them. Their response is to put you down and take power from you. So, start by understanding that there is nothing wrong with you, your attitude, or your work.

I try to do that and I've told her as much but it doesn't make any difference.

Of course not. Remember that she is the one who feels threatened by you because of the way she sees you. Whenever you defend yourself, it only makes things worse because she sees your defence as an attack on her.

OK. So what can I do?

In one sentence, stop allowing her to have power over you. For this, you need to know that people only have power if you let them. The boss is only powerful if you believe they are or if they threaten you with things that you think are important but don't control, such as your pay, your bonus, your working hours, the quality of your work, and the actual job itself. As long as you rate these as important but don't feel in control of them, you make yourself vulnerable to bullying bosses. Instead, believe in yourself, know your own value, and work on eliminating your fears. You can do this by learning to be more assertive. Assertiveness training will teach you the right confident mindset. It will give you many tricks and techniques to use when someone tries to put you down. It will help you handle what were once frightening situations in a calm, non-confrontational manner so that, whatever the other person does, you will emerge feeling good about yourself.

Yes, I think you're right? But wouldn't it be best to simply report them to HR or their boss?

It's best to avoid this unless your boss breaks a clear company rule, for example, becomes physically abusive. Aim first to learn how to handle your own thoughts, feelings and reactions. Not only will you emerge successfully from this situation but you will have gained important life skills that you can apply again and again to any other relationship.



So, what's the first thing I should do in responding to a bullying boss?

Quite simply, look and sound assertive. Looking assertive means having an appearance of confidence, self-assurance, and ease with yourself, whatever someone else says or does. To sound assertive, speak in ways that make you feel good without making others feel bad.

Won't this antagonise my boss?

No. Remember, your boss bullies you because of her win-lose world view. What you're doing is showing her you're not playing this game by changing your "losing" role to a "winning" one while letting her know that she can "win" as well.

How do you mean?

Well, let's take a typical example of bullying, unfair criticism. In your previous "win-lose" stance, you felt humiliated and cowed. In your new "win-win" stance, it's impossible for you to feel or act submissively.

By doing what?

Well, for example, you could find something in the criticism that you agree with and then ask your boss for some help on how you could change. Another technique is "fogging".

What's "fogging"?

It's a way of not acknowledging the aggression, criticism or hurt directed at you. Instead, you calmly consider what's true about the criticism that you could learn from. In one stroke, you show your bullying boss that their criticism may be right. It's no longer bullying but something you are willing to consider.

Right. So, assertiveness is the secret to handling a bullying boss?

Yes, without doubt. The beauty is, you can learn to become more and more assertive with every day until it becomes part of who you are. Think win-win, sound win-win, look win-win. And then, by refusing to be vulnerable, submissive to their power, and on the losing side, you'll show them that bullying is pointless and no longer necessary in your relationship.

About the author

David Diamond is an article contributor of ManageTrainLearn, the site that will change the way you learn forever. Download free samples of the biggest range of management and personal development materials anywhere and experience learning like you always dreamed possible; <http://www.managetrainlearn.com>

#### Reprint notice

You may reprint and re-publish all articles on ManageTrainLearn freely, for personal as well as business use, as long as you do not change the substantive text, add this reprint notice, and include a link to <http://www.managetrainlearn.com>

#### Article Source:

<http://www.managetrainlearn.com/page/recognising-a-bullying-boss> and  
<http://www.managetrainlearn.com/page/responding-to-a-bullying-boss>

This e-book  
*is made with*  
**SetaPDF**





**SETASIGN**

PDF components for **PHP** developers

**www.setasign.com**



## 25 The Humility Advantage: How Less Ego Creates More Sales by Jeff Mowatt

See if this applies to you or your team members in your organization: You've been working in your industry for several years. Your responses to requests from customers, prospects and co-workers are fast and accurate. You know your stuff and your product knowledge is one of your greatest strengths. If this is the case, then the bad news is that your extensive knowledge may also be one of your greatest weaknesses. The reason – you may be inadvertently coming across as being arrogant and insensitive.

I'm not suggesting that you have a holier-than-thou attitude or that you are unfriendly. It's just that you are so quick with your answers and recommendations that others feel like you haven't really been listening to their needs (even though you have). In other words, the greater your expertise, the more likely it is that you are unintentionally rubbing people the wrong way. The good news is that there's an easy way to prevent this misconception that I call The Humility Advantage©.

Working with over a hundred sales and service teams over the years, I've found there are at least seven key opportunities where a little employee humility pays-off substantially. Here are three that I often share in my Influence with Ease® speeches and seminars.

### Mention your Homework

Several years ago, a couple of branding consultants approached me about enlisting their services. My first thought was that these folks knew nothing about my company or my industry, so why on earth should I pay their sizable fees. I only agreed to meet with them because a colleague said they'd done good work for his firm.

When I sat down with the consultants, they did not start asking me lots of questions about me and my industry. (That would have confirmed to me that they really didn't know my business world and would have ended their chances of selling me their services). Instead, they began the meeting explaining that, by way of preparation, they'd been chatting with some of my colleagues and customers to find out their impressions of my company's services. Then, they asked if I would like to hear the word-on-the-street. As you can imagine, that got my attention. And the ensuing conversation led me to engage their services.

When you talk with potential customers, do you begin the conversation by mentioning the homework you've done on their company? If not, you're missing an opportunity to let them know that you are truly interested in them.

Rather than starting a sales conversation by asking about their needs, try commenting on something you saw on their website or read about them in an industry journal. It's a powerful way to confirm to others that you're knowledgeable without coming across as one who brags. It's one of the first steps in applying the humility advantage.

#### Confirm your Understanding

If you've participated as an audience member in one of my live presentations, you might have seen me step off the stage pretending to be a waiter taking food orders from several audience members as if they're at a restaurant. During this skit, rather than order directly from a menu, each patron has a special request such as, "I'll have the salad with the meal." or "I'd like to have fruit instead of fries," etc. As the waiter, I don't write any of this down, and as you've likely guessed, when I walk away, the patrons assume that there is no way I'm going to get all the orders straight.

There's the problem. I may have listened accurately to each request, but the emotions I left with my customers are worry and lack of confidence in my service.

As an experienced professional in your industry, you may be a great listener, but are you perceived as such? Being regarded as a poor listener is a surefire way to kill a sale or curtail your career. Fortunately, by using a little humility, this is easy to correct. In the waiter demonstration, I redo the same order-taking scenario, except the second time after taking the orders, I say, "Let me make sure I've got this straight. You would like yours with fruit instead of fries..." (I then confirm everyone's special request accurately).

Suddenly, the restaurant patrons feel good about the quality of my service. Here's the key; I repeated my understanding of their needs with the phrase, "Let me make sure I've got this straight." Fact is, I knew I had it straight, but the customer didn't. The catch is, if my ego were running my life I'd never say, "Let me make sure I've got this straight." Hence the Humility Advantage.

Here's one more application:

#### Ask Permission to Present

You've probably heard the expression that people don't like to be sold-to, but they love to buy. That means that before you present the benefits of your products or services, remember to ask for permission. When you thread all these techniques together, a sales conversation might start by pointing out the homework you've done on the other person. Then ask about their needs, confirming your understanding with, "Let me make sure I've got this straight..." Later, ask permission to present with, "Based on what you've told me, I do have some thoughts. Would you like to hear a couple of options that I think would fit for you?" Once the other person agrees, they'll feel less like they are being forced, and more like they are being helped.

#### About the author

Customer service strategist and professional speaker, Jeff Mowatt is an authority on The Art of Client Service...Influence with Ease®. For Jeff's other tips, self-study resources, and training services on establishing rapport, click <http://www.jeffmowatt.com/individual/greetingcustomers.html>

#### Reprint notice:

You are welcome to reprint them as an ongoing column or as stand alone articles. Feel free to make minor edits to customize to suit your unique needs. When reprinting, please send us a copy of your publication that includes our articles. To receive automatic updates when Jeff releases a new article, please email us directly at [info@jeffmowatt.com](mailto:info@jeffmowatt.com).

<http://www.jeffmowatt.com/articles/index.html>

#### Original article

<http://www.jeffmowatt.com/articles/humilityadvantage.html>