

*Assertiveness  
Skills*



# Course Objectives

Explain What is Assertiveness

Define Assertiveness

List the Benefits of Being Assertive

Describe the Liberation Cycle of Assertiveness

Describe the Various Behavior Patterns

Compare Passive, Assertive and Aggressive Behavior

Explain the Power of Affirmations

Describe the Various Skills for Assertiveness

Explain the Process of Disagreeing Gracefully

Explain the Four Steps to Saying 'No'

Describe the Body Language while Saying 'No'


Explain the Elements of Assertive Communication

List the Role of Assertive Words in Assertiveness

Describe the Non Verbal Aspects of Assertiveness

Explain the Action Plan for Building Assertiveness

# Introduction

A close-up photograph of a person's hand holding a blue marker, positioned as if about to write on a whiteboard. The person is wearing a dark suit jacket over a light-colored, striped shirt. The background is a blurred image of the same person's face and upper body, suggesting they are the one presenting the content.

Let us look at a day in the  
life of Ravi Gotham who  
works as a Project  
Manager in Helios Inc.

# Introduction



**Ravi faces a lot of problem daily at his workplace. His subordinates do not obey him and do not follow Ravi's leadership. In spite of repeatedly telling his subordinates to complete a list of tasks, they do not tend to complete them. Ravi is just not able to control his subordinates and is not able to communicate assertively.**

# Introduction



**Ravi also faces a lot of problem with his boss. Ravi's boss loads all his own work on Ravi's shoulders and does not even give credit to Ravi for the work done. Ravi is just not able to say 'no' to his boss.**

# Introduction

**Even at home, Ravi is not able to stay in control of his relationship with his wife. His wife constantly makes unreasonable demands of Ravi. Ravi is not able to refuse any demand of his wife and is not assertive.**



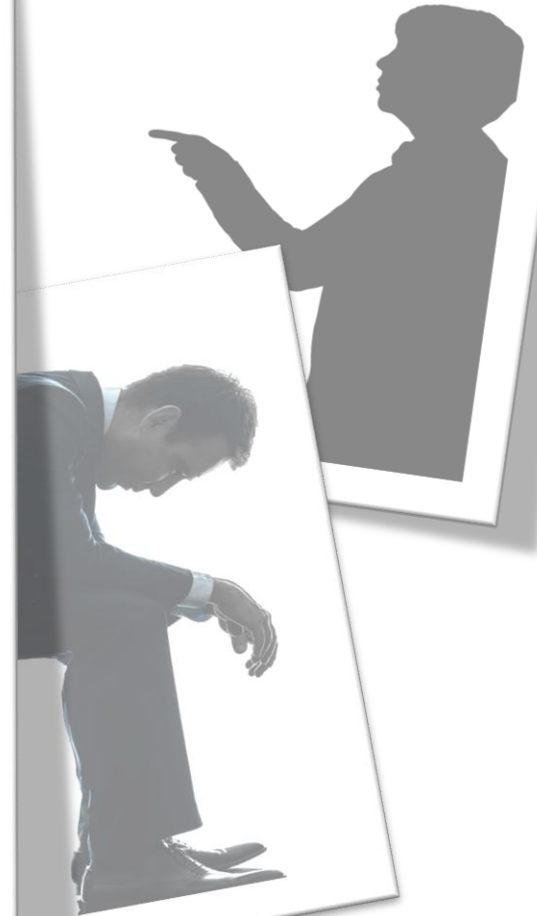
# Introduction

Hence, you can see that Ravi faces a lot of problem in his interactions at his workplace with his subordinates and boss as well in his personal relationships. All these problems arise because Ravi is not assertive. Ravi is not able to voice his ideas, opinions and views in a strong, confident and assertive manner.



# Introduction

**Thus, you can see that it is very important for you to develop 'assertiveness skills' and practice being 'assertive' in your interactions with everyone. Let us now learn about 'assertiveness skills' in detail.**





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# What is Assertiveness?

An honest, direct and appropriate expression of one's feelings, thoughts and beliefs.

Assertiveness is the ability to communicate your needs, feelings, opinions, and beliefs in an open and honest manner without violating the rights of others.



# Assertiveness

Assertiveness is NOT:

- A guaranteed way to win every argument
- A guaranteed way to get what you want
- A way to get others to feel like you feel
- A way to get others to think like you think
- A way to tell everyone everything all the time

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# Definition – Assertiveness

Assertiveness is defined as follows:

It is interesting to note that the definition of corporate governance changes in different cultural contexts. For example: Let us look at a definition provided by the Center of European Policy Studies or CEPS. CEPS define corporate governance as:

It is interesting to note that the definition of corporate governance changes in different cultural contexts. For example: Let us look at a definition provided by the Center of European Policy Studies or CEPS. CEPS define corporate governance as:

Confirming confidently, positively. To defend one's rights or opinions, sometimes with unnecessary zeal.

- Chambers Dictionary

# Definition – Assertiveness

Assertiveness is defined as follows:

Expressing opinions or desires strongly and with confidence so that people take notice.  
- Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary

absolute zero • abvass

It is interesting to note that the definition of corporate governance changes in different cultural contexts. For example: Let us look at a definition provided by the Center of European Policy Studies or CEPS. CEPS define corporate governance as:

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# Assertiveness Test

Take the Assertiveness Test to evaluate yourself and find if you are assertive or not. Answer the below questions about yourself as truthfully as possible.



Are you able to exercise and express your strengths?

Can you express negative feelings about other people and their behaviors without using abusive language?


Can you easily recognize and compliment other people's achievements?

Do you have the confidence to ask for what is rightfully yours?

Can you accept criticism without being defensive?

# Assertiveness Test

Take the Assertiveness Test to evaluate yourself and find if you are assertive or not. Answer the below questions about yourself as truthfully as possible.



Do you feel comfortable accepting compliments?

Are you able to refuse unreasonable requests from friends, family, or co-workers?

Are you able to stand up for your rights?

Can you comfortably start and carry on a conversation with others?

Do you ask for assistance when you need it?



# Assertiveness Test

Take the Assertiveness Test to evaluate yourself and find if you are assertive or not. Answer the below questions about yourself as truthfully as possible.

Do you feel comfortable accepting compliments?

- If your answer is 'YES' to all 10 questions, then you are already practicing Assertiveness Skills.
- However, if you have answered 'NO' to more than 3 of these 10 questions, then it indicates a need to understand and acquire Assertiveness Skills.

it?

# What does being Assertive Involve?

A person can choose to be assertive by his own will. However, being assertive involves a definite set of characteristics and behaviors to exercise one's assertiveness. Being assertive involves:

Saying 'yes' when you want to, and saying 'no' when you mean 'no'

Not agreeing to do something just to please someone else

Deciding on, and sticking to, clear boundaries



# What does being Assertive Involve?

**Being happy to defend your position, even if it provokes conflict**

**Being confident about handling conflict if it occurs**

**Understanding how to negotiate when two people want different outcomes**

**Having a positive and optimistic outlook**



# What does being Assertive NOT Involve?

Being assertive does NOT involve the following:



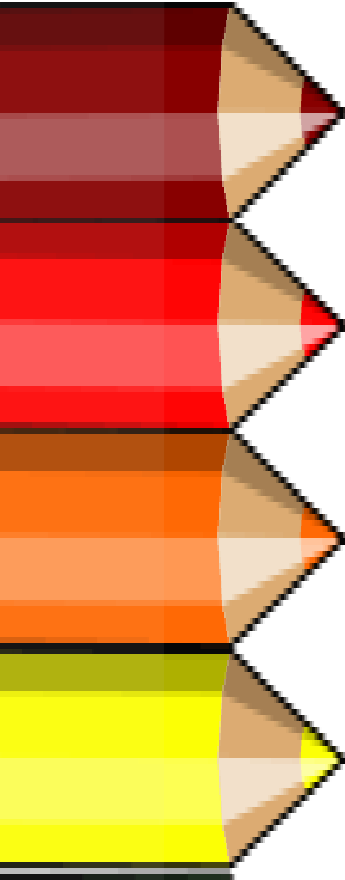
# What does being Assertive NOT Involve?

Being assertive does NOT involve the following:

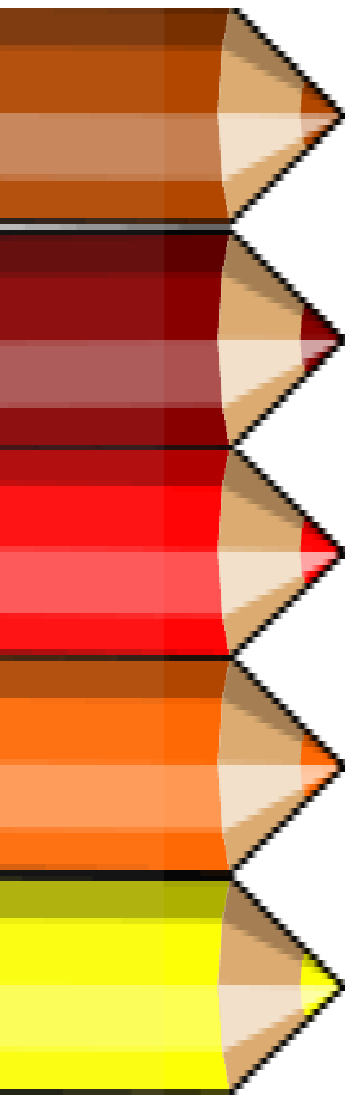


# Who is Non-assertive?

How can you find if you are assertive or non-assertive? There are various characteristics or behavior patterns that are shown by non-assertive people. The following are some of the characteristics and behaviors of a non-assertive person:

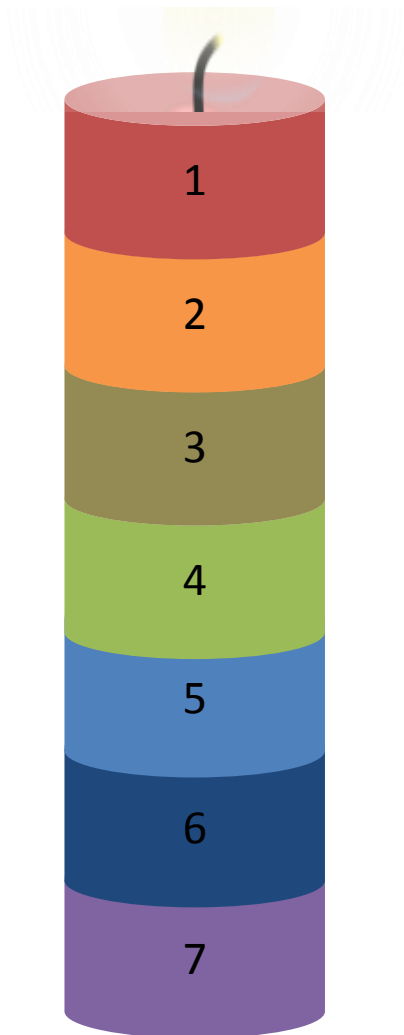
- 
- He feels responsible when things go wrong, even if it is not his fault.
  - A non-assertive person tends to buy things that he does not want because he is afraid or unconfident of saying 'no' to the salesperson.
  - A non-assertive person may avoid asking questions when in confusion or when he does not understand something.
  - A non-assertive person does not make eye contact and avoids looking directly at others when he talks to them.

# Who is Non-assertive?

- 
- He often tends to send a text message or email to someone about a conflict instead of talking to them face to face.
  - A non-assertive person feels intimidated by people in authority.
  - A non-assertive person feels dependant when asking for help from others.
  - A non-assertive person generally has a poor and clumsy posture.
  - He often feels very angry but is not able to express his anger appropriately.

# Pitfalls of being Non-assertive

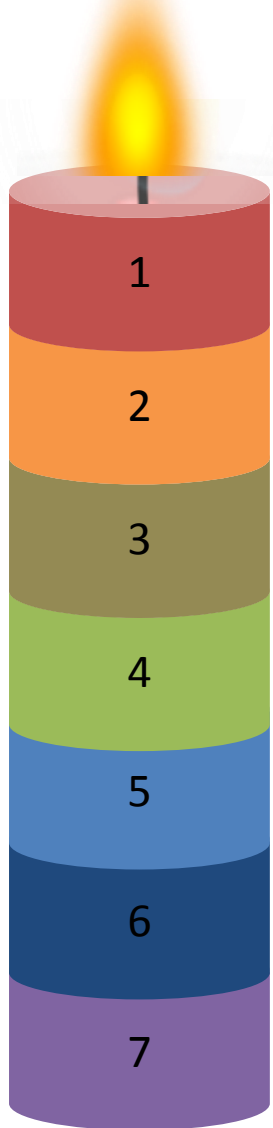
There are several pitfalls of being non-assertive. Lack of assertiveness leads to:





# Pitfalls of being Non-assertive

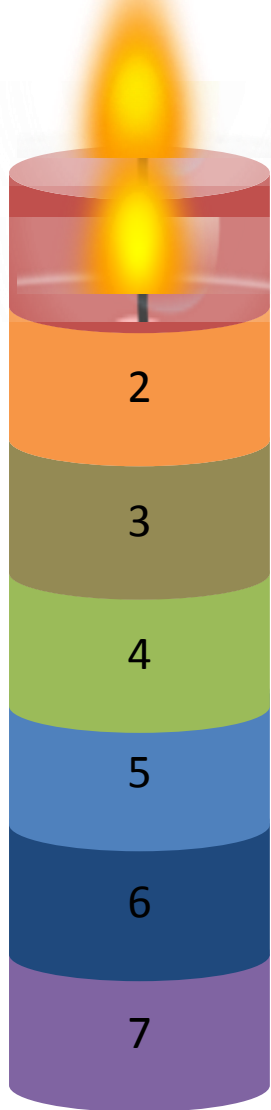
There are several pitfalls of being non-assertive. Lack of assertiveness leads to:



- **Depression:** Feeling helpless with no control over your life

# Pitfalls of being Non-assertive

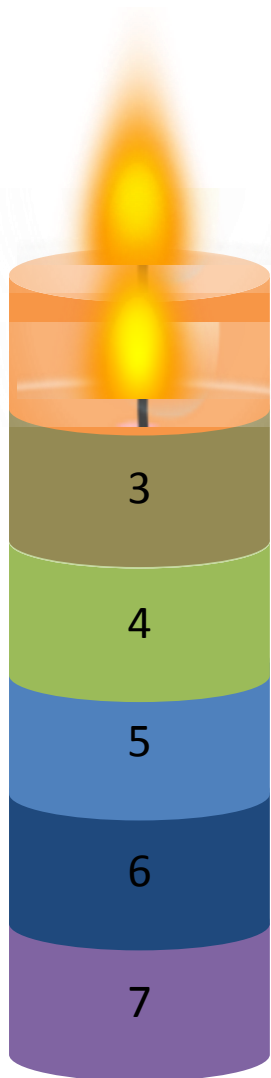
There are several pitfalls of being non-assertive. Lack of assertiveness leads to:



- **Depression**
- **Resentment:** Anger at others for taking advantage of you

# Pitfalls of being Non-assertive

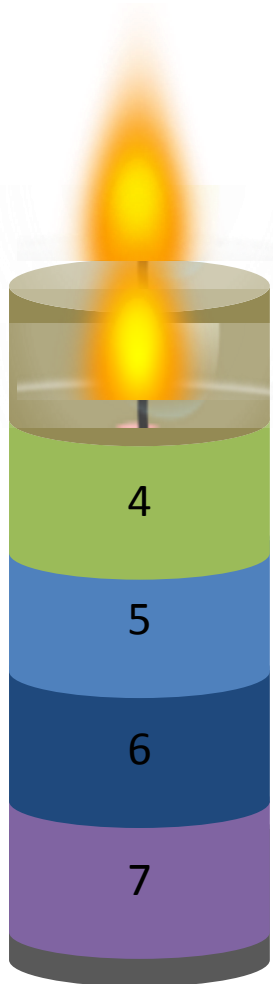
There are several pitfalls of being non-assertive. Lack of assertiveness leads to:



- **Depression**
- **Resentment**
- **Frustration:** Feelings of frustration when you question yourself: Why did I let that happen to me?

# Pitfalls of being Non-assertive

There are several pitfalls of being non-assertive. Lack of assertiveness leads to:

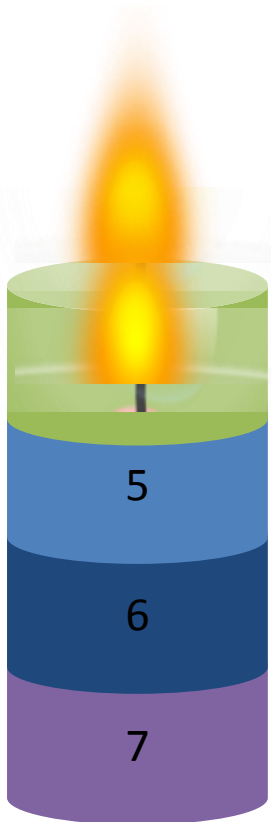


- **Depression**
- **Resentment**
- **Frustration**
- **Temper:** When you can't express your anger appropriately, it can build up to come out as severe temper outbursts

# Pitfalls of being Non-assertive

There are several pitfalls of being non-assertive. Lack of assertiveness leads to:

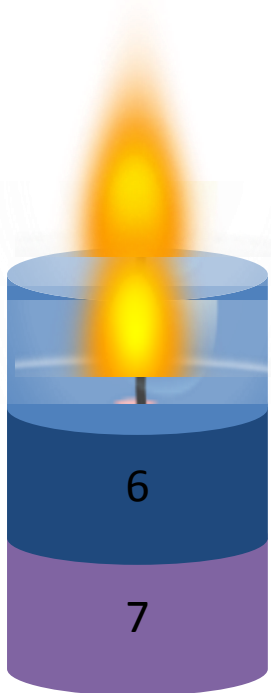
- **Depression**
- **Resentment**
- **Frustration**
- **Temper**
- **Relationships:** Relationships will suffer when individuals can't tell each other what they want from each other and from the relationship



# Pitfalls of being Non-assertive

There are several pitfalls of being non-assertive. Lack of assertiveness leads to:

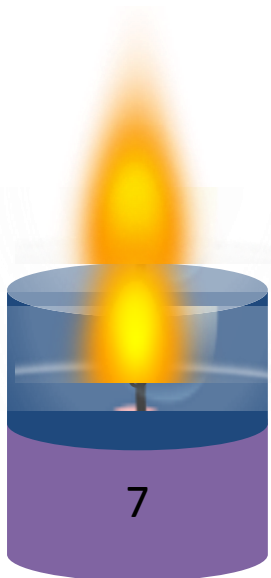
- **Depression**
- **Resentment**
- **Frustration**
- **Temper**
- **Relationships**
- **Anxiety:** You may avoid certain situations which make you feel uncomfortable and feel anxious in situations that you cannot avoid



# Pitfalls of being Non-assertive

There are several pitfalls of being non-assertive. Lack of assertiveness leads to:

- **Depression**
- **Resentment**
- **Frustration**
- **Temper**
- **Relationships**
- **Anxiety**
- **Stress:** Stress can have a negative impact on the body and mind



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# Benefits of Being Assertive

There are several benefits of being assertive such as follows:



Being assertive makes you feel better about yourself



It minimizes any unpleasantness with other people



Being assertive helps have better relations with others



It reduces stress

# Benefits of Being Assertive

There are several benefits of being assertive such as follows:



Being assertive  
propels your career  
ahead



Being assertive  
vaults you into  
leadership  
position



It helps you to  
adapt to  
changing social  
and professional  
environments



Being assertive gives  
you freedom from  
guilt conscience as  
you know that you  
are right

Did you  
know?

Roll your mouse  
over the icon,  
to learn more.

# Did You Know?



- Assertiveness Training or 'AT' was introduced by Ravi in the year 1961 and popularized by Joseph Wolpe. Wolpe believed that a person could not be both assertive and anxious at the same time.
- So, when a person becomes assertive, he would not suffer from unnecessary anxiety.

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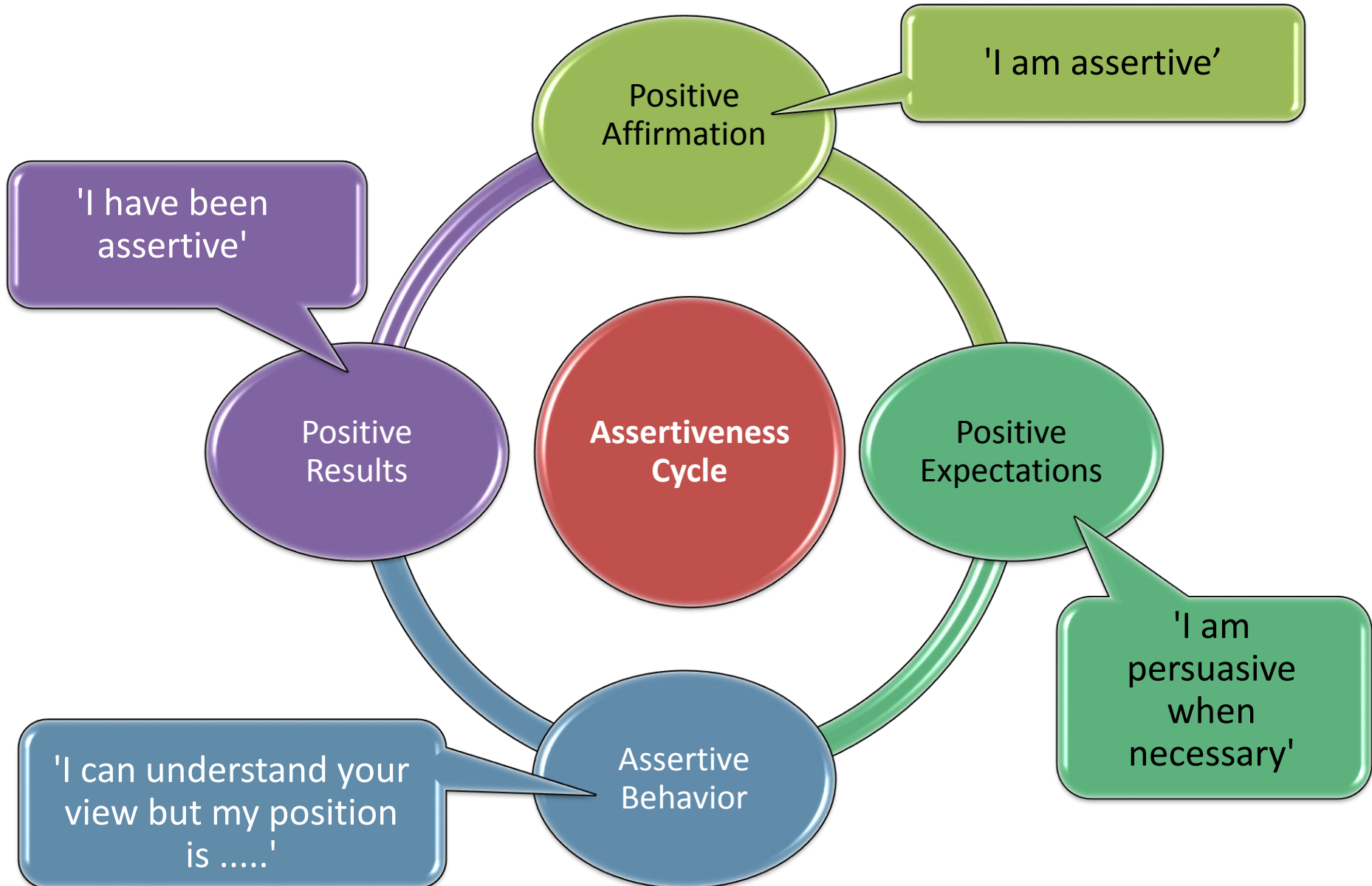
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# Liberation Cycle of Assertiveness



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# Understanding Behavior Patterns

There are three basic behavior patterns seen in people:



Let us look at each in detail.

# Understanding Behavior Patterns

1



Aggressive Behavior

## Symptoms:

- Frequently argues with others
- Frequently gets angry
- Easily and frequently finds fault with others
- No difficulty in complaining when receiving poor quality
- Expects others to accommodate own schedules
- Continually works towards personal agendas at other's expense
- Rarely feels aware of the needs or feelings of others



# Understanding Behavior Patterns

1

Aggressive Behavior

## Reasons:

- Satisfying one's own needs
- Disregard for the needs of others
- Think of themselves as superior beings
- Suffered from childhood emotional trauma
- Over-correction of being too passive
- Inappropriate dealing with anger

- No difficulty in complaining
- Expects others to accommodate own schedules
- Continually works towards personal agendas at other's expense
- Rarely feels aware of the needs or feelings of others

# Understanding Behavior Patterns

# 2



## Symptoms:

- Able to express desires and feelings
- Able to converse and work well with people
- Able to disagree with others respectfully
- Aware of the needs and desires of others
- Able to make concessions for others
- Able to express a concern or a need
- Able to refuse a request without feeling guilty

# Understanding Behavior Patterns

2

Assertive Behavior

## Reasons:

- Satisfy one's own needs keeping consideration of others in mind
- Think of themselves as confident and right beings
- Have no fear of rejection
- Have appropriate inner voices
- Do not believe in being too passive or too aggressive
- Have the right way and attitude towards dealing with anger

- Able to converse and work well with people
- Able to disagree with others respectfully
- Aware of the needs and desires of others
- Able to make concessions for others
- Able to express a concern or a need
- Able to refuse a request without feeling guilty

# Understanding Behavior Patterns

# 3



## Symptoms:

- Reluctant to express own opinions and feelings
- Often feels used by others
- Refrains from complaining
- Finds it difficult to refuse the requests of others
- Acquiesces in the views and desires of the majority
- Is submissive in the presence of aggressive behavior
- Frequently makes compromises for harmony



# Understanding Behavior Patterns

3



Roll your mouse over the icon, to learn more.



## Reasons:

- Fear of rejection
- Fear of upsetting others
- Feels responsible
- Inappropriate inner voices

## Symptoms:

- Reluctant to express own opinions and feelings
- Often feels used by others
- Refrains from complaining
- Finds it difficult to refuse the requests of others
- Acquiesces in the views and desires of the majority
- Is submissive in the presence of aggressive behavior
- Frequently makes compromises for harmony

# Tip!

People who are 'passive' are the 'Nice Guys'. These 'Nice Guys' appear generous, flexible, and extremely polite. However, underneath the surface they are helpless, anxious and have a resentful core. So, you should stop being a forever 'nice guy' to avoid all your pent-up resentment from being pushed around to come out in an unexpected outburst of anger and violence.



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# Comparison of Passive, Assertive and Aggressive Behavior

	<b>Passive</b>	<b>Assertive</b>	<b>Aggressive</b>
<b>Style</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not expressing needs</li> <li>• Self-devaluing</li> <li>• Waiting to be led</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Honest, open, direct</li> <li>• Recognizes own rights</li> <li>• Listens to others' needs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Domineering, insisting</li> <li>• Win/Lose</li> <li>• Not listening</li> </ul>
<b>Non-verbal behaviour</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Small posture</li> <li>• Quiet, hesitant voice</li> <li>• Little eye contact</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Upright, balanced pose</li> <li>• Firm, clear voice</li> <li>• Steady eye contact</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interrupting</li> <li>• Loud</li> <li>• Staring, pointing</li> </ul>
<b>Language</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Sorry to bother you ...</i></li> <li>• <i>I can't seem to ...</i></li> <li>• <i>It's only my opinion</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>I believe/need/I'd like</i></li> <li>• <i>No</i> (when appropriate)</li> <li>• Open questions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>That won't work</i></li> <li>• <i>You can't be serious</i></li> <li>• <i>Your problem/fault</i></li> </ul>



# MCQ



Q. Which of the following people tend to stand up and tower over the other person?

- Passive Person
- Aggressive Person
- Assertive Person
- Authoritative Person

Click on the radio button to select the correct answer!



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# Power of Affirmations

A man in a grey suit and blue tie is sitting in a light-colored chair. He is looking upwards and to the right with a thoughtful expression. His hands are raised slightly, as if he is speaking or gesturing. The background is bright and out of focus, suggesting an office or meeting room environment.

Positive affirmations play an important role in developing self-confidence and becoming assertive. Only when you are confident about yourself can you become an assertive person. It is crucial that you use powerful affirmations daily and affirm to yourself of the good things that you have to offer as a person to this world.

# Power of Affirmations



Affirmations are very powerful and beneficial as:

- They help improve our inner voices
- They help to better our mental well-being
- They help to cast off our inner limitations
- They help to give hope
- They help to build self-confidence
- They help you to become your own person

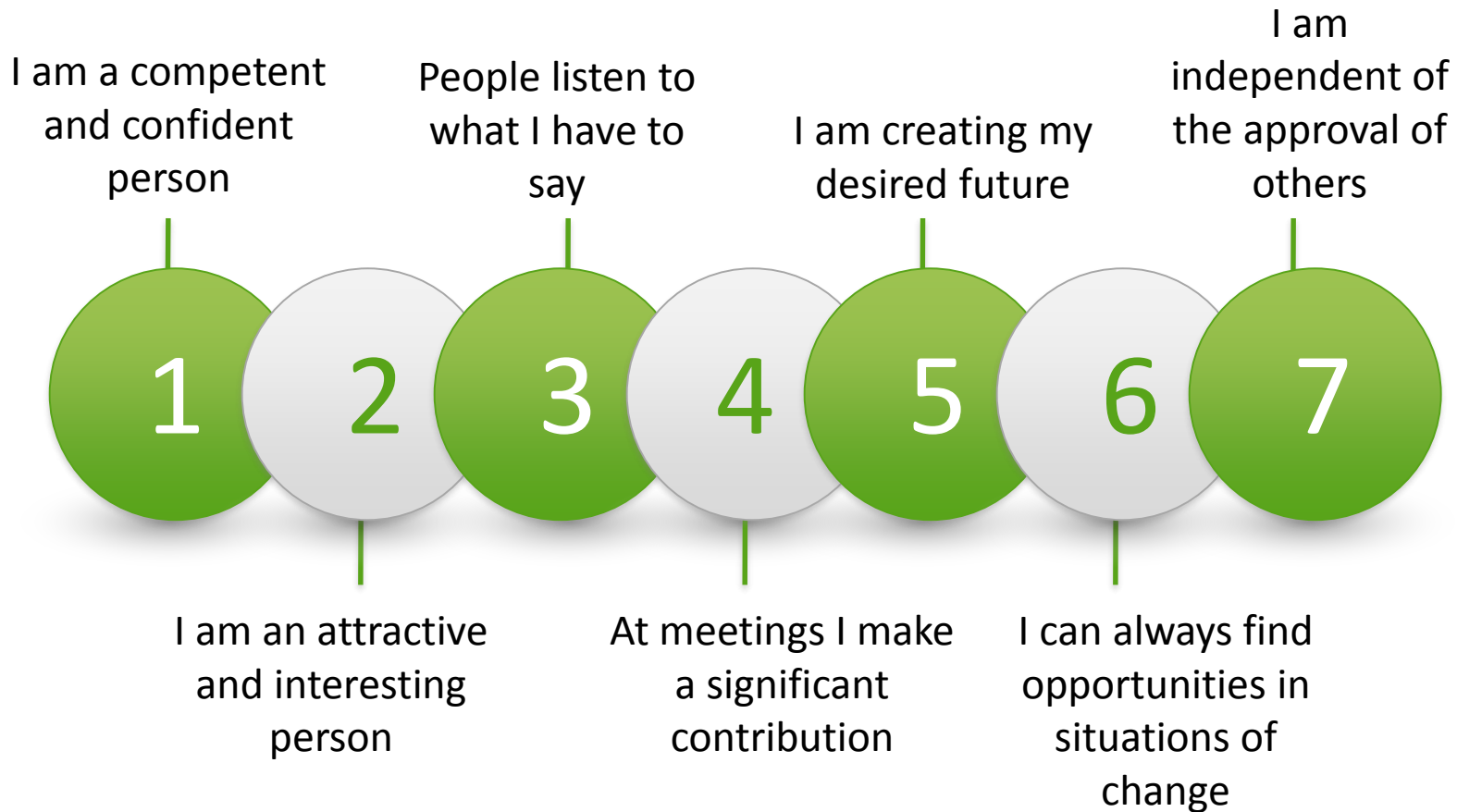
# Affirmations for Work

- There are various positive affirmations that you can use at your workplace to improve yourself as a professional and develop better relationships at the workplace.
- Some of these affirmations may appeal to you, others may not.
- It is important that you develop a set for yourself that best suits your personal characteristics and behavior.



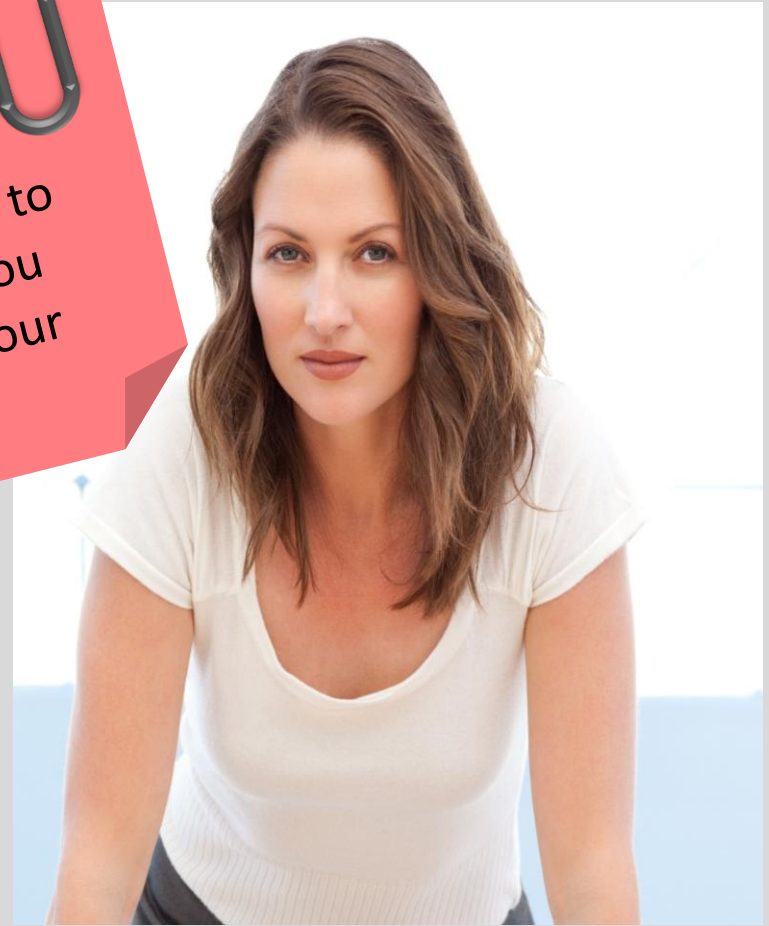
# Affirmations for Work

The following are some positive affirmations to use at the workplace:



# Affirmations for Life

There are various positive affirmations that you can use to improve yourself as a person and develop a better attitude towards your life. Some of these affirmations may appeal to you, others may not. It is important that you develop a set for yourself that best suits your personal characteristics and behavior.



# Affirmations for Life

The following are some positive affirmations to use for life:

I am what I am

I am at one with myself and my world

I respect myself and all living things

In loving myself, I love others

I am continually developing towards my inner self

In giving, I achieve more

I am open to the opportunities this day brings



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# Skills for Assertiveness

The following are the various skills that you need to develop to become assertive:



**DESC (Describe, Express, Specify, Clarify)**

**Broken Record**

**Fogging**

**Negative Enquiry**

**Negative Assertion**

**“I” Statements**

**Disagreeing Gracefully**

Let us look at each in detail.

# Skills for Assertiveness

## DESC (Describe, Express, Specify, Clarify)

- The acronym DESC stands for:
  - D – Describe
  - E – Express
  - S – Specify
  - C – Clarify
- To become more assertive and develop assertiveness skills, you must:
  - Describe the actions or behavior that you see as taking place
  - Express why that behavior is an issue
  - Specify the resulting actions or change of behavior you would like to effect
  - Clarify the consequences for failing to change behavior or meet demands



# Skills for Assertiveness

## Broken Record

- The 'Broken Record' can prove to be a useful skill to develop when trying to become more assertive.
- The 'Broken Record' skill involves repeating yourself until the person gives in or concedes to your demands.
- This skill is really very easy to develop and use as you just have to repeat yourself.
- It has been found that most people capitulate after you repeat yourself three times.



# Skills for Assertiveness

## Broken Record

- The 'Broken Record' can prove to be a useful skill when you are trying to become more assertive.

- The 'Broken Record' involves repeating your point again, until you are conceded to.

- This skill is particularly useful when you are not getting what you are entitled to.

- It has been found that people are more likely to capitulate after you repeat yourself three times.

**Broken record is particularly useful when:**

- Dealing with those in authority
- You are not getting what you are entitled to
- Dealing with people brighter or more fluent than you
- The other person is likely to use put-downs

# Real Life Example

A close-up photograph of a person's hand holding a white rectangular sticky note. The hand is wearing a dark suit jacket. The sticky note has blue handwritten-style text.

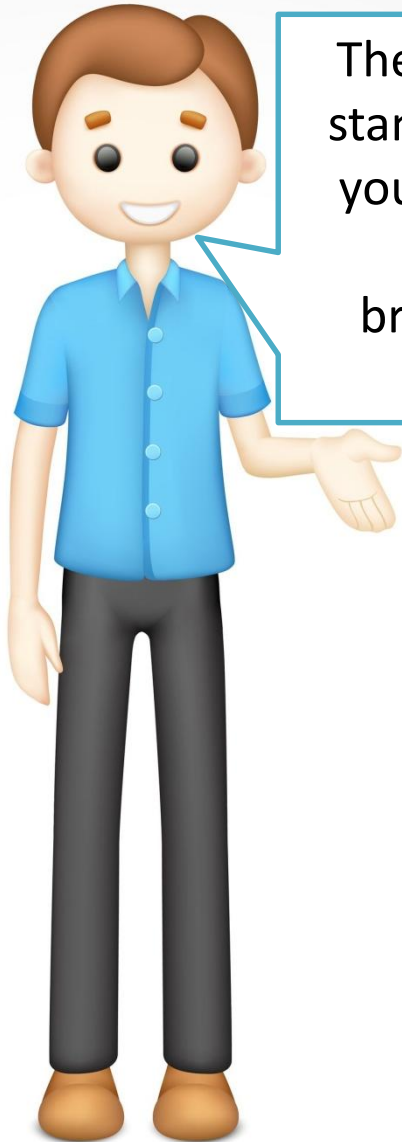
*Let us now look at an example to see how the 'broken record' works for assertiveness.*

# Real Life Example

- Ravi had attended a course to develop 'sales skills' at a leading training institute.
- However, Ravi found that the trainer had not covered all the topics that were mentioned in the brochure that was shown to Ravi before he signed up for the course.
- Also, Ravi did not find that the course was up to the mark that was promised to him.
- So, Ravi decides that he wants a partial refund of the fees that he had paid for the course.
- Let us see how Ravi uses the 'broken record' technique to communicate assertively.

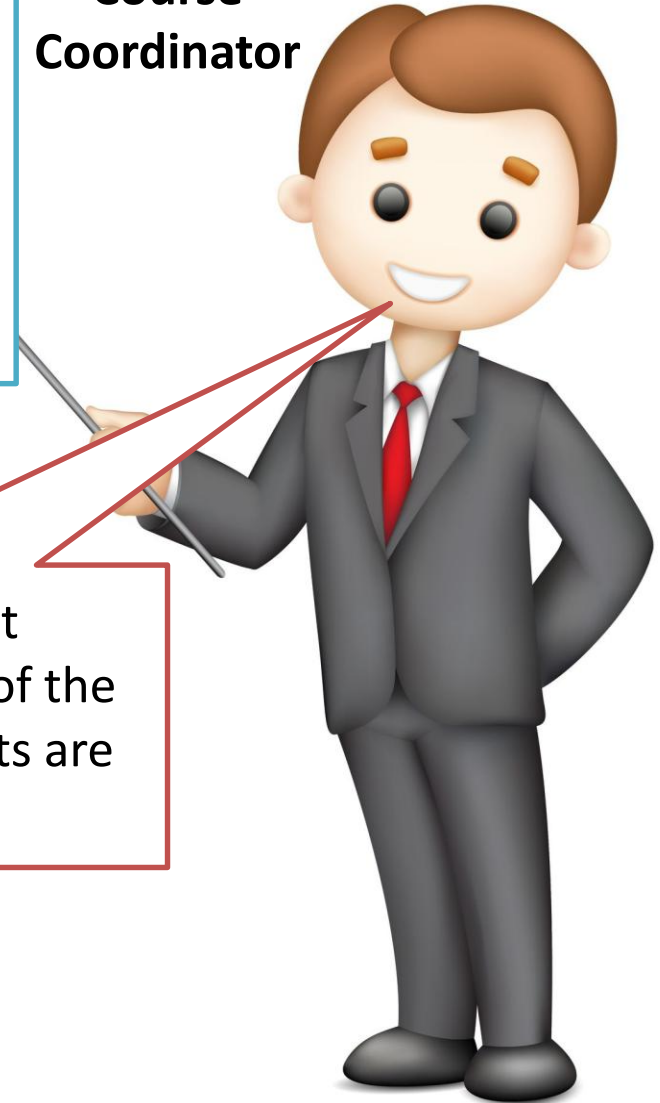
# Real Life Example

Ravi



The program was not up to the standard you had promised and you did not cover all the topics mentioned in the course brochure. So, I want a partial refund of the fees I paid.

Course Coordinator



Other people have not complained, in fact some of the feedback from the students are excellent



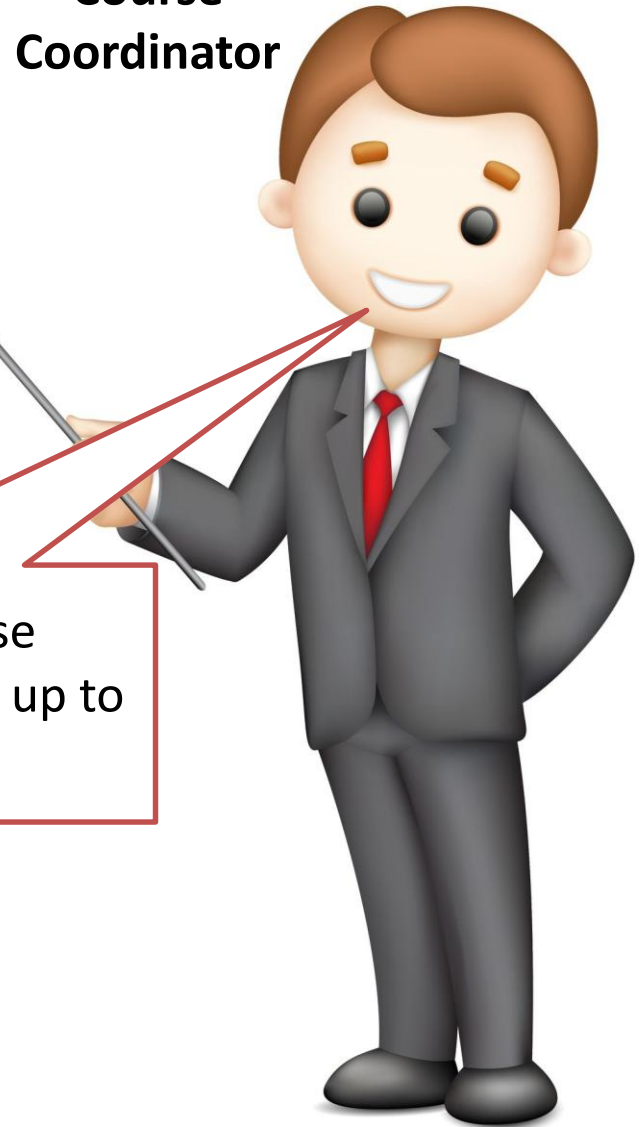
# Real Life Example

Ravi



They might be, but I want a refund because the course was not up to standard.

Course Coordinator



In my opinion as a course coordinator, the course was up to standard.

# Real Life Example

Ravi



I can appreciate that is your opinion but I want a refund.

Course Coordinator



It is not our policy to give refunds.

# Real Life Example

Ravi



That may be your policy but I want a partial refund.

Course Coordinator



Alright let me talk to my manager. However, we could only refund 20% of your fees if the manager agrees.

Sure, that's fine. I appreciate your help in this regard.

# Real Life Example

Ravi



- Ravi got the partial refund for the course.

- Hence, you can see that by continuously repeating the same thing confidently, strongly and assertively, one can use the 'broken record' technique to be assertive.

# Skills for Assertiveness

## Fogging

- Fogging is an especially useful skill to use when someone is putting pressure on you to do something.
- So, your response to the pressure is to put up a fog. This involves listening to what the other person says and then deciding whether or not you wish to comply with their request.
- If not, then using their words, or similar words to theirs, acknowledge their need but state your case.
- This method is a very polite method of saying 'No'.



# Skills for Assertiveness

## Negative Enquiry

- 'Negative Enquiry' is a very interesting skill to use for assertiveness.
- Negative Enquiry involves inviting extra criticism and/or examples so that you have the benefit of gaining additional feedback from the other person.
- It helps you understand the other person's point of view and also helps you to probe further into their dislike or aversion towards you or your ideas and opinions.



# Skills for Assertiveness

## Negative Assertion

- It is a natural human tendency that when people call us names, criticize us or give us negative labels, we usually wish to defend ourselves.
- However, when we try to defend ourselves, aggressive or manipulative people take advantage of our defensiveness and soon find our weak spots.



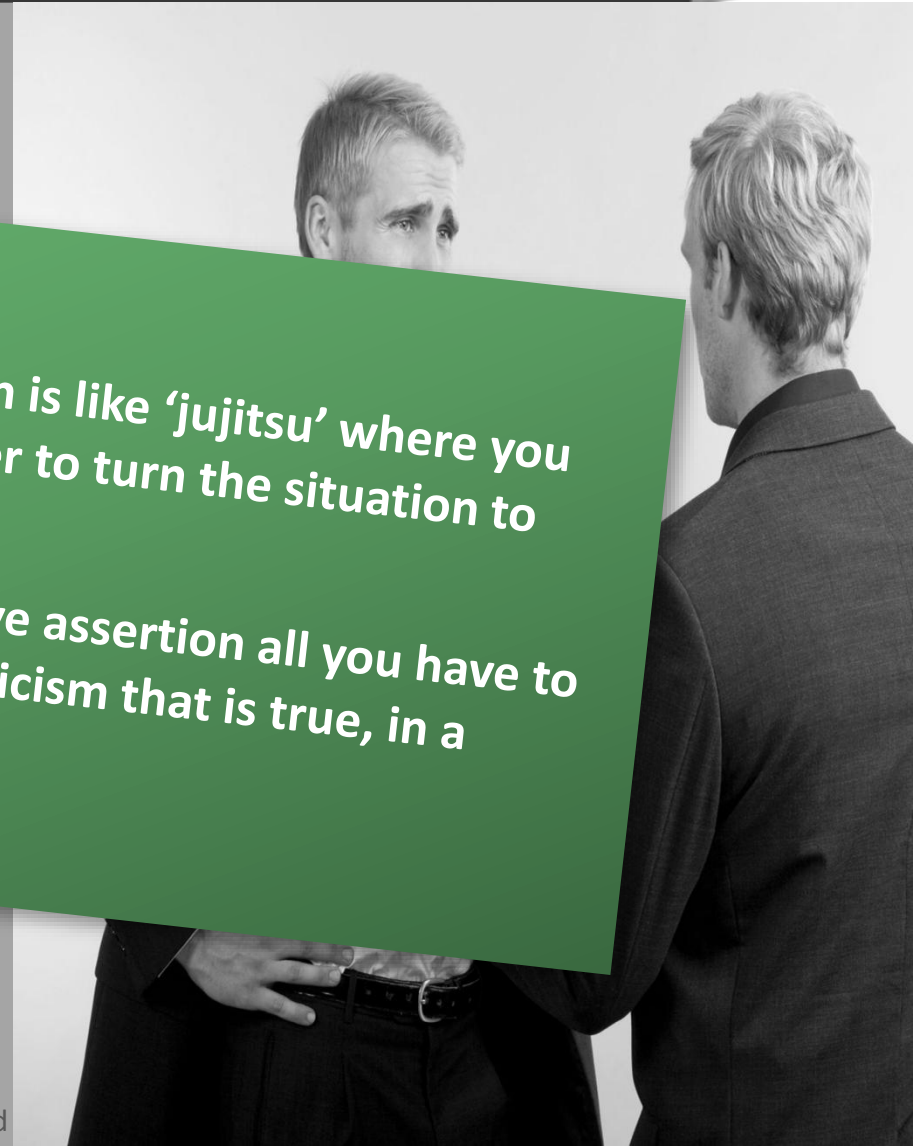
# Skills for Assertiveness

## Negative Assertion

- It is a natural response for people called negative assertive to defend ourselves.
- However, we should not let people take defensive spots.

**The skill of Negative Assertion is like 'jujitsu' where you use the power of your attacker to turn the situation to your advantage.**

**No one is perfect, so in negative assertion all you have to do is accept the part of the criticism that is true, in a matter of fact way.**





# Skills for Assertiveness

## “I” Statements

- “I” statements are among the most powerful you can make, both for yourself and others.
- In “I” statements you are affirming who you are and what you want.
- Using “I” statements is the hallmark of assertiveness.



# Skills for Assertiveness

## "I" Statements

**"I" statements can be used in a variety of ways:**

- **Situation**
- **Interpretation and Understanding**
- **Feelings and Emotions**
- **Wants and Needs**
- **Future Actions**

**Let us look at each in detail.**



# "I" Statements

1

Situation

2

3

4

5

Situation statements are powerful because they are factual and, as an observation on your part, they are non-negotiable.

- 'I have been asked to work late three times this week'
- 'I see that I have been passed over for promotion again'
- 'I notice that you have not spoken to me for three days'

# "I" Statements

1

2

**Interpretation &  
Understanding**

3

4

5

**These statements are powerful because you're describing your interpretation of a situation, not just the situation itself.**

- **'I get the impression you are not interested'**
- **'I have the feeling you don't want my ideas'**
- **'I think you are ignoring me'**

# "I" Statements

1

2

3

Feelings &  
Emotions

4

The strength of these statements is that they let the other person know your exact position and what you expect.

5

- 'I want you to pay attention'
- 'I want your full co-operation'
- 'I want you to be on time'

# "I" Statements

1

2

3

4

5

This is not about feelings, but really a way to express your opinion more strongly. Again, these statements are powerful because they are non-negotiable or irrefutable.

- 'I feel betrayed'
- 'I feel taken advantage of'
- 'I feel angry, disappointed, cross, annoyed'

Wants &  
Needs

# "I" Statements

1

2

3

4

5

Future  
Actions

The strength of these statements is that they let the other person know what you expect from him.

- 'I want you to pay the bill'
- 'I want your full support for the campaign'
- 'I want you to complete this report'

## Real Life Example

*Let us now look at an example to see how 'I Statements' can be used in different ways for assertiveness.*



# Real Life Example



**You had seen at the beginning of this module how Ravi who is a Project Manager faces a lot of problems with his subordinates due to not being assertive. In spite of repeatedly telling his subordinates to complete a list of tasks, they do not tend to complete them.**

**Let us now see how Ravi can use 'I Statements' in this situation to get his subordinates to comply with his requests.**

# Real Life Example



## Situation

'I see that this is the third time you have not done as I had requested'

# Real Life Example



## Situation

## Interpretation

'I think you are trying to do as little as possible of all that I tell you to do'

# Real Life Example



**Situation**

**Interpretation**

**Feelings**

'I feel disappointed and annoyed that I have to repeat myself'

# Real Life Example



**Situation**

**Interpretation**

**Feelings**

**Want**

'So I want you to do what I ask even if I'm not there to supervise you'

# Real Life Example



**Situation**

**Interpretation**

**Feelings**

**Want**

**Future Action**

'I am going to report you to higher authorities if you do this again'

# Skills for Assertiveness

## Disagreeing Gracefully

- Occasionally there will be disagreements between two people.
- Acquiescing or doing the opposite, that is, attacking, are not constructive responses when you are in a disagreement.
- Following a simple step-by-step process will help you put your case without getting emotional, losing your integrity or losing your respect for the other person.



# Skills for Assertiveness

## Disagreeing Gracefully

**The Process of Disagreeing Gracefully involves the following steps:**

- **Affirmative Statement**
- **Softening Statement**
- **Indicate Process**
- **State Reasons**
- **Disagree**
- **Offer a compromise\***

**The compromise is optional and it is for you to decide whether or not to make a concession.**

**Let us look at each step in detail.**



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# Process of Disagreeing Gracefully

1

**Step 1:  
Affirmative  
Statement**

2

3

4

5

6

**This is simply saying 'YES'. It might sound strange saying this when you are disagreeing. But if you say 'NO', the other person immediately goes into argument mode and is less likely to listen. You are using 'yes' to prepare them for what you are going to say, not to indicate that you agree with them.**

# Process of Disagreeing Gracefully

1

2

**Step 2: The Softening Statement**

3

4

**Most people's views are influenced by their background, experience or profession. You can show that you recognize this within the context of a softening statement. Here are some examples:**

- **"As an engineer I can understand why you take such a position"**
- **"As someone much experienced than myself, with different values, I can understand where you come from"**

5

6

# Process of Disagreeing Gracefully

1

2

3

**Step 3:  
Indicate  
Process**

4

5

6

This explains to the person the process you will use to outline your position or your reasons for the stance that you have taken. Here are some examples:

- “If I may, I would like to say something about that ...”
- “Let me give you my reasons”

# Process of Disagreeing Gracefully

1

2

3

4

5

6

Here you simply give the reasons or justification for your position or opinion. This can either be done in a straightforward way, or you can give a balanced view of pros and cons, explaining why you have chosen the side that you have.

**Step 4:  
State  
Reasons**

# Process of Disagreeing Gracefully

1

2

3

4

5

6

**Do not apologize or use tentative language here. Use the strongest language that you can, remembering to accompany what you have said with appropriate body language. Here are some examples:**

- **“So, I cannot agree with you”**
- **“Therefore, I must disagree”**
- **“Hence, I think you are mistaken”**

**Step 5:  
Disagree**

# Process of Disagreeing Gracefully

1

2

3

4

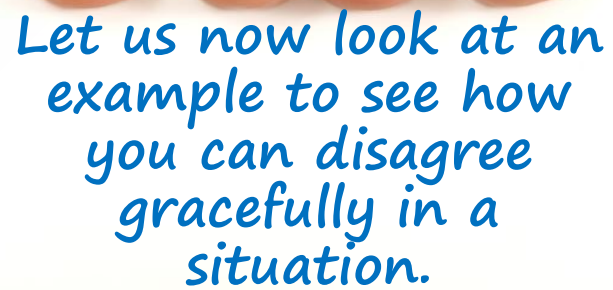
5

6

This is an optional step. Offering a compromise is optional and it is for you to decide whether or not to make a concession. The decision to offer a compromise depends upon the situation, the person in front of you, the possibility of a compromise or your own wish to offer a compromise. It would be good for both parties if a compromise can be reached as a 'compromise' helps provide a middle way between two extreme options.

**Step 6:  
Offer A  
Compromise**

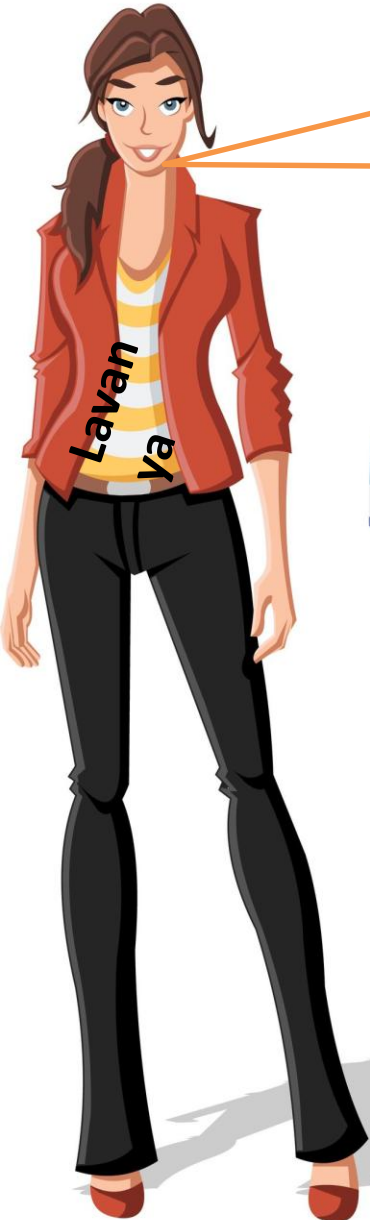
# Real Life Example

A close-up photograph of a person's hand holding a white sticky note. The hand is wearing a dark suit jacket. The sticky note has blue handwritten text.

*Let us now look at an example to see how you can disagree gracefully in a situation.*



# Real Life Example



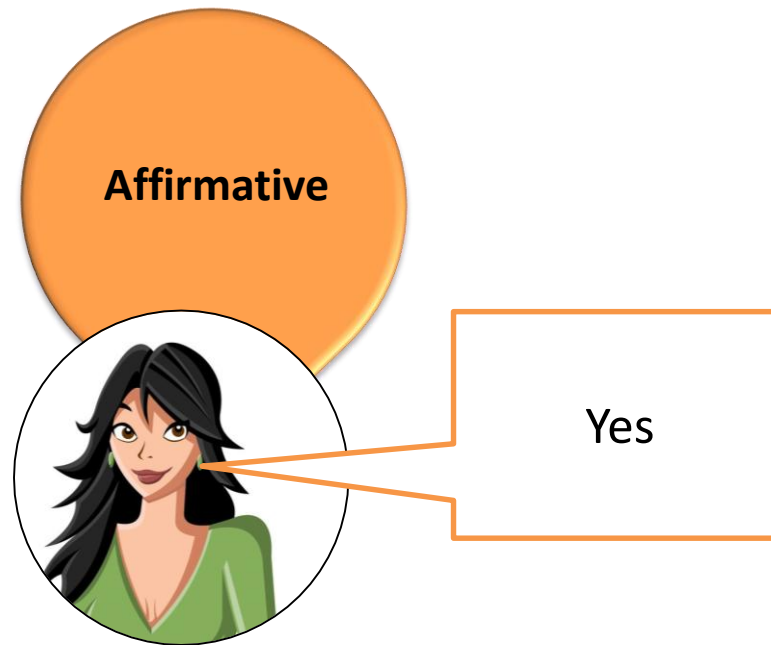
'I don't think you should go out today on a Saturday night which is our 'dinner out' night'

**latha and Lavanya are two colleagues who work together and share a rented apartment as flat mates. latha plans to go out for a movie that she has been longing to see on a Saturday. Saturday is the day that latha and Lavanya have set aside for their grocery shopping and dinner out together. So, Lavanya is not very happy about latha spoiling their normal Saturday routine to go out for the movie.**

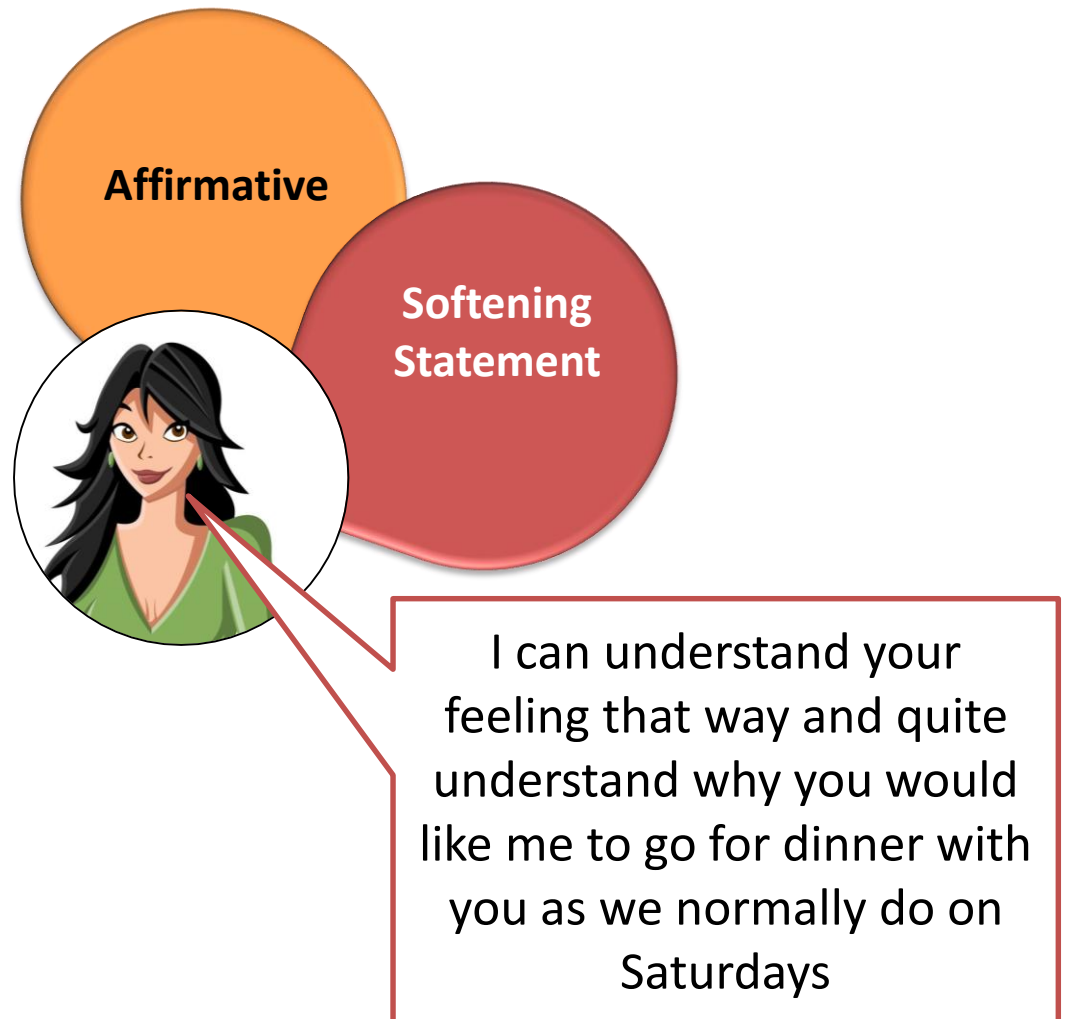
**Let us see how latha uses the process of disagreeing gracefully.**



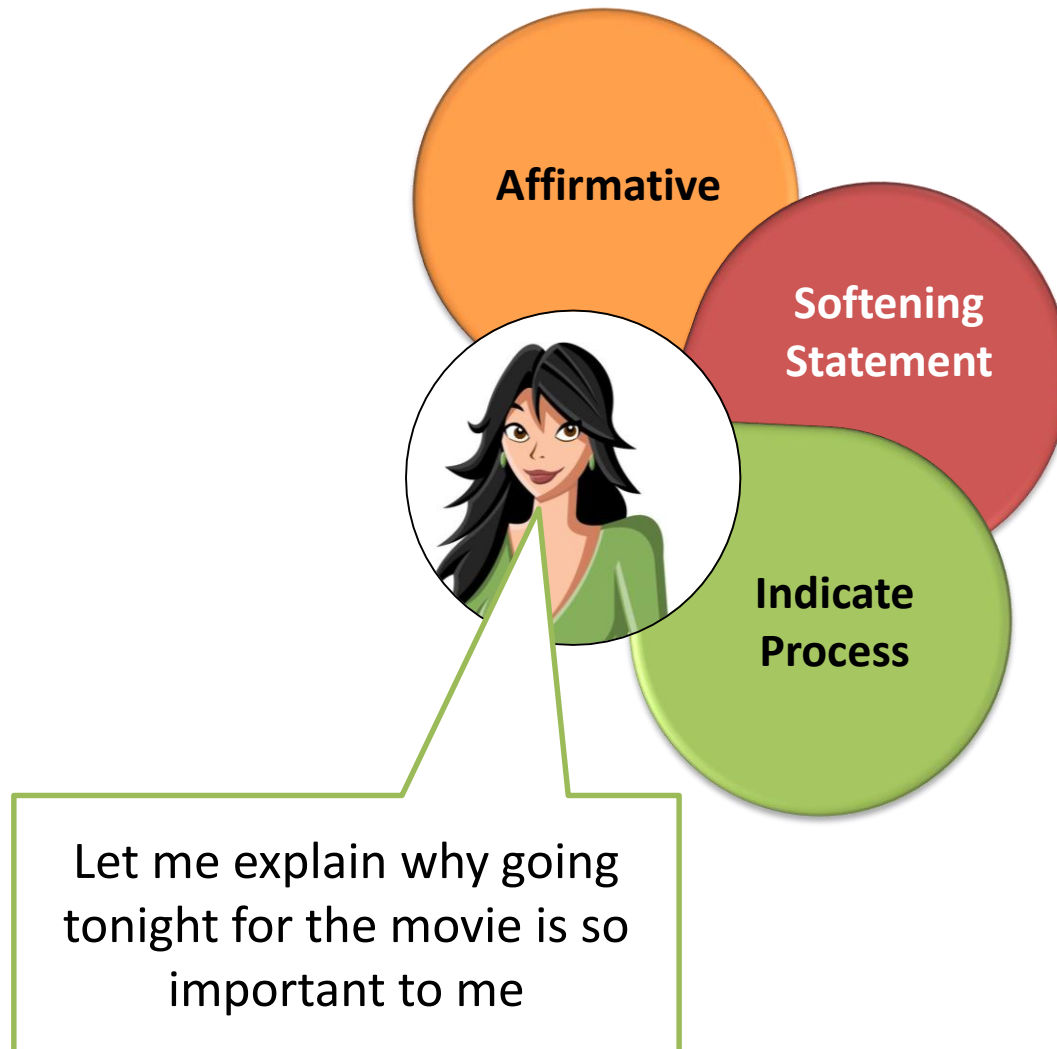
# Real Life Example



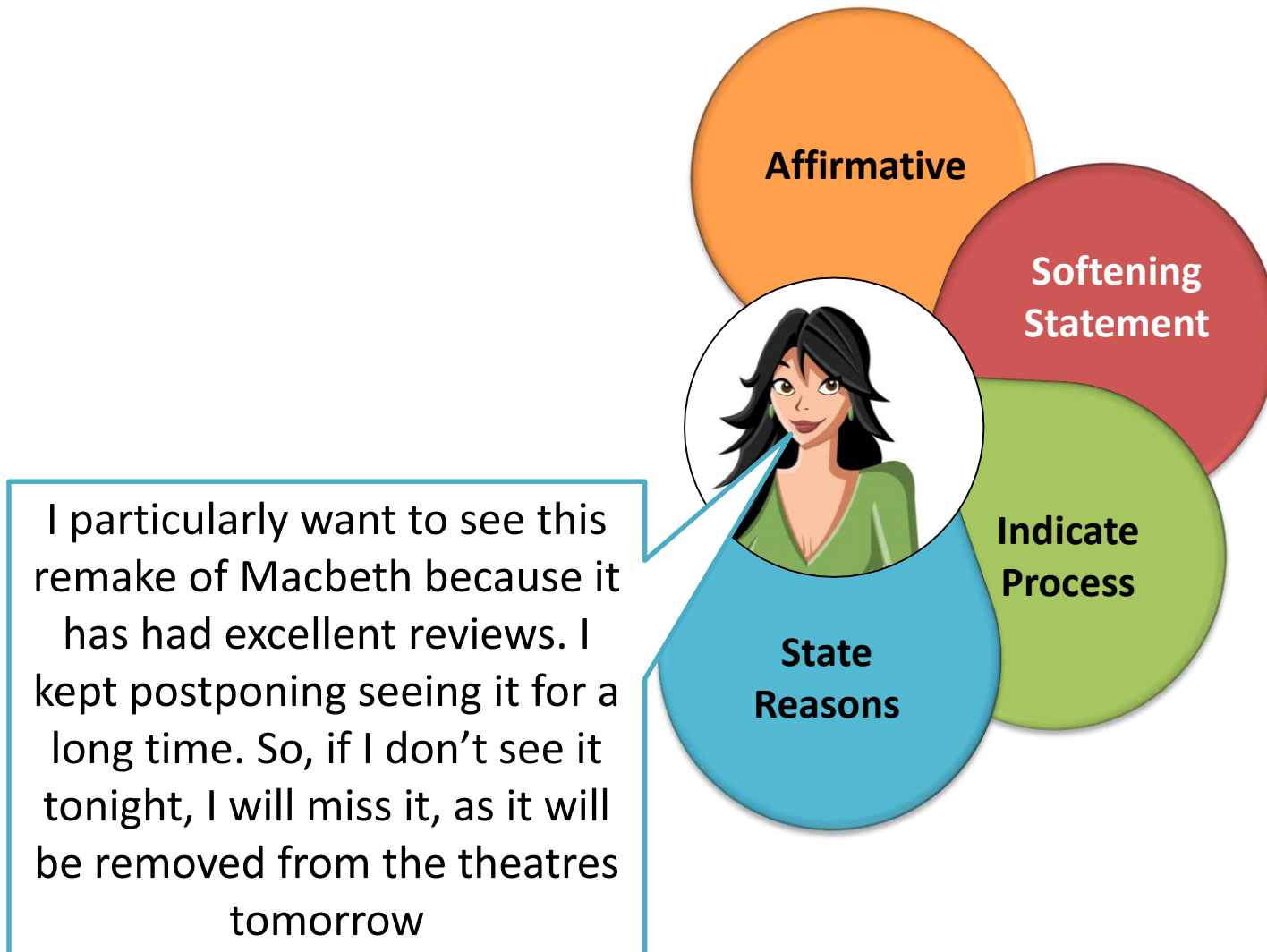
# Real Life Example



# Real Life Example

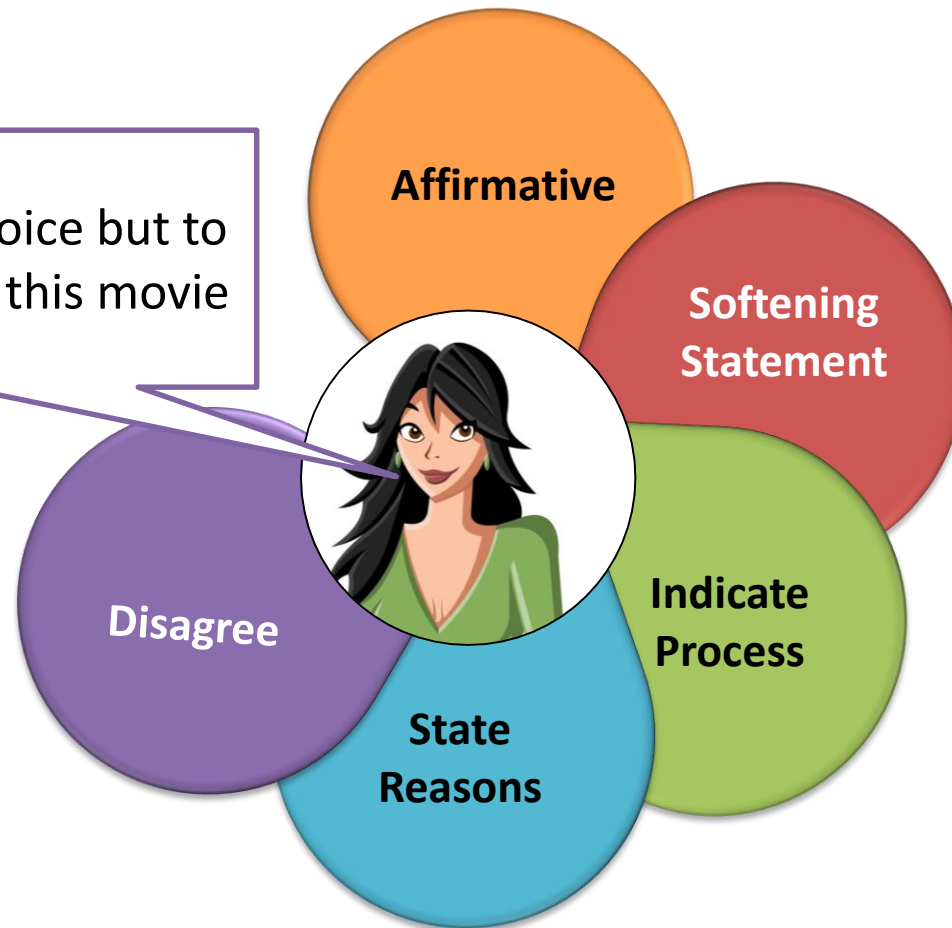


# Real Life Example

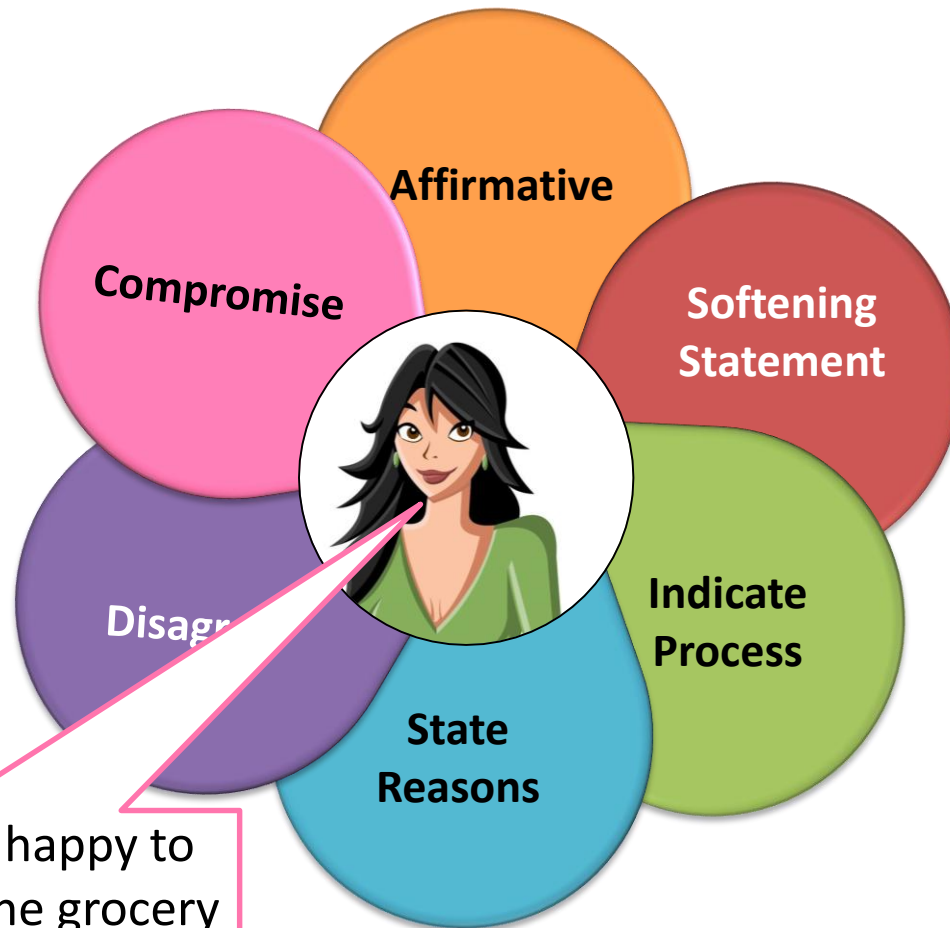


# Real Life Example

So I don't have a choice but to go tonight to watch this movie



# Real Life Example



But I am more than happy to go out with you for the grocery shopping and dinner tomorrow

# MCQ



Q. Which of the following is an optional step in the process of disagreeing gracefully?

- Indicate Process
- Offer a Compromise
- Affirmative Statement
- Softening Statement

Click on the radio button to select the correct answer!





# The Art of Saying 'NO'

Saying 'NO' to a person is an art. When you say 'no' to a person, it has to be said in such a way that you clearly convey the message that you do not intend to comply with the other person's request. Also, the 'no' should be said in such a manner that it does not out rightly offend the other person.



# The Art of Saying 'NO'

There are three different ways that you can say 'NO':

## Passive NO

This is a weak way of saying 'No'. A passive 'no' is usually accompanied by weak excuses and rationalizations.

## Assertive NO

This is the best manner of saying 'no' to any person, whether your colleague, boss, spouse, friend, relative or anybody. An assertive 'no' is a simple and direct 'no' said in a straightforward and firm manner without any rudeness, contempt or weakness.

## Aggressive NO

This is a rude way of saying 'No'. An aggressive 'no' is said with contempt and rudeness.

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# Four Steps to Saying 'No'

Step - 4

## **Step 4: Offer to find an alternative –**

Let the other party know that you will try to help them but you are unable to perform the entire request. Present alternative options or solutions that you can offer to do for them other than performing the actual request made.

Step - 3

## **Step 3: Give a reason for your refusal –**

Without giving a reason, you may come across to the other person as uncooperative or hostile. So, always accompany your 'no' with a clear and honest reason for your refusal.

Step - 2

## **Step 2: Say 'no' immediately –**

You do not need to justify your decision. If you start doing so, you will prolong the conversation unnecessarily.

Step - 1

## **Step 1: Listen to the request –**

Make sure you understand the request completely before coming to a hasty conclusion of saying 'no' to the request. Clarify if needed.

# Tips for Saying 'No'



Never say 'yes' when you want to say 'no' else you will resent and repent what you agreed to do.



Stay resolved and not let yourself be pushed over to say 'yes'.



Start your sentence with a 'no' to let the other person know your response to his request before you get down to the explanations of your refusal.



Just say 'no' when you want to say 'no'

# Tips for Saying 'No'



If you are not sure you want to comply with someone's request, ask time to think it over.



Use an empathetic tone and words while saying 'no'.



Do not feel shy in saying 'no'. Most people end up doing things they do not want to do and feel frustrated because they hesitate in saying 'no'

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# Body Language while Saying 'No'

A person wearing a black suit jacket, a black dress shirt, and a red necktie is shown from the chest up. Their right hand is raised in front of them, palm facing forward, with fingers slightly spread, in a clear 'stop' or 'no' gesture. The background is plain white.

**To convey your message clearly and firmly, it is crucial that your words are always accompanied with the appropriate body language. The correct body language can add to your words and convey the meaning without any confusion.**

**While saying 'no', it is crucial that you use the appropriate body language to make sure the other person understands your refusal clearly.**



# Body Language while Saying 'No'

The following are a few points to keep in mind with respect to body language while saying 'no':

**Shake your head sideways in a 'no' when you say 'no'.**

**Never smile when saying 'no', it weakens the message.**

**Avoid nods and 'Ahas' when about to say 'no'.**

**Stand up if the other person is standing up to make a level eye contact while saying 'no'.**

**Pre-empt your 'no' when you sense an unjustified request is heading your way.**

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# Elements of Assertive Communication

- The following are the various elements of assertive communication:



- Let us look at each in detail.

# Elements of Assertive Communication



## Soft Assertion:

A 'soft assertion' is a kind of statement that does not require any action or anything of the listener.

## Example:

A T-Shirt with 'Save Whales' written on it does not demand any action from you but lets you know the stand of the person wearing it.

# Elements of Assertive Communication



## **Basic Assertion:**

A 'basic assertion' is more of a simple statement conveying what you want out of a situation. Simplicity is the key to this kind of assertion.

## **Example:**

"I don't want to work on this weekend"

# Elements of Assertive Communication



## **Empathetic Assertion:**

An 'empathetic assertion' is the most effective type of assertion one can make. In such an assertion, you try to understand how the other person may feel.

## **Example:**

“I know that you may be feeling frustrated after trying to find the data through many attempts, but I just don't want to leave any stone unturned.”

# Elements of Assertive Communication



## **Escalating Assertion:**

An 'escalating assertion' is the kind of assertion that has a specific consequence attached to it.

## **Example:**

“If you get this proposal accepted I’ll see to it that you get a hike in the forthcoming review.”

# Elements of Assertive Communication



## Confrontation Assertion:

A 'confrontation assertion' is a type of statement which is made when a mutual agreement has been violated.

### Example:

"We had decided to complete the quarterly reports by the end of the day on Friday. Since that has not happened, we will have to work over the weekend"

Did you know?

Roll your mouse over the icon, to learn more.



# Did You Know?



- Passive communication includes words such as ‘maybe’, ‘I guess’, ‘would you mind if’, ‘only’, ‘just’, ‘I can't’, ‘if that's what you want.’
- Aggressive communication includes words of threats such as ‘you'd better’ and ‘if you don't watch out.’ Sarcastic comments such as ‘oh, come on, you must be kidding’ and evaluative comments such as ‘should’, ‘bad’, and ‘must’.
- Assertive communication includes words such as, ‘I think’, ‘I feel’, ‘I want’, ‘let's see, how can we resolve this’, ‘what do you think’ and ‘what do you see.’

# MCQ



Q. Which of the following is the most effective type of assertion that you can make?

- Basic Assertion
- Confrontation Assertion
- Escalating Assertion
- Empathetic Assertion

Click on the radio button to select the correct answer!



# MCQ



Q. Which of the following is a 'type of statement which is made when a mutual agreement has been violated'?

- Confrontation Assertion
- Soft Assertion
- Basic Assertion
- Escalating Assertion

Click on the radio button to select the correct answer!



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# Assertive Words

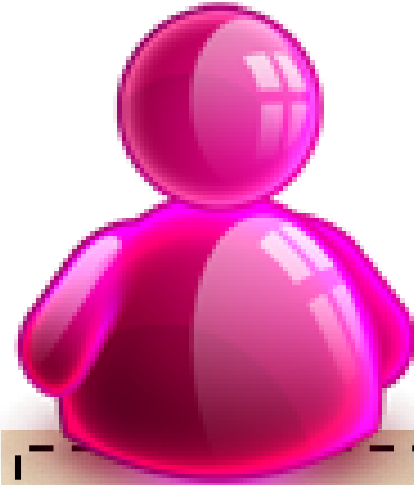
Assertive words play a crucial role in conveying your assertiveness. You can practice to be more assertive and develop good assertiveness skills by using the right assertive words at the right time. There are various words that you can use to convey your assertiveness such as:



**Thank You**



**If**



**When**

Let us see how you can use each of these words for assertiveness.

# Assertive Words



“I would like you to be quiet now. Thank you.”

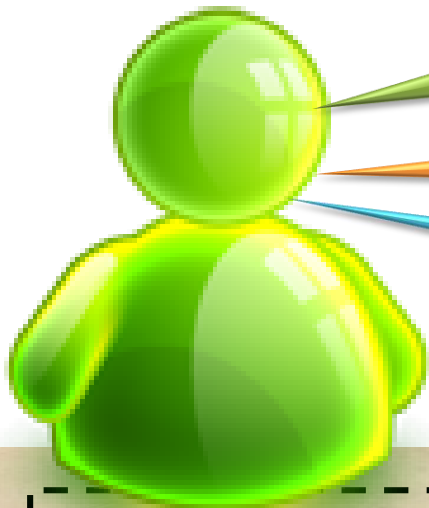
“I would like you to help me. Thank you.”

“I want you to pay attention. Thank you.”

## Thank You

- Judicial use of ‘thank you’ can be exceptionally powerful. ‘Thank you’ is an interesting phrase. We are brought up to say ‘please’ when we want something. But, if we say ‘please’ we are asking the person for something. However, using a ‘thank you’ while making a request becomes assumptive. In other words, you assume that what you ask for will be done or given.
- Let’s take a look at a few examples.

# Assertive Words



“If you do this then I will ...”

“If you work harder I will ...”

“If you co-operate you can have ...”

## If

- The conjunction ‘if’ is exceptionally powerful when you want to make a concession or give something away. The ‘if’ acts as a piece of elastic or a connector with which you can pull back the concession, if you don’t get what you want.
- In life, the best way to get someone do something is to go by the barter system. You should let the other person know, that if they comply with your request, only then you will give them what they want in return. It is a simple logic of using ‘give and take’.
- Let’s take a look at a few examples.

# Assertive Words

TIP

Roll your mouse over the icon, to learn more.

“When the work has been completed ...”

“When you ...”

“When you stop making accusations ...”

## When

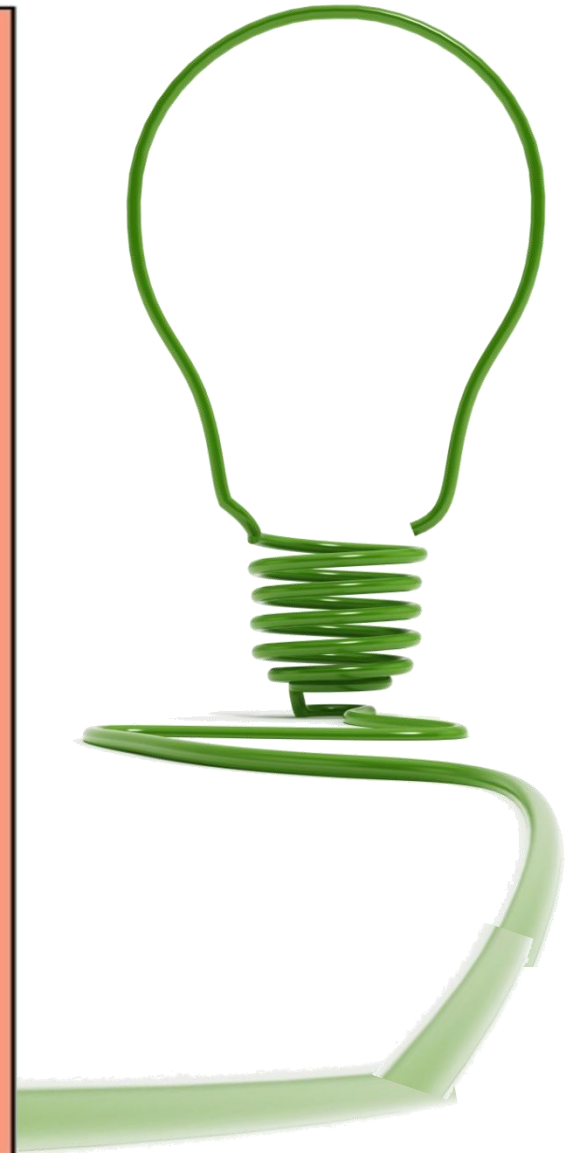
- This is another conjunction which is the same as ‘if’ when you make it conditional. It has the same power as ‘if’ when used to make requests and you want to get something done from someone. The only difference is that instead of making the request sound like a condition, it makes the request sound like a requisite for something the person wants.
- Let’s take a look at a few examples.



# Tip!

Everyone including you can achieve 'Assertiveness' if you know your 'rights' and act according to your rights. The following are the rights of every person:

- Right to be treated with respect.
- Right to have and express your own ideas and feelings.
- Right to be listened to and to be taken seriously.
- Right to make mistakes.
- Right to ask for information from others.



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# Non Verbal Aspects of Assertiveness

The following are the various aspects to be kept in mind to convey your assertiveness through non verbal means or through your body language:

Facial Expression

Position and Space

Posture

Tone of Voice

Eye Contact

Let's look at each in detail.

# Non Verbal Aspects of Assertiveness

The following are the various aspects to be kept in mind to convey your assertiveness through non verbal means or through your body language:

## Eye Contact:

- A 'Passive' person uses very little eye contact
- An 'Aggressive' person never drops eye contact with the other person
- An 'Assertive' person uses eye contact about 50% of the time

Facial Expression

Position a

Tone of Voice

Eye Contact

# Non Verbal Aspects of Assertiveness

The following are the various aspects to be kept in mind to ...

## Tone of Voice:

- A 'Passive' person uses a too soft tone and voice which is often hard to hear
- An 'Aggressive' person uses a too loud voice and a rude tone
- An 'Assertive' person uses effective tone modulation and an appropriate volume and tone

Facial Expression

Position and

Tone of Voice

Eye Contact

# Non Verbal Aspects of Assertiveness

The following are the various aspects to be kept in mind to ... through non verbal means or

Facial Expression

Position and

## Posture:

- A 'Passive' person usually keeps his arms folded and contracts his body to fold in himself. He also tends to fidget
- An 'Aggressive' person uses a confronting posture and tends to stand up and tower over the other person in an attempt to intimidate the other person
- An 'Assertive' person uses a confident posture and stands up tall and straight at the level of the other person with whom he is talking to

Eye Contact

# Non Verbal Aspects of Assertiveness

The following are the various aspects to be kept in mind to ... non verbal means or

Facial Expression

Position and

## Position and Space:

- A 'Passive' person usually shrinks back into his space and avoids getting into other's space
- An 'Aggressive' person comes ahead and tries to occupy the other person's personal space and territory
- An 'Assertive' person maintains an even space and position and keeps an arms distance with the other person. He also respects the other person by keeping the other person on the same level as himself. Hence, an 'assertive' person will sit down if the other is sitting and stand up when the other is standing

Eye Contact

# Non Verbal Aspects of Assertiveness

The following are the various aspects to be kept in mind to express oneself through non verbal means or

## Facial Expression:

- A 'Passive' person will usually show facial expressions that show that he is intimidated by the other person and has a submissive expression on his face
- An 'Aggressive' person shows facial expressions that show anger with eyebrows frowning, teeth clenched etc.
- An 'Assertive' person maintains a calm and composed face and reflects emotions that are being expressed by his words as well

Facial Expression

Position and

Eye Contact



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# Action Plan for Building Assertiveness

The following are the steps for building and practicing assertiveness:



- **Step 1: Maintain Record:**

Maintain a log of all your affirmations, goals, ambitions, rights, achievements etc. Read and update this record regularly.

- **Step 2: Fill an Inspiration Form:**

Think about all the people whom you idolize. Read about all your heroes and idols. Make a list of values, affirmations and attitudes which inspire you to follow these idols.

- **Step 3: Analyze Yourself:**

Think about all that you want. Prepare a script about what to say to convey your assertiveness. Learn your script. Practice your script verbally. Practice your script with appropriate body language.

- **Step 4: Look Back:**

At the end of each day look back on the various instances of assertiveness that you conveyed. Analyze the various aspects. Practice and rehearse on the new responses.

- **Step 5: Meet Problems Upfront:**

Confront particular situations, persons whenever possible. You will sharpen your assertiveness skills and in turn build up confidence.

# Action Plan for Building Assertiveness

The following are the steps for building and practicing assertiveness:



- **Step 6: Compliment Often:**

Make a list of people who matter to you and think of three good things about each. Compliment at least three people every day. Also, make sure to use 'I' statements daily.

- **Step 7: Find a Mentor:**

Find one person whom you really admire and request him for his mentorship. Discuss your goals, ambitions, objectives and problems with your Mentor.

- **Step 8: Gather Feedback:**

Make a list of people whom you trust and ask them for their frank and correct feedback. Ask about your strengths, confidence, assertiveness skills etc. Work on building these skills seriously.

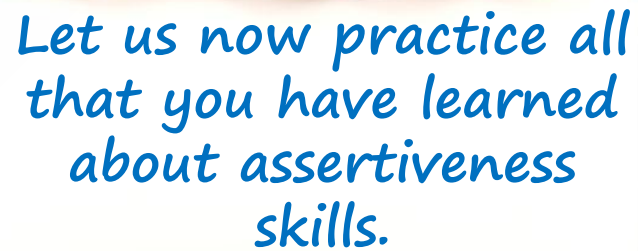
- **Step 9: Boost Confidence:**

Make efforts to boost self esteem by adopting image enhancement measures. Work out to get in shape and take care of your dressing style and personality.

- **Step 10: Stick to the Plan:**

Remember to practice your assertiveness skills on all occasions. Continual practice will help you to gain confidence faster.

# Practice

A close-up photograph of a person's hand holding a small, rectangular, cream-colored sticky note. The hand is wearing a dark blue or black suit jacket with a white cuff. The background is a plain, light color. The text on the sticky note is written in a blue, cursive font.

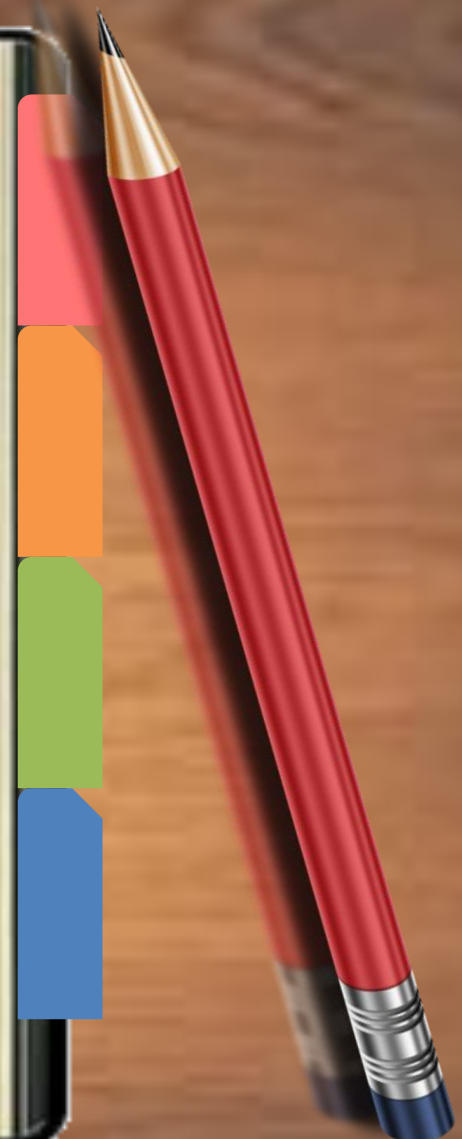
*Let us now practice all  
that you have learned  
about assertiveness  
skills.*

# Practice

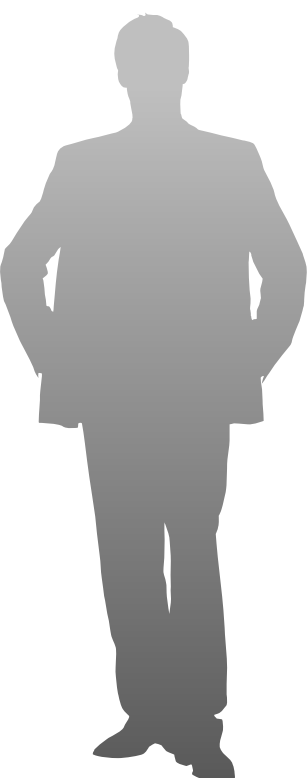


Keep a check of your assertiveness. Maintain a diary and note down each instance of assertiveness, passiveness or aggressiveness that you displayed.

- What can you do to move from being passive/aggressive to assertive?
- Who are the key people in front of whom you remain non-assertive?
- How can you be assertive in front of these difficult people?



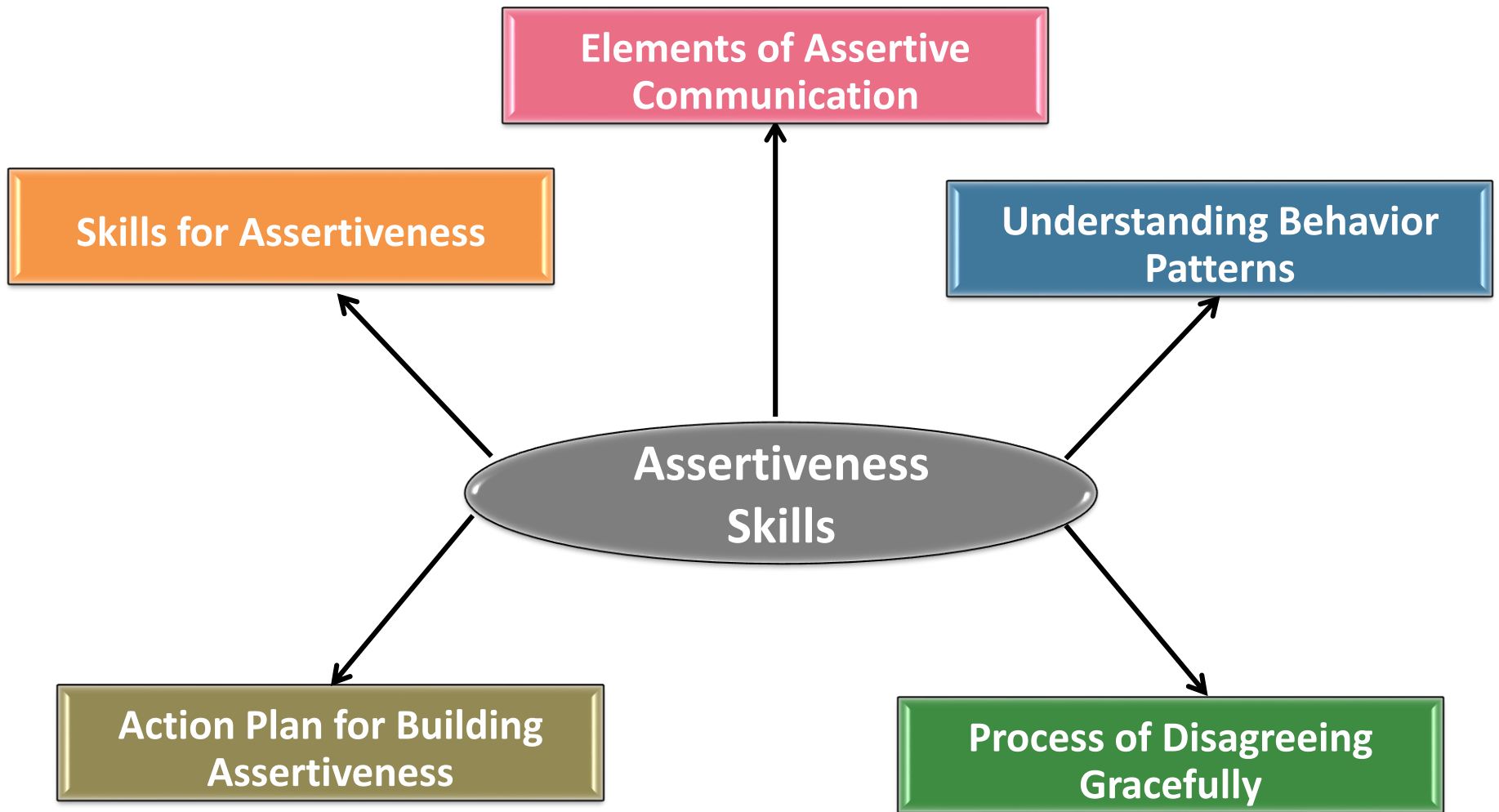
# Case Study



Karthick is a Software Programmer in XYZ. Karthick is a big push over and his colleagues and boss constantly overburden him with their tasks. Karthick is just not able to say 'no' to anyone.

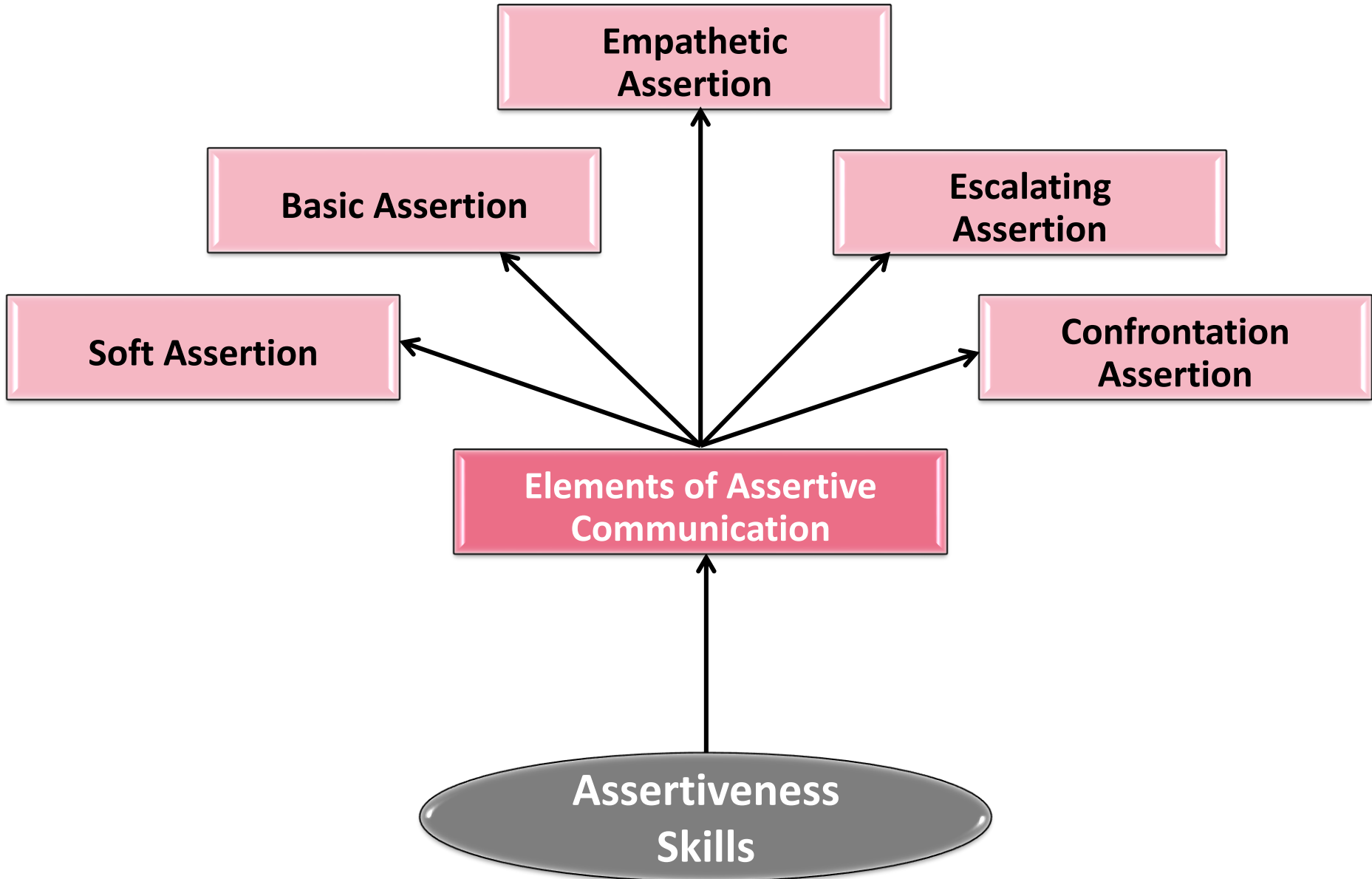
1. What steps should Karthick follow to say 'no' to anyone?
2. What kind of a body language should Karthick display while saying 'no'?

# Summary



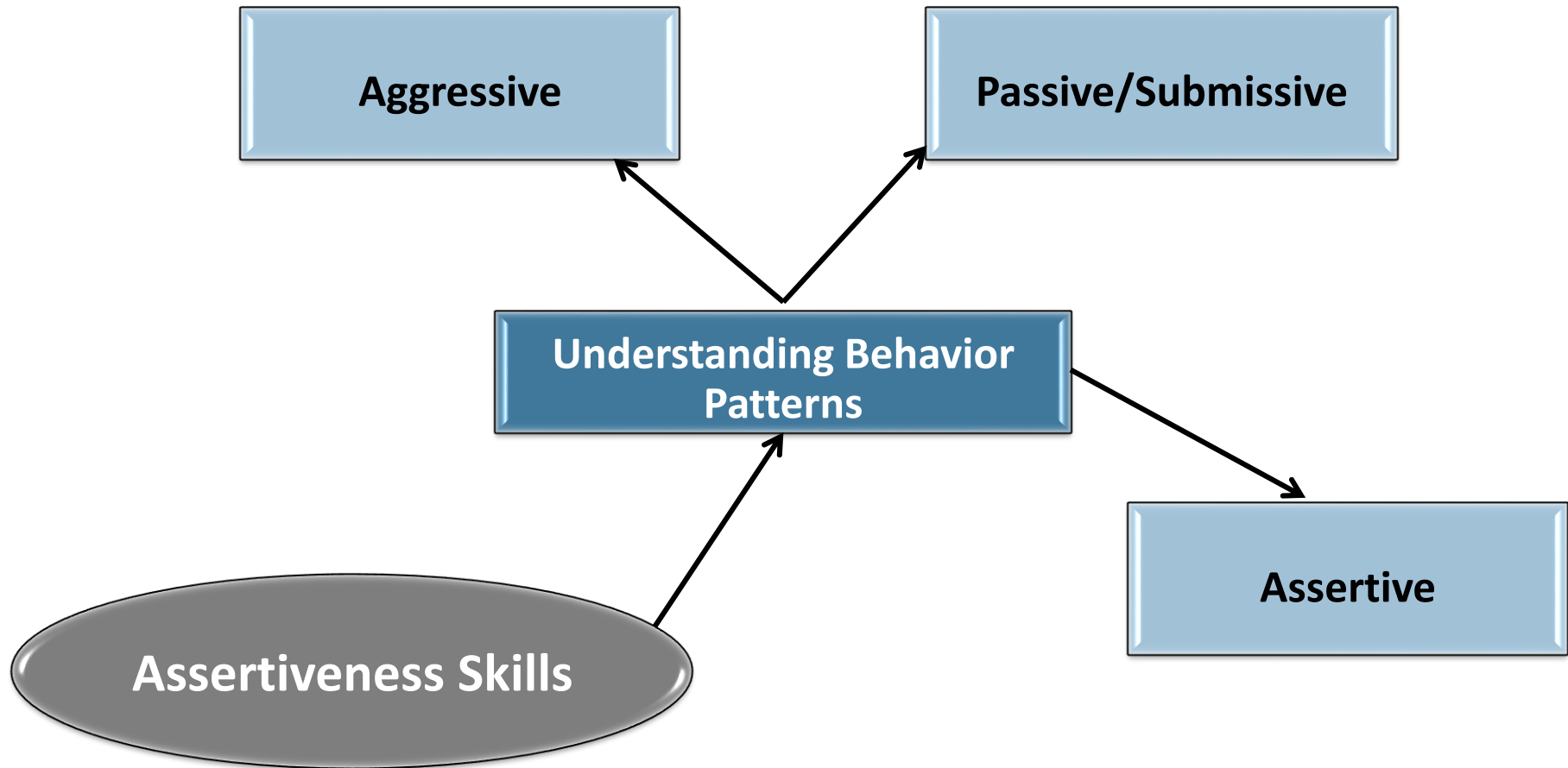
Let's look at each in detail.

# Summary





# Summary



# Summary

**Assertiveness  
Skills**

**Process of Disagreeing  
Gracefully**

**Affirmative  
Statement**

**Offer a  
Compromise\***

**Softening  
Statement**

**Disagree**

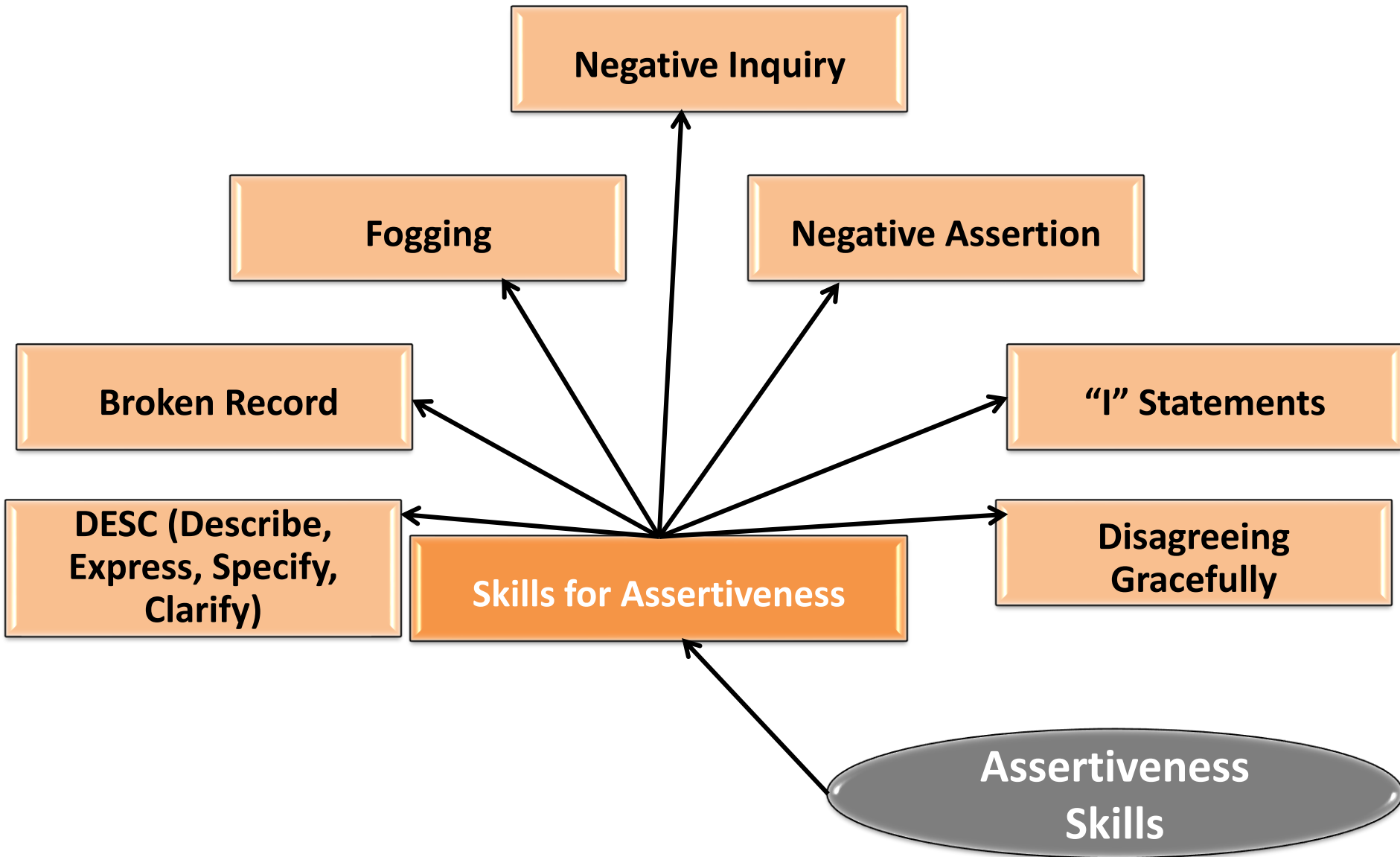
**Indicate Process**

**State Reasons**

# Summary



# Summary



# Glossary

Click each alphabet to learn more.



# Glossary

Click each alphabet to learn more.

- **Aggressiveness** - Aggressiveness is a natural disposition to be hostile
- **Anxiety** - Anxiety is a relatively permanent state of worry and nervousness

A

B

C

H

O

# Glossary

Click each alphabet to learn more.

- **Behavior** - The behavior is the way a person behaves toward other people
- **Balanced** - Balanced is being in a state of proper equilibrium

A

B

C

H

O

# Glossary

Click each alphabet to learn more.

- **Conflict** - Conflict is a state of opposition between persons, ideas or interests
- **Conscience** - Conscience is conformity to one's own sense of right conduct

A

B

C

H

O



# Glossary

Click each alphabet to learn more.

- **Humiliating** - Humiliating is cause someone to feel shame or hurt the pride of someone
- **Harmony** - Harmony is the compatibility in opinion and action

A

B

C

H

O

# Glossary

Click each alphabet to learn more.

- **Optimistic** - Optimistic is someone who expects the best possible outcome
- **Opinion** - Opinion is a personal belief or judgment that is not founded on proof or certainty

A

B

C

H

O