



THE
ASSERTIVENESS
Workbook

CARA TUTTLE
EMBRACE ASSERTIVENESS © 2024



HOW TO USE THIS WORKBOOK

Welcome!

This workbook may be completed in order, or you may flip through it and find the exercises most relevant and inspirational for you. While designed as a companion to one of my workshops or the book *Drowning in Timidity: Women Politeness and the Power of Assertive Living*, it is not necessary to have read the book for these exercises to be useful. I hope you find clarity and feel emboldened as you work through the prompts. Enjoy!

Cara

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Here we go!

GETTING STARTED

FIND A COMFORTABLE SPACE WITH SOME PRIVACY



MAXIMIZING YOUR TIME

- TRY TO FIND ALONE TIME FOR THIS WORK
 - CREATE A CALENDAR REMINDER FOR COMPLETING EXERCISES
 - TRY TO FIND A ROUTINE TIME THAT WORKS FOR YOU
 - DO THE EXERCISES THAT MOTIVATE YOU
 - COME BACK TO THE TOUGH ONES WHEN YOU CAN FOCUS
 - REWARD YOURSELF FOR WORK WELL DONE
-



GENTLE REMINDERS

- ◆ THIS WORK MAY BRING UP UNCOMFORTABLE MEMORIES
 - ◆ SOME EXERCISES MAY FEEL CHALLENGING
 - ◆ YOU'LL LIKELY FEEL TEMPTED TO SAY, "WELL, BUT..."
 - ◆ THERE IS ALWAYS SOMETHING TO DO, SOME ACTION TO TAKE
 - ◆ BRAINSTORM POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS, WORK-AROUNDS EVEN WHEN SOLUTIONS SEEM IMPOSSIBLE
-



FOCUS ON RESULTS

- IT'S OKAY IF YOUR PROGRESS FEELS LIKE BABY STEPS
- EVERYONE HAS TO START SOMEWHERE
- THIS WILL BE A PROCESS OF TRY AND TRY AGAIN
- THIS IS A STRATEGY FOR CONTROLLING YOURSELF, NOT OTHERS
- REMEMBER, SOMETIMES THE EFFORT (RATHER THAN OUTCOME) IS ITS OWN REWARD.



THE PATH *to* ASSERTIVENESS

Within this workbook are exercises to guide your journey from hesitation or timidity toward assertive living. Assertiveness is a muscle we must build and then flex, as needed. Assertiveness is the method of advocating for self while still valuing and respecting others. Since assertiveness has as its core a sense of balance – balancing the needs or wants of self in relation to others – assertiveness training can help maintain equilibrium in our lives. This balance can help bring about more egalitarian relationships, and don't we all want better, stronger, healthier relationships?

This journey starts with you. You may experience doubt and discomfort, but push through – this is how growth occurs. You may find that the usefulness of exercising assertiveness on your own behalf soon extends to family and friends and then to the world around you. Assertive women are my greatest cheerleaders, my occasional safety net, and my closest friends. They bolster my self-confidence, self-respect, and self-worth. Through these mutually affirming relationships, I have come to believe assertiveness training holds the power to ultimately build the sisterhood and solidarity many of us have always wanted. Let's get started!

DATE

ASSERTIVENESS SELF CHECK-IN

Consider your responses to the following questions.

If someone used the word "assertive" to describe me, I would feel:

My assertive human role models are:

I chose these role models because...

My short-term assertiveness building goals are:

My long-term assertiveness building goals are:

DATE:

STRENGTH IN NUMBERS

IDENTIFY 6 VALUES, QUALITIES, OR SKILLS THAT MAKE YOU FEEL STRONG, CAPABLE, AND WORTHY OF THE LIFE YOU WANT

The image contains six large, light gray circles arranged in a hexagonal pattern. Each circle is empty except for a white curved line on its right side, which serves as a visual cue for writing. These circles are intended for the user to identify and write down six values, qualities, or skills that make them feel strong, capable, and worthy of the life they want.

SELF-AWARENESS

ASSESSMENT

READ THE PROMPTS BELOW AND ENTER THE FIRST THING THAT COMES TO MIND. THERE ARE NO WRONG ANSWERS HERE. THE BETTER WE KNOW AND UNDERSTAND OURSELVES, THE BETTER WE CAN ASSERT OURSELVES WHEN IT MATTERS.

I AM A HUMAN BEING THAT...

LOVES	
WANTS TO	
IS DRIVEN BY	
IS INSPIRED BY	
HAS A HABIT OF	
IS HAPPIEST WHEN	
BELIEVES IN	
WOULD GIVE	
WILL ONE DAY	
HAS THE GOAL OF	
WHO NOTICES	
IS AFRAID OF	

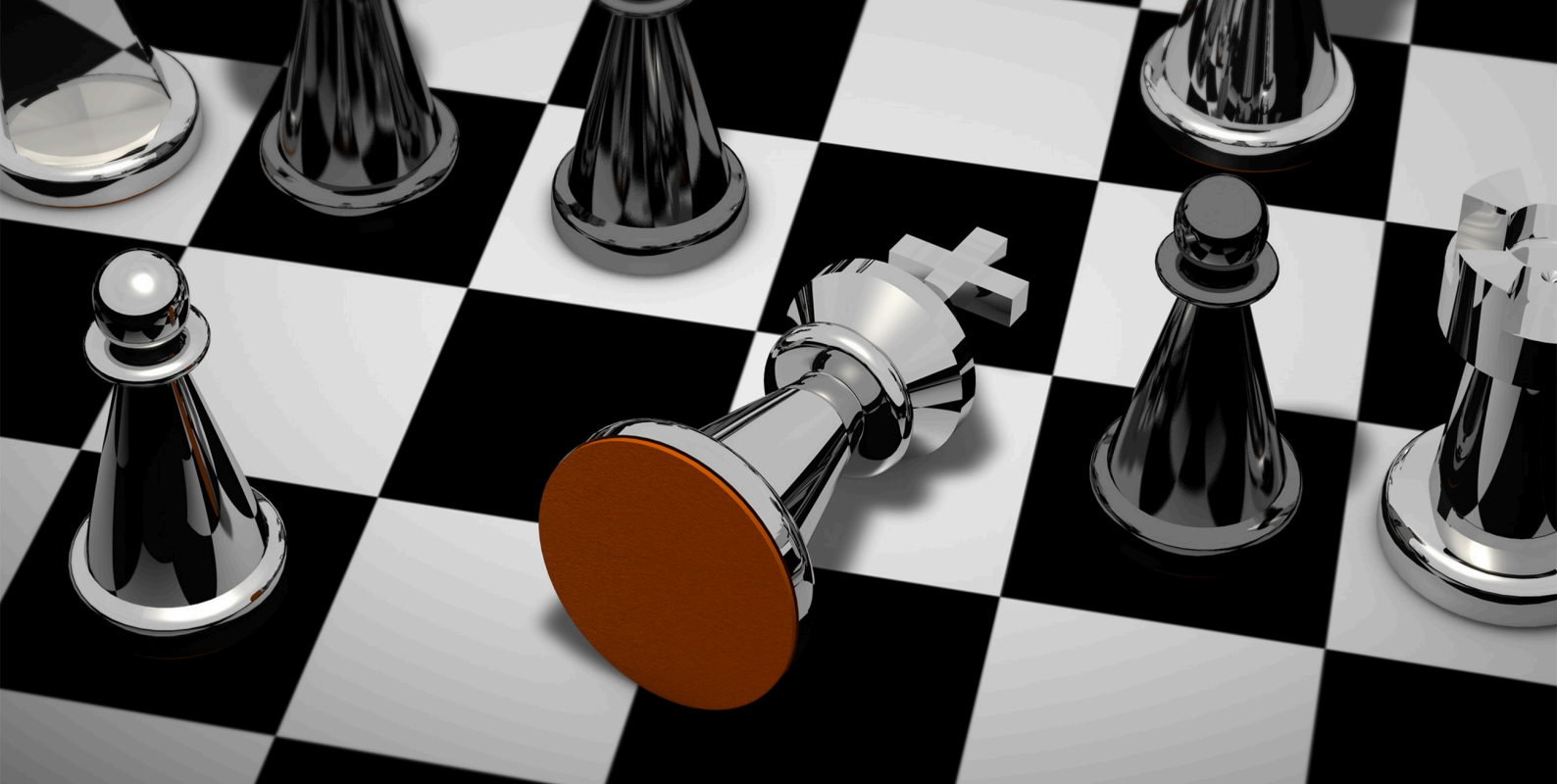
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THE PATH *to* ASSERTIVENESS

Within the remaining pages of the workbook are exercises to guide your journey from hesitation or timidity toward assertive living. We've done some self-reflection. Now it's time to learn new skills. Assertiveness is a muscle we must build and then flex, as needed. Assertiveness is the method of advocating for self while still valuing and respecting others. Since assertiveness has as its core a sense of balance – balancing the needs or wants of self in relation to others – assertiveness training can help maintain equilibrium in our lives. This balance can help bring about more egalitarian relationships, and don't we all want better, stronger, healthier relationships?

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Polite. Adjective. Showing or characterized by correct social usage; marked by an appearance of consideration, tact, deference, or courtesy; marked by a lack of roughness or crudities. *Merriam-Webster.*

Politeness is generally considered useful, appropriate behavior. Sure. And I hope for the most part, you engage with other humans with consideration and respect. Yet I do not want us to retreat into politeness when our courage is waning or use expectations of politeness as an excuse to hold ourselves back. If you consider the definition of the word “politeness,” you may be surprised at how similar the definition is to how we are applying assertiveness here. Whether you consult Merriam-Webster or Dictionary.com, the definitions explain politeness as engaging with courtesy, tact, consideration, and respect.[i] Because there is a difference in engaging assertively and aggressively, you can absolutely be both assertive and polite at the same time.

A few dated definitions of politeness do include deference among its characteristics, and for women, especially, the challenge may be in learning how to use that deference sparingly and strategically.

Women remain subject to gendered societal expectations, while we’ve also internalized messages about equity, equality, and advancement that now span generations. This complicated status quo means that many a woman develops career aspirations and knows she is expected to engage in competitive American work cultures, and so works to build confidence engaging in public speaking, salary negotiation, raising her hand, leaning forward, leaning in. And yet our progress seems slow – slower than expected and with less joy and less money along the way. Many women come to believe this is an individual problem – they didn’t work hard enough, they don’t have what it takes – when actually we’re all very much still navigating the growing pains of women’s full participation in the workforce, while also struggling to get our efforts to value diversity and build cultures of inclusion and belonging in our schools, professions, and communities for anyone is who isn’t white, heterosexual, cisgender, able-bodied, and male. (And even among them, class remains a significant divide.)

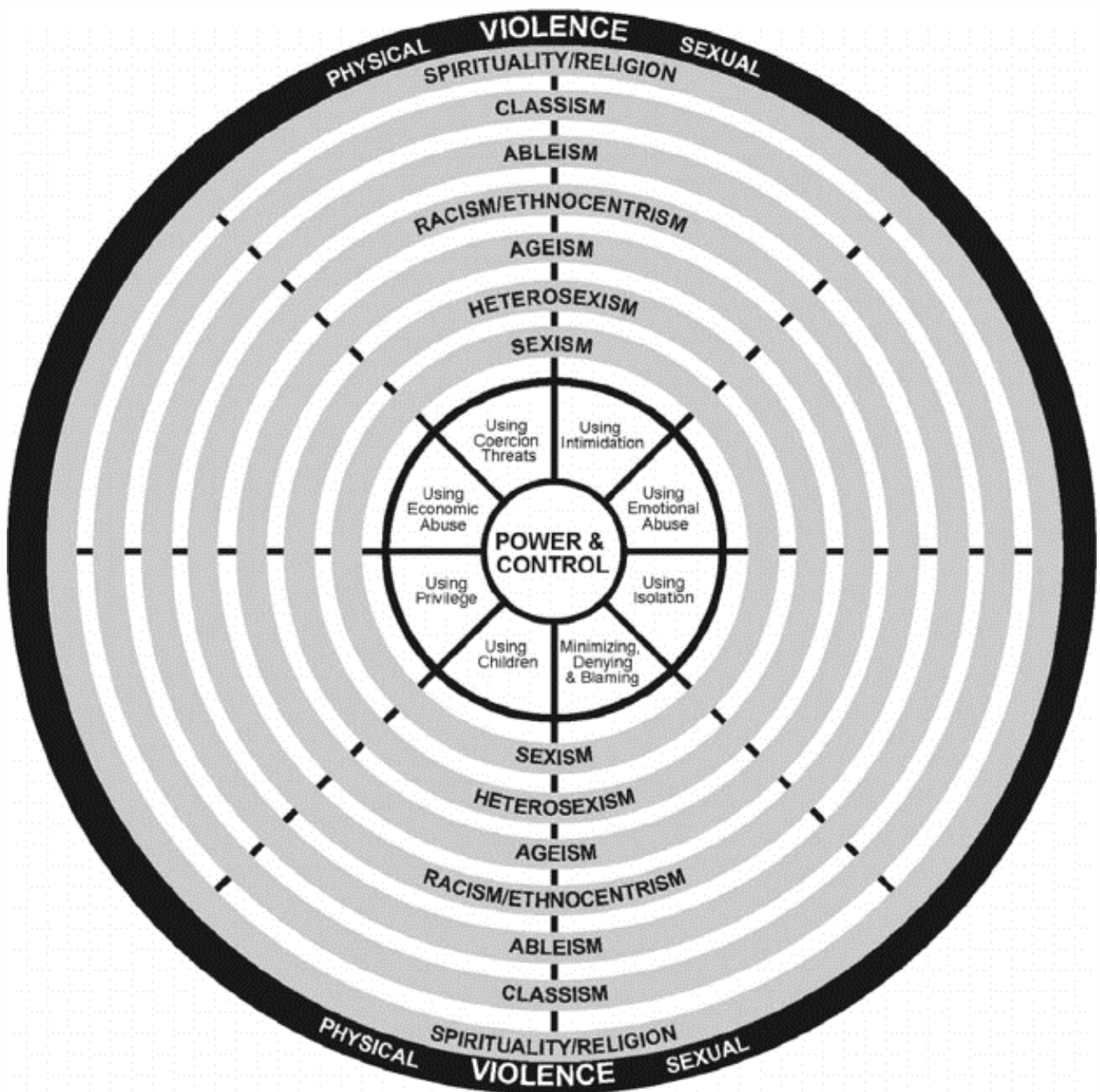
Many assertiveness guides focus solely on the individual, and here, too, the bulk of the work will focus on who and what we can control, and that is usually just ourselves.

Throughout, you will find individual exercises designed to build your own confidence and assertiveness skills, prompting growth which is intended to come with the responsibility to also use on behalf of others. This dual approach is just part of what it will take to actually create much-needed, long overdue change and reach those espoused values of inclusion and belonging, for all of us. ♦

THE POLITENESS TRAP

TOOLS

MULTICULTURAL POWER & CONTROL WHEEL



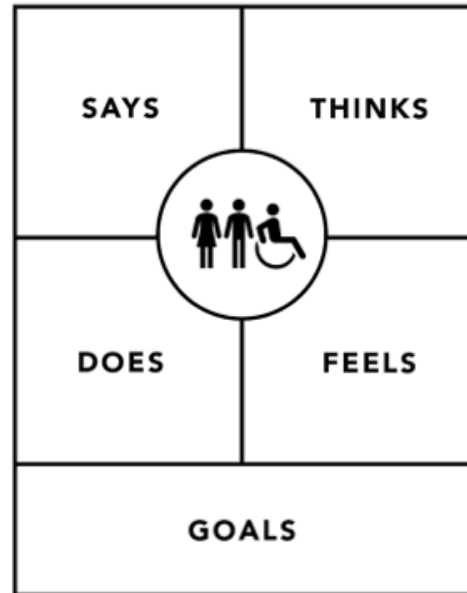
Source: Alexis Chavis and Melanie Hill, "Integrating Multiple Intersecting Identities: A Multicultural Conceptualization of the Power and Control Wheel." *Women & Therapy* (2009).

TOOLS

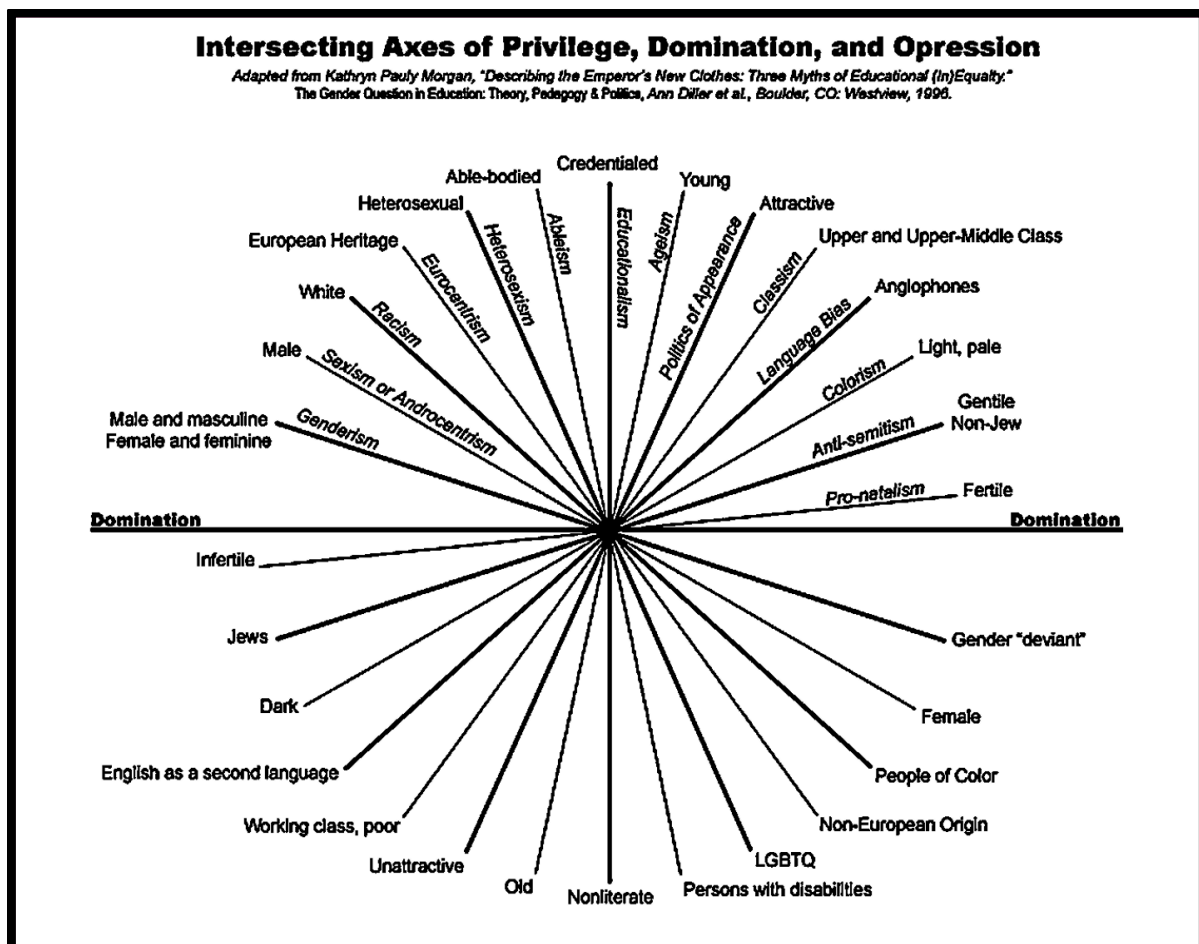
Effective Direct Intervention Communication

Empathy Mapping

- As active, intervening bystanders, we are attempting to advocate on behalf person(s) involved in a risky situation. In order to do it well, not only must we strive to understand others, but we must also help others understand themselves and prioritize their needs. Empathy maps are a powerful, fundamental tool for helping us in accomplishing both.
- An **empathy map** is a collaborative visualization used to articulate what we know about a person. It externalizes knowledge about others in order to 1) create a shared understanding of the needs of those involved, and 2) aid in our decision making.



Source: <https://www.nngroup.com/articles/empathy-mapping>



Daily ASSERTIVENESS

DATE ___ / ___ / ___

S M T W T F S

C H E C K - I N

- | | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> I PRIORITIZED MY SLEEP LAST NIGHT | <input type="radio"/> I SAID NO TO A REQUEST TODAY |
| <input type="radio"/> I MADE TIME FOR MY BREAKFAST | <input type="radio"/> I VOLUNTEERED TO DO SOMETHING I AM INTERESTED IN |
| <input type="radio"/> I TOOK TIME TO GET DRESSED IN SOMETHING THAT MADE ME FEEL GOOD | <input type="radio"/> I AVOIDED APOLOGIZING FOR SOMETHING I DID NOT DO |
| <input type="radio"/> I LISTENED TO SOMETHING EMPOWERING | <input type="radio"/> I ASKED MY PARTNER TO HELP WITH SOMETHING THEY SHOULD |
| <input type="radio"/> I TOOK 30 OR MORE MINUTES FOR MYSELF TODAY | <input type="radio"/> I NEGOTIATED A DECISION WITH MY FRIEND/FAMILY/PARTNER |
| <input type="radio"/> I CLEANED UP AFTER MYSELF TODAY | <input type="radio"/> I AVOIDED COMMUNICATING PASSIVE-AGGRESSIVELY TODAY |
| <input type="radio"/> I TOOK UP PHYSICAL SPACE TODAY | <input type="radio"/> IF I CHOSE PASSIVITY, I DID SO STRATEGICALLY |
| <input type="radio"/> I PARTICIPATED IN A LOW-STAKES DECISION | |
| <input type="radio"/> I OFFERED MY OPINION IN A CONVERSATION | |

OPPORTUNITIES TO ENGAGE ASSERTIVELY:

OBSTACLES ENCOUNTERED TODAY:

I FELT EMPOWERED TODAY WHEN:

ONE THING I CAN DO TO PREPARE FOR TOMORROW:

OVERALL MOOD



ANGRY



TIRED



SAD



GOOD



GREAT

GETTING WHERE WE WANT TO GO

GOALS

FOR EACH OF THE CATEGORIES BELOW, GIVE YOURSELF CREDIT FOR WHAT YOU ARE DOING WELL, AND NOTE WHERE YOU WANT TO GROW. TAKE SOME TIME TO REFLECT ON YOUR ANSWERS, AND THEN IDENTIFY A GOAL FOR EACH CATEGORY.

CATEGORY	WHAT I'M DOING WELL	WHERE I NEED IMPROVEMENT	GOAL FOR THIS YEAR
<i>FAMILY</i>			
<i>FRIENDS</i>			
<i>WORK/ SCHOOL</i>			
<i>PHYSICAL HEALTH</i>			
<i>MENTAL HEALTH</i>			
<i>ADD YOUR OWN</i>			

LIST OF WANTS

AN EXERCISE IN SELF-KNOWING

What
I Want:

What I
Need:

What I Won't
Tolerate:

Did you feel able to unapologetically list your wants (not needs) here? How can we move from thinking about our wants internally to asking out loud for our wants to be met?



PATTERNS AND SOLUTIONS

REVIEWING PAST CHALLENGES

Consider the three experiences you identified earlier. Now, as if you were an outside observer or judge, identify key facts -- not feelings -- linked to the situation. What do you know, if you're being self-reflexive, about the progression of events? Did you communicate your wants and needs assertively at that time? If not, why?

HISTORICAL FACTS

CRITICAL ANALYSIS

HISTORICAL FACTS

CRITICAL ANALYSIS

HISTORICAL FACTS

CRITICAL ANALYSIS

CONCLUSION

USING ASSERTIVENESS STRATEGICALLY

Choosing Your Battles	What are the pros and cons of periodic conformity?
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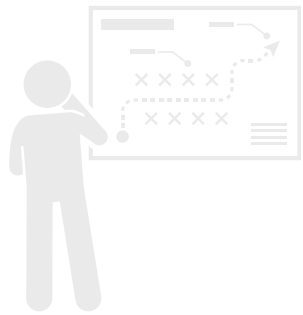
When might you exercise restraint, rather than asserting yourself, strategically?

My Emotional Strengths	My Emotional Challenges
------------------------	-------------------------

--	--

What I can control:	What I cannot control:
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--	--

What tactics could I use to persuade the other person that will not undermine my position?	
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PERMISSION OR FORGIVENESS

DATE



LEARN TO ASK FORGIVENESS INSTEAD OF PERMISSION

IDENTIFY 10 TIMES IN YOUR ADULT LIFE WHEN YOU THOUGHT YOU SHOULD DO SOMETHING BUT DID NOT ACT. WHAT STOPPED YOU? DID YOU CONSULT WITH SOMEONE? DO YOU USUALLY MAKE YOUR OWN DECISIONS, OR DO YOU LOOK TO OTHERS TO LEAD? DOES INVOLVING OTHERS MAKE YOU DOUBT YOURSELF?

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

9.

10.

**WRITING EXERCISE:
STATE AN OPINION AND ARGUE IT
FORCEFULLY, IN 3 SENTENCES**

*Persuasion is
often more
effectual
than force.*
Aesop

In all writing, when trying to persuade, consider starting from the frame: The purpose of this essay is to explain. Then offer at least 3 compelling reasons.

WHERE CAN I USE GROUPS OF 3?

WHERE CAN I INCLUDE
RHETORICAL QUESTIONS?

HOW CAN I PERSONALIZE MY
MESSAGE?

RATE YOUR LEVEL OF
PREPARATION

WHERE CAN I BUILD IN
ALLITERATION?



How do you describe yourself? When I ask you, “Who are you?” what words come first to mind? Try to describe yourself with three descriptive phrases right now, as we begin this second chapter. For so many women, the word “just” shows up in the answer, even when the question itself is so limiting! Did you say to yourself, “I’m just a mom,” or “I’m just a program coordinator,” “just a college student,” or “just a nurse” or “just a teacher”? Why “just”? Is that work not trying, tiring, and satisfying? Look around. Consider your colleagues. Does it appear that everyone is equally good at what you do?

The word “just” is a qualifier. It is used to diminish or limit, in some way, whatever comes next. It is often an unnecessary word, one that could easily be removed from most sentences and yet the sentences still get the job done. Who uses the word “just” more frequently? Women, of course, along with anyone whose identity is linked to a disproportionate lack of privilege and belonging, which often contributes to imposter syndrome or other lack of confidence.

The word “just” is also often used to resist accountability. It’s still a qualifier, sure, but one routinely used by those who are not living fully, authentically...you guessed it – assertively. Many women employ the word “just” in this way, as an excuse for their own unhealthy, intrusive, controlling, judgmental beliefs and actions. “Just” is used to cover a multitude of sins, conveniently relied upon by those who choose to sit in immaturity, who may never step into assertiveness, opting instead to avoid taking responsibility for their thinking, their choices, their weaknesses and inaction.

This type of woman can cause serious damage. Generationally, and historically, this practice makes some sense – when and where equality has been denied, the more we often find these forms of indirect power-seeking and intragroup control fester. For many, choosing to conform and live (they imagine) safely is only comfortable if they can get you, too, to live that way.

Change is fraught with risk. As is growth. As is responsibility. The assertive person takes action and moves forward. The unassertive person chooses to remain still. Stillness is valuable in its place and time; however, when still becomes stuck, we have a problem. You know the type – she offers her opinion, some comment about how someone other than herself should be doing something differently, and

then follows up with the throw-away statement, “I’m just a _____ (sub your pal’s proudest self-given label here). The shrug of the shoulders, paired with the word “just” here is meant to imply a lack of responsibility for the pressure or control she is trying to exert, contains within itself a denial of accountability for the inappropriateness or hypocrisy of the claim she is making, and is designed to minimize blowback from others who may disagree with her or resist this type of passive-aggressive social policing. Then, when someone disagrees, the “just” can be repositioned and repurposed, yet again, in further deflection through faux self-deprecation, shapeshifting to now take the tone of, “but what do I know?”

For all the good intentions that may accompany this practice, the method leaves much to be desired. This communication style remains indirect and unaccountable. Masked manipulation often comes out as “mean girl” behavior. This undermines trust and connection. This reinforces stereotypes about women and our rumored limitations, whereas living assertively means avoiding undermining yourself and weakening your own position.

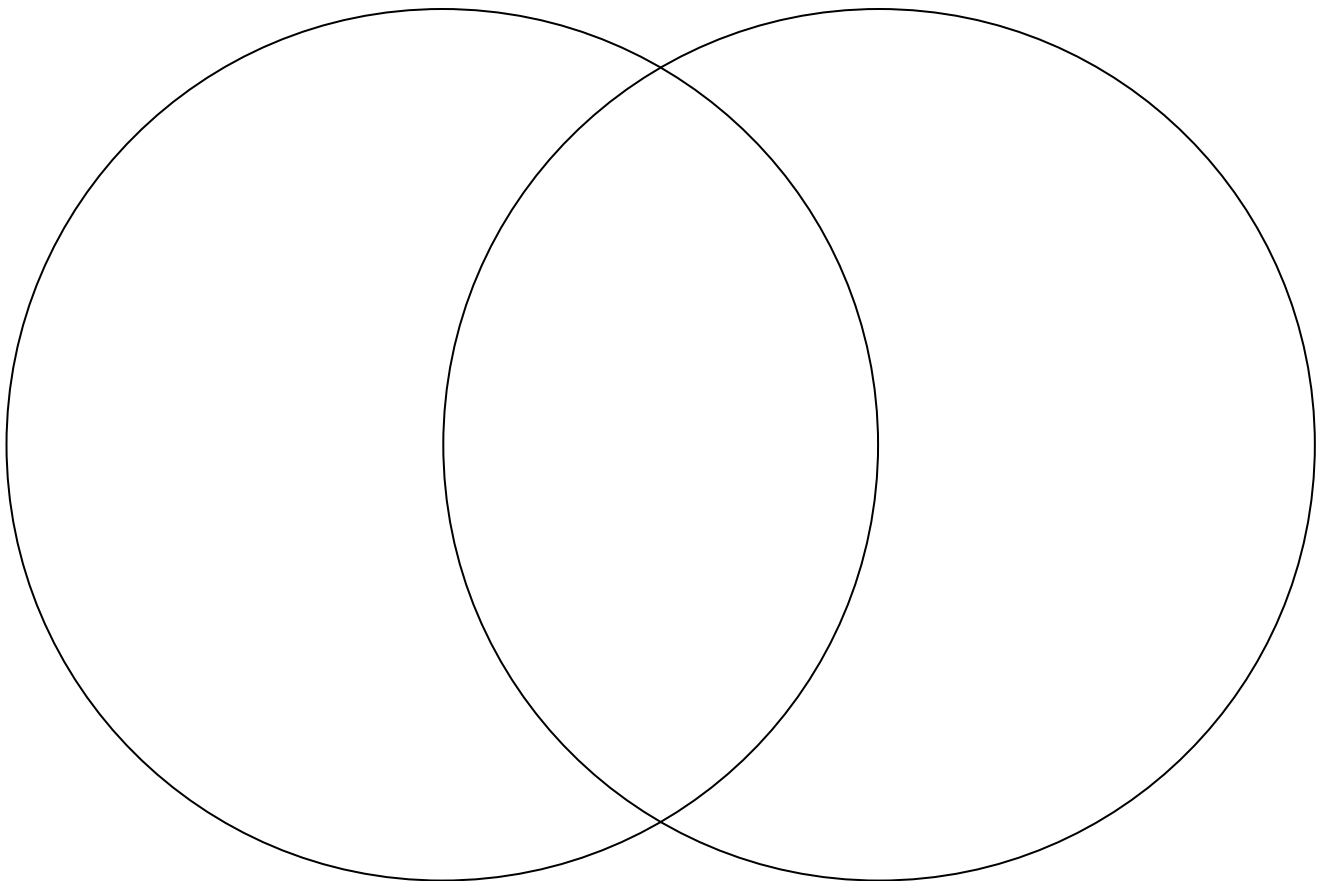
“JUST” & ACCOUNTABILITY

ASSERTIVENESS & PASSIVITY

Use the Venn diagram below to plot the temptations of passivity versus the advantages that assertive communication has to offer. Use the middle section for any areas of overlap or ambivalence.

Pros of
Passivity

Pros of
Assertiveness



Notes:

PROFESSIONAL ASSERTIVENESS

You want people to believe in your cause or your product, so it is worth spending time developing a mission statement or elevator pitch that encapsulates the essence of your work. Keep it clear and brief while conveying enthusiasm and certainty.

Sample Mission Statement:

"My [product/company] is designed to enable women to prioritize their self-care, empowering individuals to make authentic choices that improve their health and wellbeing, and enable them to advocate for their community.

Sample Elevator Pitch:

"At Embrace Assertiveness, we are passionate about helping people communicate more clearly and efficiently, build and maintain healthy relationships, and navigate conflict without causing harm. Let's connect, so that I can tell you more about the advantages of embracing assertive communication as a daily practice for yourself and others."

Draft language:

ASSERTIVENESS AS DAILY PRACTICE

HABIT TRACKER

Month:

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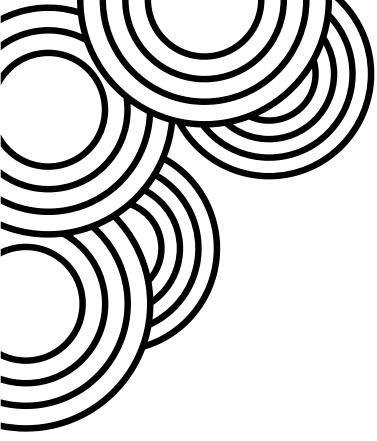


CHECKING IN

Let's return for a moment to self-reflection. Likely, for you, this assertiveness journey ebbs and flows, and you may find yourself feeling optimistic and proud of yourself at times while feeling discouraged and pessimistic at other times. That's why some of you may not benefit most from doing these exercises in order. Flip through and complete the exercises that appeal to you. Just make sure you're not choosing only the ones that are easy for you and never making it back to do the hard ones!

- Why are you working on assertiveness?
- Is it you that you want to change, or are you trying to change someone else?
- As you plan for tough conversations, are you considering both your fears, wants, and strategies AND thinking about the timing, ease of saying yes, reasons they might say no, and needs of the other person?
- Are you keeping the lessons in your mind, or are you actually putting them into practice in the real world. Internal motivation is great, but believing is not enough. You're going to have to communicate, and try, and try again.
- Keep your goals realistic. Don't get bogged down in all of the ways something might go wrong. Nothing will change if you don't try.





THOUGHT AWARENESS

Choose one issue, relationship behavior, unresolved tension -- whatever is going on that you think would benefit from an assertive approach. Jot down your greatest fears and worries about speaking up in the space below.

**Negative
Thoughts**

Now, let's rationally challenge the negative thoughts. Look at what you just wrote down above, and for every thought, ask yourself, Is that reasonable? Likely? Are my concerns supported by fact (proven, evidence)? Might I be wrong or approaching this negatively?

**Rational
Thoughts**

Now, for every negative thought above, we're going to reframe it. Relying upon the rational thoughts and facts in play, write out what positive action could happen. What is actually likely? What if it goes well? What makes this worth a try?

**Positive
Thoughts**

COGNITIVE RESTRUCTURING

Another Exercise for Reframing Your Thinking

Cognitive restructuring is an exercise useful for understanding what lies behind our hesitation and moods. If we reframe our thinking and reactions, we can learn to begin to find assertive responses more readily accessible.

Step 1: Identify the Situation

Describe the situation that led to your hesitation or mood.



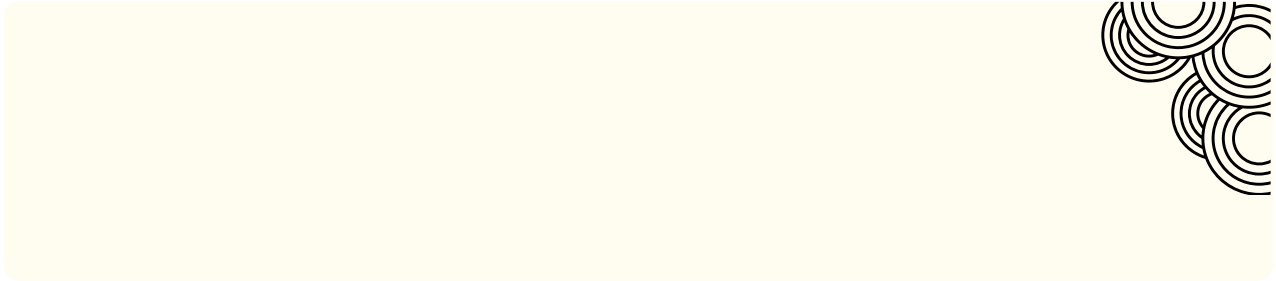
Step 2: Analyze Your Mood

Describe how you felt in the situation, and how you're feeling now.



Step 3: Identify Automatic Thoughts

How did you initially respond? What are your tendencies?



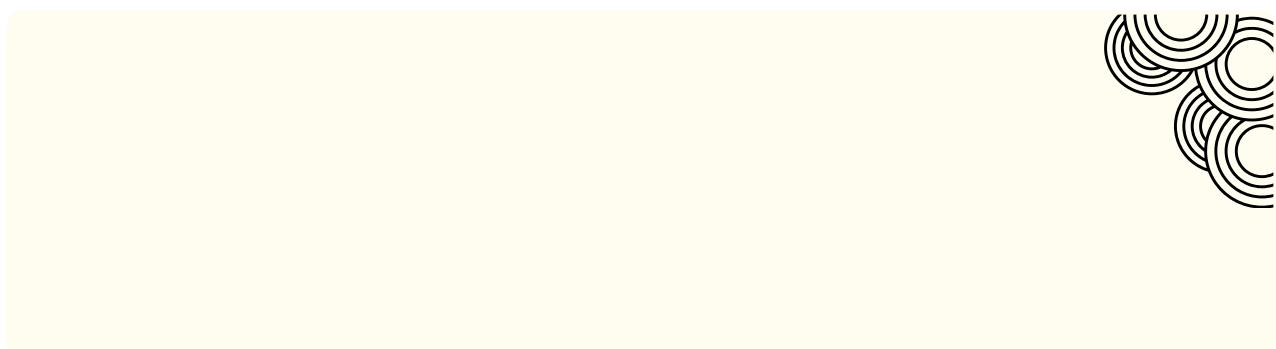
Step 4: Find Objective Evidence

Were you right? How do you know? What evidence exists to interpret the experience another way?



Step 5: Perks of Reframing

How might you respond differently next time? How do you feel right now? About a similar situation in the future? What do you have to gain by viewing the situation differently?



Understanding YOUR REACTIONS

Think of a situation in which you would like to engage more assertively. Using the boxes below, diagram your feelings, thoughts, physical responses (sweating? shortness of breath?), and likely behaviors/reactions.

Scenario

Feelings

Thoughts

Physical Symptoms

Behaviours



POWER *through* ASSERTIVENESS

We must remember that we should be building power through assertiveness – not aggressiveness. Similarly, we then should make good use of that power, and not engage in abuses of power. Quite simply, power may be defined as the ability to achieve purpose. In that sense, power is not so scary. We all want to achieve purpose.

Assertiveness can help you build the influence you will need to achieve purpose. Assertiveness becomes self-perpetuating in this way – you build influence, you gain power, you use your power to achieve purpose, and with proven results, you are likely to get the chance again. You receive recognition for your talents and skills, and your influence expands; you gain followers. Use your growing assertiveness and influence for good. When this all comes together – that, indeed, is the life worth living. You might even find yourself getting paid for doing what you love! Once you gain experience and establish yourself in your field or workplace, you will find yourself asserting yourself without thinking about it, without anticipatory anxiety, without waves of imposter syndrome, with confidence in your decisions and a sense of certainty about what and how you do what you do. That stage is sometimes described as flow, and what you have found is a calling.

BRAND IDENTITY

How would you describe your current or aspirational personal brand? What would you like to project?

QUESTION ONE

How would you describe your overall presentation of self? Your demeanor?

QUESTION TWO

How would you describe your overall voice? Who are you on a team?

QUESTION THREE

What are you good at? What are your strengths?

QUESTION FOUR

How/where would you like to be more persuasive?



GOAL SETTING

Start this journey with a detailed guide on how to define clear and attainable goals. Answer the following questions to identify your personal and professional objectives:

1. Personal Goals:

- What milestones do you want to achieve in your personal life?
- What would make your life more fulfilling?

2. Professional Goals:

- What are your ambitions and achievements in your career?
- How do you envision yourself professionally in one or five years?

VISION BOARD

_____ DATE: _____

HEALTH

LOVE

FAMILY

CAREER

SMART GOALS

Instructions: For each goal, fill in the details according to the SMART criteria. This will help ensure that your goals are clear, focused, and actionable.

S	SPECIFIC	<p>A. What exactly do you want to achieve?</p> <p>B. Who is involved or responsible?</p> <p>C. Where will it take place (if applicable)?</p> <p>D. Why is this goal important?</p>
M	MEASURABLE	<p>A. How will you track progress?</p> <p>B. What are the key performance indicators (KPIs)?</p> <p>C. How will you know when the goal is accomplished?</p>
A	ACHIEVABLE	<p>A. Is the goal realistic given your resources and constraints?</p> <p>B. What steps or actions will you take to reach the goal?</p> <p>C. Do you have the necessary skills and support?</p>
R	RELEVANT	<p>A. Does the goal align with your business objectives?</p> <p>B. Will it contribute to your long-term success and growth?</p> <p>C. Is now the right time to pursue this goal?</p>
T	TIME-BOUND	<p>A. When will you start working on the goal?</p> <p>B. What is the target completion date?</p> <p>C. Are there any milestones or checkpoints along the way?</p>

Section 1

SETTING YOUR GOALS

Some goals are concrete. Some have deadlines. Some are ultimatums.
For a longer-term goal, use the 30, 60, and 90 day timeframes
below to evaluate your progress.

30 DAYS

ACTION PLAN

-
-
-
-

60 DAYS

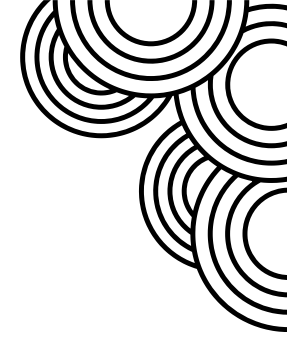
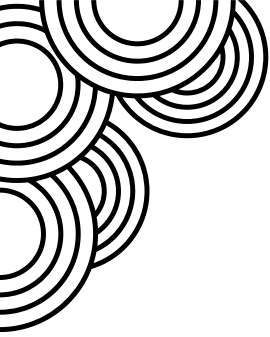
ACTION PLAN

-
-
-
-

90 DAYS

ACTION PLAN

-
-
-
-



ACHIEVING YOUR GOALS

TIMELINE

USE THE DIAGRAM BELOW TO PLOT OUT YOUR ASSERTIVENESS JOURNEY

GOAL:

MONTH:

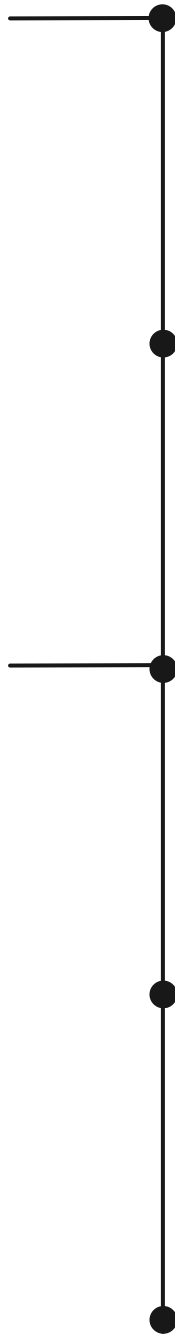
Efforts/Action Steps:

Reflection:

MONTH:

Efforts/Action Steps:

Reflection:



MONTH:

Efforts/Action Steps:

Reflection:

MONTH:

Efforts/Action Steps:

Reflection:

DAY /

DATE /

MY CHECKLIST

DAILY CHECKLIST

01

02

03

04

05

06

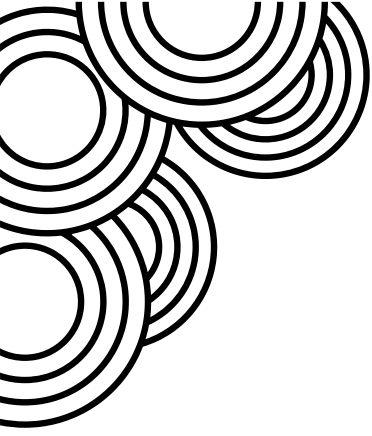
07

08

09

28-DAY ASSERTIVENESS CHALLENGE

DAY	WEEK 1	WEEK 2	WEEK 3	WEEK 4
1	TAKE TIME TO DO SOMETHING SOLELY FOR YOURSELF	SAY NO TO SOMETHING YOU DO NOT WANT TO DO	SCHEDULE SOMETHING AT A TIME CONVENIENT FOR YOU, NOT OTHERS	MAKE THE DECISION ABOUT WHERE/WHAT TO EAT THAT ISN'T A COMPROMISE
2	NEGOTIATE SOMETHING (A PRICE, DEADLINE, FAMILY COMMITMENT, ETC.)	SAY NO TO SOMETHING YOU'RE ASKED TO DO WITHOUT APOLOGIZING	TAKE TIME TO DO SOMETHING SOLELY FOR YOURSELF. (YOU'RE WORTH IT.)	WRITE YOURSELF A PEPTALK ABOUT A COMING CHALLENGE
3	ASK FOR SOMETHING FROM A SUPERVISOR, PARTNER, OR OTHER ADULT IN YOUR LIFE	TAKE TIME TO DO SOMETHING SOLELY FOR YOURSELF. (YOU'RE WORTH IT.)	WRITE ABOUT A MATERIAL POSSESSION YOU ARE GRATEFUL FOR AND WHY IT BRINGS YOU JOY.	TAKE A MOMENT TO APPRECIATE YOUR JOB OR CAREER AND WRITE ABOUT HOW IT HAS POSITIVELY IMPACTED YOUR LIFE.
4	WRITE ABOUT A FRIEND OR FAMILY MEMBER WHO HAS BEEN THERE FOR YOU THROUGH THICK AND THIN, AND HOW THEY HAVE POSITIVELY IMPACTED YOUR LIFE.	MAKE A LIST OF FIVE THINGS YOU ARE LOOKING FORWARD TO IN THE FUTURE AND WHY YOU ARE GRATEFUL FOR THEM.	TAKE A MOMENT TO APPRECIATE YOUR COMMUNITY AND WRITE ABOUT SOMETHING YOU ARE THANKFUL FOR IN REGARDS TO WHERE YOU LIVE.	WRITE ABOUT A BOOK OR MOVIE THAT HAS INSPIRED YOU AND HOW YOU ARE GRATEFUL FOR ITS IMPACT ON YOUR LIFE.
5	WRITE ABOUT A TIME WHEN SOMEONE SHOWED YOU KINDNESS AND HOW IT IMPACTED YOUR LIFE.	WRITE ABOUT A SPIRITUAL BELIEF OR PRACTICE THAT BRINGS YOU GRATITUDE AND PEACE.	TAKE A MOMENT TO APPRECIATE THE TECHNOLOGY YOU USE ON A DAILY BASIS AND WRITE ABOUT HOW IT HAS POSITIVELY IMPACTED YOUR LIFE.	WRITE ABOUT A FOOD OR MEAL YOU ARE GRATEFUL FOR AND WHY IT BRINGS YOU JOY.
6	WRITE ABOUT A CHALLENGE OR OBSTACLE THAT YOU ARE GRATEFUL FOR BECAUSE IT TAUGHT YOU SOMETHING IMPORTANT.	MAKE A LIST OF TEN THINGS YOU ARE GRATEFUL FOR RIGHT NOW.	WRITE ABOUT A PET OR ANIMAL YOU ARE GRATEFUL FOR AND HOW THEY BRING JOY TO YOUR LIFE.	TAKE A MOMENT TO APPRECIATE YOUR SENSES (SIGHT, SMELL, TASTE, TOUCH, AND HEARING) AND WRITE ABOUT THREE THINGS YOU ARE GRATEFUL FOR IN REGARDS TO EACH SENSE.
7	WRITE ABOUT A TEACHER OR MENTOR WHO HAS POSITIVELY IMPACTED YOUR LIFE AND HOW YOU ARE GRATEFUL FOR THEIR INFLUENCE.	TAKE A MOMENT TO APPRECIATE YOUR SENSE OF HUMOR AND WRITE ABOUT THREE THINGS THAT MAKE YOU LAUGH OR SMILE.	WRITE ABOUT A HISTORICAL FIGURE OR EVENT THAT YOU ARE GRATEFUL FOR AND HOW IT HAS POSITIVELY IMPACTED YOUR LIFE.	MAKE A LIST OF THREE THINGS YOU ARE GRATEFUL FOR IN REGARDS TO YOUR PERSONAL GROWTH OR DEVELOPMENT.



MONTHLY *Reflection*

DATE:

TIME:

Monthly Wins

This makes me feel:

What was tough?

How can I avoid/reduce that challenge?

Accomplished Goals

Unaccomplished Goals

Goals Carrying Over

Habits Retained

Habits Eliminated

New Habits Developed
(Both Good & Bad)

Three things that I am most grateful for this month:

Two life lessons I learned this month:

A few words that describe your accomplishments:

How will you rate this month overall?



ASSERTIVENESS SCRIPTS

PRACTICE GUIDE

1 Introducing Yourself

Try to be pleasant and speak in brief sentences. "Hi! I'm Cara. I'm (say role). I'm pleased to meet you." Don't be self-deprecating or minimize your role.

2 Requesting a Meeting

"Good morning! I was hoping to get on your calendar today or tomorrow for a brief conversation."

3 Responding to Job Offer

"Thank you so much. I am excited for this opportunity. I'll get back to you in a few days with my answer and will let you know in the meantime if any questions arise." Then get out! Get off the phone. Try not to do the negotiation right then and there.

4 Initial Salary Negotiation

"Thank you so much for this offer. I am very excited about the prospect of joining this company. I am hoping there is room for some movement on the starting salary. Do you have a few minutes to chat?"

5 Salary Negotiation Continued

Keep it brief and keep it simple. "I was hoping to start at \$XX,000, based upon my market research." Do not share personal reasons for needing more money (mortgage, daycare, etc.) Focus on the work and cost of living in that area.

6 Defusing Conflict

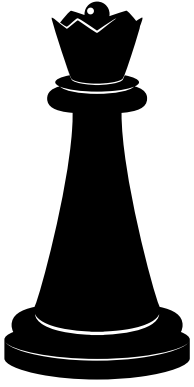
"I hear you, and I want to resolve this. I care about how you feel about this, and I think we could come to the conversation more fruitfully if we took a break for a minute to collect our thoughts."

7 Establishing a Boundary

"I need you to take a step back. This is making me uncomfortable. Please lower your voice/give me some personal space/do not touch me." Direct is best, when you feel safe. Step away or move their hand off of you, if touch is involved.

8 Exit Strategies

Indirect tactics are also fine, especially if there is a safety concern. Excuse yourself to go to the restroom or take a call and then leave. Say you forgot something. Avoid ending up alone with the person making you uncomfortable if you can.



PRIORITY MATRIX

Fill in the priority matrix is a great way to visualize what goals should take priority over others and how to best allocate your time toward achieving them.



HIGH

Tough Work Worth Doing

Easy Wins

IMPACT

Worth My Time?

Not Worth Fighting

LOW

HIGH

EFFORT

LOW

SELF-REFLECTION: IDENTIFYING YOUR CURRENT MINDSET

Reflection is the first step in understanding where you currently stand. Here are a series of questions aimed at helping you identify your mindset:



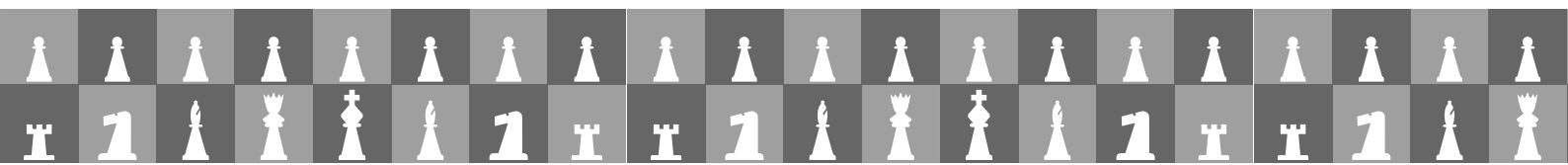
How do I react when I face a challenge in my personal or professional life? Do I tackle it head-on or shy away?



Do I appreciate feedback and criticism, viewing them as chances to improve? Or do I become defensive and disheartened?



What are my beliefs about my abilities? Do I believe I can grow and change, or am I stuck with what I have?



Steps to CULTIVATE RESILIENCE



Develop a Strong Support System: Surround yourself with positive influences.



Practice Self-Care: Activities like meditation, reading, or even walking can rejuvenate your mind.



Embrace Change: Accept that change is a part of life and look for ways to adapt and learn.



Set Realistic Goals: Setting and working toward achievable goals can boost your confidence and sense of purpose.

Action Plan:

Choose one area where you feel least resilient and actively work on it for a month. Note your progress and obstacles, and refine your approach as needed.

Enough already! You've made it this far into the book, so it is clear that a sincere desire for

change exists within you. There is nothing left to do but do it. Action is required. Practice makes perfect. I believe in assertive, unapologetic living, and so here's the coaching pep talk message of tough love: there is no half-assing it. Half-assing, by definition, is not assertive. YOU need yourself to step up. Your friends and family need you. Look around – our communities clearly need folks to step up. What I found missing in assertiveness resources when I was on my own skills-building journey was this sense of collective assertiveness – the idea of applying individual assertiveness skill-building to activist organizing and community change. We cannot continue to focus solely on individual development.

I have not encountered an activist, past or present, who does not worry about American individualism and our current manifestation of capitalism and how it distracts us from considering our collective wellbeing. I want to remind you – you do not have to go it alone! We know there is strength in numbers. Engaging collectively, rather than simply individually, sustains our momentum and bolsters our courage.

Engaging collectively makes us harder to ignore. Engaging collectively guides our individual efforts into generating systemic change.

Lives are literally at stake. Believing passionately is not enough. Seek out growth and sit in discomfort. Live the positive affirmation posts that you like and share on social media. Follow up the private, individual act of reading books like this with more learning and, more importantly, outward directed action. Assertive living cannot occur if you do not put your voice and your body out there, in your home, your workplace, among your friends and family, and into the streets of our communities. Ideal next steps could include enrolling in an empowerment self-defense class, bystander intervention training, anti-racist education workshops, attending your first public vigil or protest, signing or drafting a petition, attending and participating in a local council meeting, or even running for office. We need you!

Chances are you have a friend who sits near you on a scale of assertiveness. Talk with this friend about serving as assertiveness accountability partners for each other and set weekly challenges or goals. Share your successes and process any hesitations or failures. Know that there will be failures. Failed attempts are okay!

As a student of assertiveness, know that you can earn partial credit on this homework assignment. To be human is to be imperfect. To be imperfect is to be human. Say that out loud if you need to. (Really, you will benefit from reading those two sentences out loud at least three times.) If you also struggle with perfectionism and that plays into your fears about assertive living, seek out resources to better understand and help reduce that type of immobilization. Assertive living is in the trying, the getting back up, continuing the conversation, and the making of tough choices.

Once you have cultivated your own assertiveness skills, it is then your responsibility to advocate for others. If you have benefitted from this book, pay it forward. There is so much work to do! Do the work, and I hope you laugh along the way. There is no way forward but to try and try again. Know, though, that building an assertive living framework and living the rest of your life assertively is so, so worth the effort. Your future self will thank you.

NOW PAY IT
FORWARD

USING MY ASSERTIVENESS TO BENEFIT OTHERS

VISION BOARD

_____ DATE: _____

WHO ARE WE
HELPING?

WHY? AND WHY ME?

ACTION STEPS

COLLABORATORS



ADVOCATING FOR OTHERS

30 Acts of Assertiveness in 30 Days

1		2		3		4		5	
6		7		8		9		10	
11		12		13		14		15	
16		17		18		19		20	
21		22		23		24		25	
26		27		28		29		30	

RECOMMENDATIONS

"It's Not Manipulation, It's Strategic Communication," Keisha Brewer, TEDxGeorgetown <https://youtu.be/QGeHS4jO0X0>.

Toastmasters International (You don't have to join! There are many free public speaking resources at <https://www.toastmasters.org/resources/>.)

Danny Rubin's Series on Business Insider

<https://www.businessinsider.com/author/danny-rubin>

(including "How to Write an Email to Someone who is Frustrated with You"

<https://www.businessinsider.com/how-to-write-an-email-to-someone-who-is-frustrated-with-you-2016-1>)

Harvard Business Review Power of Persuasion Collection

<https://store.hbr.org/product/the-power-of-persuasion-collection/0007BN>

Getting to Yes: Negotiating Agreement Without Giving In by Roger Fisher and William Ury, Penguin (1983).

Getting Past No: Negotiating in Difficult Situations by William Ury, Bantam (1993).

Yes!: 50 Scientifically Proven Ways to Be Persuasive by Noah J. Goldstein, Steve J. Martin, and Robert B. Cialdini, Simon & Schuster (2009).

Start with Why: How Great Leaders Inspire Everyone to Take Action by Simon Sinek, Portfolio (2011).

"The Counterintuitive Way to be More Persuasive," Niro Sivanathan, TED https://youtu.be/hK8kk_3WA7w.

"You are Contagious," Vanessa Van Edwards, TEDxLondon <https://youtu.be/cef35Fk7YD8>.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Ask for It: How Women Can Use the Power of Negotiation to Get What They Really Want by Linda Babcock and Sara Laschever

The Assertive Woman by Stanlee Phelps and Nancy Austin

Untamed, Glennon Doyle

Brave, Not Perfect: Fear Less, Fail More, and Live Bolder, Reshma Saujani
The Likeability Trap: How to Break Free and Succeed as You Are, Alicia Menendez

The Gifts of Imperfection: Let Go of Who You Think You're Supposed to Be and Embrace Who You Are, Brené Brown

"Another Side of #MeToo: Male Managers Fearful of Mentoring Women," *New York Times*, Katrin Bennhold, January 2019,
www.nytimes.com/2019/01/27/world/europe/metoo-backlash-gender-equality-davos-men.html

Becoming Bulletproof: Life Lessons from a Secret Service Agent, Evy Pompouras

The 3-Second Trick to Impress Anyone on the Phone, Danny Rubin, *Business Insider* (2016), <https://www.businessinsider.com/introduce-yourself-first-thing-on-the-phone-2016-10>.

Dunn, Jennifer & Schweitzer, Maurice. (2005). Feeling and Believing: The Influence of Emotion on Trust. *Journal of personality and social psychology*.
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/7842418_Feeling_and_Believing_The_Influence_of_Emotion_on_Trust

The Secret To Persuasive Communication (2017),
<https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbescoachescouncil/2017/10/02/the-secret-to-persuasive-communication/?sh=5bc4b0042939>.

NOTES

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Cara's books are available in paperback, ebook, and PDF on her website, in paperback through PWN Books, in paperback, Kindle, and Audible through Amazon.

THE
ASSERTIVENESS
Workbook

CREATED BY CARA TUTTLE
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