

Uncovering Life Scripts

Personal Influences

1. Think about your home environment when you were growing up. Think about your family, friends and significant teachers with whom you interacted. What messages did you receive from them about you – your worth & your ability to achieve?

2. What core beliefs do you believe they passed on to you?

3. What are some of your deeply-held beliefs today?

4. How do those beliefs hinder or help you today?

The Assertiveness Questionnaire

This assessment looks at when you may behave non-assertively due to feeling comfortable in these situations. Check column "A" if the situation would make you uncomfortable. Rate your discomfort level (1-4) in column "B".

1. Mildly Uncomfortable
2. Moderately Uncomfortable
3. Very Uncomfortable
4. Unbearably Threatening

A	B	When do you behave non-assertively?
_____	_____	Asking for help
_____	_____	Stating a difference of opinion
_____	_____	Receiving and expressing negative feelings
_____	_____	Receiving and expressing positive feelings
_____	_____	Dealing with someone who refuses to cooperate
_____	_____	Speaking up about something that annoys you
_____	_____	Speaking up when you disagree with someone
_____	_____	Talking when all eyes are on you
_____	_____	Protesting a rip-off
_____	_____	Saying "no"
_____	_____	Responding to undeserved criticism
_____	_____	Responding to compliments
_____	_____	Making requests of authority figures
_____	_____	Negotiating for something you want
_____	_____	Taking Charge
_____	_____	Asking for cooperation
_____	_____	Proposing an idea
_____	_____	Asking questions
_____	_____	Dealing with attempts to make you feel guilty
_____	_____	Asking for service
_____	_____	Asking for a date or appointment
_____	_____	Asking for favors
_____	_____	Asking for a raise or promotion

Who are the people with who you are most non-assertive?

- Parents or other family members
- Co-workers/peers
- Your Boss
- Strangers
- Customers

Log Form Instructions

Use the results of the Assertiveness Questionnaire to help plan your own personal growth program. Consider using the following Assertiveness Log Form to monitor your progress.

1. Consider areas where you scored either a 3 or 4.
2. Next, consider what you would like to see yourself do instead. Try to see yourself doing the desired behavior.
3. Finally, consider the outcome of the new behavior. What was the result? What were the benefits?
4. Monitor your own behavior carefully for a week or more and record your observations regularly in your log. Also, watch others who you consider to be effectively assertive and compare their actions to your actions.
5. Identify your obstacles. What are your barriers that seem to make being assertive more difficult. Common obstacles may include:
 1. Anxiety or fear of the possible consequences
 2. Lack of skills or lack of self-confidence in your skills
 3. Other people in your life

Record in your log the obstacles that you feel are holding you back from becoming more assertive.

6. Examine carefully the four entries you completed in your log after a full week or more. Look for patterns. Assess your particular strengths, and weaknesses. You will find that the results will shine a spotlight on what you will need to do to increase your assertiveness.

Adapted from Alberti, R. & Emmons, M. (1995). *Your perfect right: A guide to assertive living*. San Luis Obispo, CA: Impact Publishers.

Assertiveness Log

Dates: From _____ To _____

Situations: (Write down several situations that need more assertive actions on your part as identified in the Inventory.)

Attitudes: (Write down how you would feel if you were to behave more assertively these situations.)

Behaviors: (Take an “outsider’s perspective” and become “an observer” of your own behavior. What did you observe concerning your actions?)

Obstacles: (What were some of the obstacles that may have hindered your attempts of more assertive behaviors?)

Progress: (What progress did you make? Remember....it doesn’t have to be perfect – just better each time.)

Source: Adapted from Alberti and Emmons (1986)

Assertive Approaches

1. Assert by communicating:

Interest

- What concerns me is...
- What we really need is.... Because....

Purpose

- What I'm trying to accomplish is...
- I'm hoping to be able to...
- Our intention is...

2. Describe observations

- I've noticed that...
- From what I've been able to see...

3. Seek agreement (Create a bridge)

- I agree with you that...
- I definitely share your concern that...
- I share your opinion in that...

4. Use “Yes, and”.....NOT “Yes, but”

- I share your concern and I'm also concerned about....
- I agree with you here and...

5. Shift from Content to Process – the focus changes from the issue (content) to what's going on with the other person (process)

6. Delay Momentarily – you don't have to respond immediately – take time to think, to ask a clarifying question, etc.

- “That's interesting. Let me think about that for a moment.”
- “Are you asking...”

7. Use Time Out – when discussion is at an impasse

- “We're both too angry to talk about this right now. Let's talk later after we have both cooled down.”
- “Perhaps we both could give this more thought and discuss it tomorrow.”

8. Probe – try to get more information

- “I never knew. Can you give me an example?”
- “How often does that happen?”

9. Utilize the Broken Record - state your position/intention/rejection repeatedly without defensiveness or anger

10. Cloud – partially agree with the criticism or agree in principle or in probability

- “You spend money like it grows on trees.”
- “Yeah, I have spent more money lately.” or “You are right, it’s not a good idea to spend too much money.” or “It’s probably true that I’m spending quite a bit lately.”

11. Utilize Assertive Preference - acknowledge you heard the concern but then indicate your disagreement w/ it

- “I hear you don’t agree with how I do it. I prefer to do it this way.”
- “I understand that you see it this way. I would still prefer to have it work out this way.”

12. Utilize Empathic Assertion - convey recognition of the other person’s situation or feelings, then express your own thoughts or needs

- “I know you are feeling angry and frustrated while you wait for a response. The best I can do is give you a ballpark estimate of how long it will take.”

13. Utilize Escalating Assertion - increase the intensity of your message in light of the persistence of another

“ I really need to finish my statement before you speak. Again, I need to finish my statement fully before you explain your perspective.”

Ten Steps for Controlling Emotional Listening Situations

The following are suggested steps to follow in a preventative maintenance mode when someone has displayed anger or frustration and triggered an emotional reaction within you.

1. Listening attentively without interrupting—take several deep breaths to help control your physical reactions.
2. Make a conscious choice about your response—you can get angry, try to solve the problem, or ignore it. (Trying to solve the problem is the best way to keep it from happening again.)
3. Acknowledge the other person's feelings—make it okay for them to feel the way they do.
4. Ask objective questions for clarification—use open ended questions to draw out the other person's thoughts.
5. Try to see the other person's viewpoint—agree where you can and feed back what you think you are hearing.
6. Stick to the subject—define your problem and don't let other issues interfere.
7. Be patient—problems don't always have immediate solutions. Be patient with the other person and yourself.
8. Clearly express your viewpoint—don't force proof. Present your evidence without backing them into a corner.
9. Explain why—a reasonable explanation can often take the sting out of an emotional issue.
10. Work out a “win-win” plan. Make sure your solution is fair and workable for both (or all) of the people involved.

My Assertive Rights

- I have the right to take responsibility for the initiation of my behavior, thoughts and emotions and to handle the consequences they may create
- I have the right to state my limits, expectations, and feelings about other people's behavior in a way that respects their self-esteem
- I have the right to decide if I am responsible for solving other people's problems and to facilitate their solving their own problems
- I have the right to make mistakes, to be responsible for them and to learn from them
- I have the right to say, "I don't know" and then seek a solution
- I have the right to be treated with respect and to respect others
- I have the right to explain my position in the manner I think is most appropriate and to listen non-judgmentally to the position of others.
- I have the right to ask for clarification when I do not understand
- I have the right to ask for what I want, knowing that the other person has the right to refuse.

Assertiveness Role Plays

A coworker insists on yelling at you every time she is giving you instructions as to a patient's care. She has never been professional with you but to avoid conflict you have not bothered addressing this with her. You are really tired of feeling intimidated every time you have to work with her.

What do you need to say to her to assert for your rights? Create an "I" statement.

Notes to prepare for your meeting:

Ben has been late for a standing meeting for the third time during the past two weeks. No one has said anything to him because he is usually on time and is a valued member of the team. On the other hand, you don't want this lateness to continue as it delays the meeting. He brings important information that the other team members need as he is the quality expert in the group.

What do you need to say to him to assert for your team? Create an "I" statement.

Notes to prepare for your meeting:

A member of your team, Sarah, does her work thoroughly and with very few errors. However, she often does not complete assignments on time, which results in team deadlines not being met. Team members are getting frustrated, as they depend on you and Sarah to get their work completed. As the largest percentage of the work comes to you, you feel you should talk to her.

What do you need to say to her to assert for your rights? Create an "I" statement.

Notes to prepare for your meeting:

While you are giving instructions to Paul, a co-worker, he interrupts you three times. This generally happens when you are speaking to Paul. Although you have never said anything to him, it really frustrates you.

What do you need to say to him to assert for your rights? Create an "I" statement.

Notes to prepare for your meeting:
