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Important Notice

These seminar materials are general in nature and have been designed to serve as a guide to facilitate discussion. This course and these materials are presented with the understanding that neither are to be construed as the direct rendering of legal or management advice. If the participant or reader has a specific need or problem, the services of a competent professional should be sought to address the particular situation.

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ASSERTIVENESS TRAINING

A Skills and Confidence Building Seminar and Workshop

Since we cannot change someone else's behavior, it is helpful to examine skills which allow us an opportunity to change our behavior. In so doing, we become more proactive in solving problems, resolving conflicts and creating positive climates in which our assertiveness can flourish. The objectives of this seminar include:

- Identifying Assertive Behaviors
- Exploring Skills for Assertive Interaction
- Practicing to Increase Assertiveness

Building a foundation

- Roadblocks to Assertiveness
- Defining the Terms — What Assertiveness Is and Is Not
- Exploring the Assertive Behavior Continuum

Diagnosing personal assertive attitudes & skills

- Assertiveness Inventory
- An Assertive Assessment Scale

How-to's for assertive interaction

- Positive Self-Talk
- Achieving Cooperation
- Assertive Guidelines to Manage Anger
- Assertive Listening Skills
- Saying No and Diffusing Defensiveness

WHAT HAPPENS NOW?

In service to yourself

- Assertive Interaction and Your Job
- Developing Assertive Strategies and Goals

AT FIRST GLANCE: HOW DO YOU SEE YOURSELF?

Place a check by as many of the behaviors listed below that best describe how you act most often. If a behavior describes an action you use infrequently -- DO NOT check it.

1. I know that I am more impatient and pushy than is appropriate.
2. I recognize that I am sometimes carried away by my desire to win, to prevail, to be in control.
3. I have been told by others that I should be more firm and should express myself more directly.
4. I have little difficulty in expressing myself succinctly, clearly and straightforwardly.
5. I am able to draw out other people, listen, and respond without compromising my own position or putting down theirs.
6. I try too hard to please people and to keep everybody happy.
7. Sometimes I express my anger by attacking others.
8. I have been told that I am too aggressive and I should try to be less abrasive.
9. I deal with conflict, disagreement, and anger without becoming overly tense or backing off and compromising inappropriately.
10. I have no trouble asking questions or modifying my own position when I think it is appropriate and generally being open and available to other people.
11. Sometimes I back down pretty easily.
12. I find it hard to be direct; I tend to try to take a soft approach and avoid confrontations.
13. I find myself acting resentful and vindictive more often than I would like.
14. I am able to use my concern and empathy for others, in order to be cooperative and work effectively in teams or groups.
15. There are quite a few times when, after a situation is over, I feel I should have acted more firmly in my own best interest.
16. Sometimes I step on people's toes or rub people the wrong way.
17. I become quite tense and nervous when I have to deal with conflict or unpleasant situations.
18. I feel good about myself and I am able to go after what I want.

ROADBLOCKS TO ASSERTIVENESS

List below any situations or circumstances where you have difficulty interacting assertively:

THE MEANING OF ASSERTION

“Assertive behavior promotes equality in human relationships, enabling us to act in our own best interest, to stand up for ourselves without undue anxiety, to express feelings honestly and comfortably, to exercise personal rights without denying the rights of others.”

R. Alberti & M. Emmons

Your Perfect Right: A Guide to Assertive Living

As a verb, to **ASSERT** is:

- to state positively with great confidence in the truth of your statement—but with no objective proof.
- to declare openly, formally, or with deep conviction your rights, beliefs, and opinions often in the face of opposition

To **BEHAVE** and **INTERACT** assertively is:

- to accomplish the direct expression of our feelings, preferences, needs and opinions in a manner which DOES NOT THREATEN, PUNISH, PUT DOWN, OR INFRINGE ON THE RIGHTS OF OTHERS.

A fundamental question for **ASSERTIVE INTERACTION**:

- What am I willing to do differently to improve the quality of this interaction/relationship — regardless of whether the other person reciprocates in kind?

THE BEHAVIOR CONTINUUM

NONASSERTIVE

ASSERTIVE

AGGRESSIVE

Verbal
Words:
Tone:

Verbal
Words:
Tone:

Verbal
Words:
Tone:

Nonverbal
Eyes:
Face:
Stance:
Posture:
Gestures:

Nonverbal
Eyes:
Face:
Stance:
Posture:
Gestures:

Nonverbal
Eyes:
Face:
Stance:
Posture:
Gestures:

Other Behaviors:

Other Behaviors:

Other Behaviors:

CHARACTERISTICS CHART

Nonassertive	Assertive	Aggressive
Dependent (on you for care)	Interdependent	Dependent (on you for blame)
Reactive	Proactive	Reactive
Not honest — too scary	Honest about what is relevant	Brutally honest
Accommodate	Cooperate	Compete
Subtle/hidden manipulation	Adult to adult	Direct manipulation
Hope	Request	Demand
Avoid problem/conflict	Confront problem	Attack person
Unclear on personal boundaries — allow others to impose on you	Clear on personal boundaries	Unclear on personal boundaries — impose on others

ASSERTIVENESS: ANOTHER LOOK*

An **ASSERTIVE** individual is one who:

- Is able to ask for help and support.
- Takes pride in the accomplishments of others.
- Doesn't take himself or herself too seriously.
- Sees others for who they are — not as simple formulas or types, but as complicated, multi-dimensional, and ever-changing beings.
- Does not see others as a means to an end, but chooses to relate out of genuine interest.

* Adapted from: Fran Rees, *The Facilitator Excellence Handbook*, 1998, p.323.

Assertiveness Inventory

ASSERTIVENESS INVENTORY

Part One

For items 1 — 30, assume a personal /social setting and mark **one** letter (a, b, or c) for each item. Try to be honest in describing yourself rather than trying to pick the “right” answer.

1. If I want something that I'm not getting, I'm likely to:

- a. feel helpless and give up.
- b. concentrate on finding ways to work toward it.
- c. get angry and insist on having what I want.

2. I think the best way to relate to close friends is to:

- a. accommodate to their needs.
- b. ask them for what I need and expect them to ask for what they need.
- c. expect them to accommodate to my needs.

3. I think the best way to relate to new people is to:

- a. see what kind of people they are before deciding how to relate to them.
- b. impress them with my skill and knowledge as soon as possible.
- c. be open and direct from the beginning.

4. When I feel hurt by something a family member has done, I tend to:

- a. tell him/her my feelings and discuss it with him/her.
- b. avoid saying anything to him/her about it.
- c. find a way to get back at him/her.

5. If I am concerned about how my friend feels about me, I'm likely to:

- a. tell my friend of my concern.
- b. ask someone else to find out how my friend feels about me.
- c. accuse my friend of not caring about me.

6. When my opinion is questioned, I tend to:

- a. back down and wish I hadn't said anything.
- b. defend my opinion and prove I'm right.
- c. explore the question in an active interchange.

7. If I want a book a friend borrowed a long time ago, I'm likely to:

- a. tell him/her I'd like to have it back.
- b. let him/her keep it and buy another copy.
- c. demand it back and refuse to loan him/her anything else.

8. When I'm asked to do something I think is inappropriate, I usually:

- a. criticize the person for asking me to do such a thing.
- b. go along with it even though I feel uncomfortable.
- c. state my concerns about it.

9. When someone calls me by the wrong name, I usually:

- a. tell him/her my name immediately.
- b. ask him/her why he/she can't get my name right.
- c. figure it's not worth saying anything about.

10. I think the best way to deal with competition is to:

- a. try to do my very best.
- b. avoid competition as much as possible.
- c. try to win no matter what.

11. When someone is very demanding, I believe it is best to:

- a. refuse to be pushed around and tell him/her to leave me alone.
- b. tell him/her how I feel about demands.
- c. go along with the demands if I possibly can.

12. If I want to walk along a path being blocked by people talking, I'm likely to:

- a. tell them to get out of the way.
- b. go some other way.
- c. ask them to let me pass through.

13. If I disagree with someone else's opinion, I am likely to:

- a. tell him/her he/she is wrong.
- b. give him/her my opinion on the subject.
- c. let it pass and say nothing.

14. When someone's kidding is at my expense, I tend to:

- a. retaliate by kidding the same way.
- b. state my feelings about the kidding.
- c. smile to cover my feelings.

15. When I'm asked to volunteer my services for a charity, I tend to:

- a. say I refuse to be imposed on.
- b. do it whether I want to or not because I hate to refuse.
- c. decide on the basis of my time and interest.

16. If an unpleasant job has to be done around the house, I think it is best to:

- a. force someone else to do it.
- b. do it by myself without saying anything.
- c. discuss it with others involved.

17. If I want to end a phone conversation, I am likely to:

- a. say I have something else to do now and can't talk any longer.
- b. say I don't have all day to talk on the phone.
- c. half-heartedly participate in the conversation and hope it will end.

18. If the hostess serves a dish I dislike, I think it's best to:

- a. try to eat it anyway.
- b. say how much I dislike the dish.
- c. decline it in favor of something else.

19. If I want a certain seat in a restaurant, I am likely to:

- a. ask for the seat I want before being seated.
- b. get up and move to the seat I want without asking anyone.
- c. hope I get it, but accept whatever I get.

20. When I don't want to do what my friends plan, I think it's best to:

- a. do what I want and let them do what they want.
- b. insist that they do what I want to do.
- c. go along with the majority.

21. When I am asked where I want to go to eat, I usually:

- a. insist on going to my favorite place.
- b. decide where I'd like to go and suggest it.
- c. say it doesn't matter.

22. When asking someone for a favor, I feel it is best to:

- a. feel free to ask without any expectations.
- b. insist that others do whatever I need.
- c. ask only if it is absolutely necessary.

23. I think the best way to handle a “put-down” is to:

- a. ignore it and pretend not to have noticed.
- b. tell the person how I feel about it.
- c. retaliate and give it right back.

24. When someone cuts in line in front of me, I usually:

- a. say nothing to him/her.
- b. tell him/her I don't want him/her to cut in line in front of me.
- c. demand that he/she move to the back of the line.

25. If I want better service at a restaurant than I'm getting, I'm likely to:

- a. gripe about the service to myself but say nothing to anyone else.
- b. be sarcastic to the waiter and not leave a tip.
- c. ask for whatever service I need.

26. When someone interrupts me in the middle of a sentence, I tend to:

- a. ask him/her to wait a moment until I finish.
- b. wait until I get another chance to finish what I was saying.
- c. tell him/her it's rude to interrupt me.

27. In giving my opinions to others, I feel it is best to:

- a. present my opinions in an absolute way so they can't be questioned.
- b. say that I may be wrong, but that I think “so and so”.
- c. state my opinions without focusing on whether they are seen as wrong.

28. If I want to leave a party when no one else has left, I'm likely to:

- a. try to break up the party.
- b. go ahead and leave when I want to leave.
- c. stay until someone else leaves first.

29. If I want something very badly, I am likely to:

- a. hint at what I want and hope to get it.
- b. ask for it in a very direct way.
- c. insist that I get it.

30. When a friend asks me to do a favor that creates a problem for me, I usually:

- a. pretend it's no problem and go ahead and do it.
- b. tell him/her I refuse to be taken advantage of.
- c. acknowledge the problem it creates and explore alternatives.

ASSERTIVENESS INVENTORY

Part Two

For items 31 — 60, assume a work setting and circle one letter (a, b, or c) for each item. Try to be honest in describing yourself rather than trying to pick the “right” answer.

31. If I want my superiors to notice my work, I am likely to:

- a. demand to be recognized for my work.
- b. work very hard and hope they recognize it.
- c. inform them of my work and commitment to the job.

32. If I am part of a discussion group, I am likely to:

- a. leave most of the discussion to others.
- b. try to control the outcome of the discussion.
- c. take an active part in the discussion.

33. I feel the best way to get what I want is to:

- a. be patient and hope things will work out.
- b. force conditions to suit myself.
- c. work to change the situation.

34. In being responsible for other people, I think it is best to:

- a. give them clear guidelines to follow.
- b. offer suggestions and assume they will do the right thing.
- c. tell them precisely what they must do and how to do it.

35. If I have authority over others, I am likely to:

- a. exercise my authority as needed.
- b. try to avoid using my authority.
- c. relish the authority and use it at every opportunity.

36. If I am proud of a job I've done, I am likely to:

- a. share it with those who are interested in my work.
- b. make a point of bragging about it at every opportunity.
- c. say nothing about it, but hope people will notice.

37. When I am pressured to hurry with my work, I am likely to:

- a. feel overwhelmed and just give up.
- b. take it out on anyone or anything that interferes with me.
- c. work as diligently as possible.

38. If I want more challenging work to do, I am likely to:

- a. hint that I am caught up and could take on something else.
- b. say that I want more challenging work and believe I can handle it.
- c. gripe about the boring job I have and insist on something challenging.

39. If I want to know what my boss thinks of my work, I am likely to:

- a. complain to my boss that I never get any feedback on my work.
- b. ask my boss for a performance evaluation.
- c. ask a co-worker to find out what my boss thinks of my work.

40. When someone points out a mistake to me, I usually:

- a. feel embarrassed and try to keep others from knowing.
- b. appreciate his/her pointing it out and focus on correcting it.
- c. get angry and accuse him/her of being too critical.

41. If I want to present my position on a question to others, I'm likely to:

- a. try to justify my position.
- b. state what my position is and how I reached it.
- c. insist that they accept my position.

42. When I am asked a question and don't know the answer, I tend to:

- a. say I don't know.
- b. apologize for being so dumb.
- c. blame someone else for not telling me.

43. If I hear that someone has told lies about me, I think it is best to:

- a. tell him/her what I heard and ask him/her about it.
- b. tell some lies about him/her, too.
- c. say nothing to him/her, but avoid him/her in the future.

44. When it comes to getting a job done right, I think it is best to:

- a. rely on others to lead the way.
- b. trust no one but myself to do it.
- c. join with others in sharing responsibility for getting it done.

45. In sharing new ideas with others, I think it is best to:

- a. offer the ideas: "Don't you think.. .."
- b. state the ideas: "I think."
- c. strongly present the ideas: "The best way is"

46. When my judgement is questioned, I usually:

- a. say I resent this attack on my ability.
- b. deal with the questions to the best of my ability.
- c. go blank and don't know what to say.

47. If I make a mistake, I think it is best to:

- a. hide it and hope no one finds out.
- b. try to learn from it.
- c. blame it on someone else.

48. When the boss doesn't take my suggestions seriously, I usually:

- a. wish I hadn't made a suggestion and not make any more.
- b. demand to be taken seriously.
- c. restate my suggestion and my seriousness in making it.

49. I think the best way to deal with difficult people is to:

- a. interact with them in a straightforward way.
- b. be just as difficult as they are.
- c. stay away from them as much as possible.

50. I believe the best way to handle a problem is to:

- a. insist that it be settled immediately.
- b. ignore it as much as possible.
- c. get as much information about it as possible.

51. When my boss asks me to tell a story I'm uncomfortable with, I usually:

- a. refuse to do it and say I shouldn't have been asked.
- b. feel I have no choice but to do it without question.
- c. acknowledge my discomfort with the situation.

52. If I want a day off work for some personal business, I am likely to:

- a. take off and say I was sick.
- b. explain my need and request the day off.
- c. mean to ask off, but never find a good time to ask.

53. When decisions are to be made, I believe it is best to:

- a. make decisions alone and dare anyone to challenge them.
- b. share the responsibility for making them.
- c. wait for someone else to make them.

54. If I want a group to listen to my ideas, I am likely to:

- a. clearly state my ideas as often as necessary.
- b. insist upon being heard because I know best.
- c. try once, but not again if they don't listen.

55. When my authority is questioned, I tend to:

- a. not take it personally.
- b. take the offensive and set out to attack the other person.
- c. get flustered and back off my position.

56. When I am asked my opinion about a new idea, I tend to:

- a. challenge the idea to show how smart I am.
- b. wait and see what others think of it before giving my opinion.
- c. ask questions to get more information about it.

57. I think the best way to get a raise is to:

- a. insist on my right to a raise.
- b. do good work and wait to be rewarded.
- c. do good work and ask for a raise based on the work.

58. When a person asks my opinion and I know what opinion he/she wants, I usually:

- a. give my honest opinion.
- b. say what I'm expected to say.
- c. accuse the person of not really wanting my opinion.

59. When I disagree with something I have been asked to do, I usually:

- a. demand to do it my way.
- b. state my opinion about it and discuss it further.
- c. do it anyway rather than get into a discussion.

60. If I plan to tell someone he/she is doing something wrong, I'm likely to:

- a. tell him/ her as clearly and quickly as possible.
- b. dread it and postpone it as long as possible.
- c. use it as an opportunity to tell him/her everything I don't like.

SCORING THE ASSERTIVENESS INVENTORY

1. Transfer your responses to the scoring sheet on the following page by circling the letter you chose for each item. ***Note that the letters appear in different orders and that the items have been grouped in scoring categories instead of appearing in sequence.***
2. Obtain the "Personal/Social Scores" by counting the number of circles in each column in the top half of the page and writing the totals in the boxes for "Personal/Social Scores" at mid-page. Obtain the "Total P/S Scores" by combining the scores in the three boxes.
3. Obtain the "Work Scores" by counting the number of circles in each column in the bottom half of the page and writing the totals in the boxes for "Work Scores." Obtain the "Total Work Scores" by combining the scores in the three boxes.
4. For the "TOTALS" of Beliefs, Initiating, and Responding at the bottom of the page, add the "Personal/Social Scores" and "Work Scores" for each of the three areas.
5. Obtain the "GRAND TOTAL" by adding the "Total P/S Scores" and "Total Work Scores."

NOTE: Each box will contain three sub-scores: an "Na" score for "Nonassertive", an "As" "Assertive", for Assertive, and an "Ag" for "Aggressive."

SCORING SHEET

PERSONAL/SOCIAL SCORES

<u>Beliefs</u>	<u>Initiating</u>	<u>Responding</u>
2. a b c	1. a b c	4. b a c
3. a c b	5. b a c	6. a c b
10. b a c	7. b a c	8. b c a
11. c b a	12. b c a	9. c a b
16. b c a	13. c b a	14. c b a
18. a c b	17. c a b	15. b c a
20. c a b	19. c a b	21. c b a
22. c a b	25. a c b	24. a b c
23. a b c	28. c b a	26. b a c
27. b c a	29. a b c	30. a c b

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Na	As	Ag	Na	As	Ag	Na	As	Ag

Total P/S Scores

<input style="width: 30px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 30px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 30px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>
Na	As	Ag

WORK SCORES

<u>Beliefs</u>	<u>Initiating</u>	<u>Responding</u>
33. a c b	31. b c a	37. a c b
34. b a c	32. a c b	40. a b c
43. c a b	35. b a c	42. b a c
44. a c b	36. c a b	46. c b a
45. a b c	38. a b c	48. a c b
47. a b c	39. c b a	51. b c a
49. c a b	41. a b c	55. c a b
50. b c a	52. c b a	56. b c a
53. c b a	54. c a b	58. b a c
57. b c a	60. b a c	59. c b a

<input style="width: 30px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 30px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 30px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 30px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 30px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 30px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 30px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 30px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 30px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>
Na	As	Ag	Na	As	Ag	Na	As	Ag

Total Work Scores

<input style="width: 30px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 30px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 30px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>
Na	As	Ag

<input style="width: 30px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 30px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 30px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>
Na	As	Ag

Beliefs

<input style="width: 30px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 30px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 30px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>
Na	As	Ag

Initiating

<input style="width: 30px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 30px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 30px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>
Na	As	Ag

Responding

<input style="width: 30px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 30px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 30px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>
Na	As	Ag

GRAND TOTAL

AN ASSERTIVE ASSESSMENT SCALE

How would you assess your behavior in these areas? How might someone else assess you?

	NONASSERTIVE	ASSERTIVE	AGGRESSIVE
1. RATE OF SPEECH	1 too slow	3 in tempo with circumstances	5 too fast
2. PITCH	1 weak	3 well-modulated	5 shrill
3. VOLUME	1 too soft	3 appropriate to surroundings	5 too loud
4. PAUSES	1 too many	3 natural with pace	5 too few
5. TONE	1 whining wavering	3 firm warm	5 demanding cold
6. EYE CONTACT	1 averted downcast	3 open direct	5 narrowed staring
7. GESTURES	1 clammy hands fluttery, fidgety	3 relaxed natural	5 abrupt finger-pointing
8. STANCE	1 keep you arm's length, stay on edge, periphery	3 sensitive to personal space of others integrates into a group as appropriate	5 in your face make an entrance
9. POSTURE	1 stooped lean for support	3 erect well-balanced	5 rigid hands on hips
10. FACIAL EXPRESSION	1 forced smile worried	3 open, warm smiling	5 tense, sullen few smiles

POSITIVE SELF-TALK

*“I always thought the world did it to me.
Now I realize I'm pulling my own strings.”*

- Peter Senge

Positive self-talk is a thought that you deliberately choose to put into your consciousness. Such thoughts serve to remind us that although we may not have control over the people, situations, and events in our lives, we do have control over our reactions to such things. We can choose our attitudes, our thoughts, or internal communication and our actions.

Effective self-talk:

- Begins with “I”;
- Uses the present tense;
- Uses positive, active verbs;
- Is phrased as if the desired results were already present.

When to use self-talk:

- Immediately following an interaction that has put your self-esteem at risk;
- As a planning tool for a specific event which may challenge your confidence. Begin the process at least 3 weeks out from the event.

How to use self-talk:

- Create 2 to 3 phrases—that’s all you need. Don’t overwhelm yourself;
- Find 2 to 3 times per day when you can repeat these phrases softly, aloud to yourself.

POSITIVE SELF-TALK

I. Self-talk statements for general positive reinforcement:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

II. Self-talk statements for a stressful situation:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

III. Self-talk statements to minimize feeling defensive:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

ACHIEVING COOPERATION

I know (acknowledgment)

And I feel (emotion)

When (behavior)

(pause)

And I would like (suggested options)

ASSERTIVE LISTENING SKILLS

“Most people do not listen with the intent to understand; they listen with the intent to reply.”

- Stephen Covey

I. Paraphrasing

Repeating OUT LOUD your interpretation of what the speaker said. Did you get the message straight?

FOCUS: task, content

GOAL: confirm understanding of message itself

II. Reflecting

Stating OUT LOUD to the speaker an inference or assumption you have made about their unspoken feeling or motive.

FOCUS: feelings

GOAL: empathy, build relationships

III. Questioning

Asking OPEN-ENDED questions — particularly WHAT or HOW — in order to clarify and get more information without increasing defensiveness.

FOCUS: clarification

GOAL: an open environment

ASSERTIVE GUIDELINES FOR MANAGING ANGER

1. OWN IT.
2. ACKNOWLEDGE IT.
3. DETERMINE INTENSITY.
4. SEARCH OUT SOURCE.
5. SHARE AND CLARIFY.
6. FORGIVE AND/OR RENEGOTIATE.

Saying No

“Saying no says that we have limits, that we have a right to declare boundaries and decide on our own what we commit to. If we cannot say no, then yes loses its meaning.”

- Peter Block

1. Be clear on the request. Ask questions, paraphrase to verify understanding.
2. Is goodwill more important than saying “no?” Within what boundaries?
3. Would a conditional “no” be appropriate? Alternatives?
4. You have the right to say “no” without apologizing.
5. You have the right to expect others to respect your right to say “no.”
6. Stay focused on your bottom line. If appropriate use “instant replay.”
7. You have a right to take some time to think things over before giving an answer.

DEFUSING DEFENSIVENESS *

Fogging = Coping with criticism, sarcasm, or baiting by listening to exactly what the person has said and then calmly, slowly saying something like:

- "That might be true."
- "You may be right."
- "It could look that way."
- "Perhaps."
- "Maybe."
- "It may seem that way."

Avoid denying, defending, or counterattacking.

Negative Inquiry = Taking the initiative to ask for more information — possibly criticism — about you or your ideas:

- "Help me understand"
- "What have I said that you disagree with?"
- "How should I have spent the time instead?"
- "Tell me where I have failed to meet your expectations."
- "Describe for me the changes you think I should make."
- "I'm wondering about"

Asking does not mean that you agree to change or that you agree with what was said. It only means that you will listen to the person's views.

Negative Assertion = Acknowledging valid criticism:

- "Yes, that's true. I did forget that."
- "I see your point. That suggestion of mine won't work."
- "I really blew that one."

Avoid adding "but. . ." to your defense, because the word "but" negates the negative assertion preceding it.

* Adapted from *When I Say No I Feel Guilty* by Manuel Smith.

ASSERTIVE INTERACTION AND YOUR JOB

Here are five assertive skills* to be used at work:

1. **Take an active orientation.** Be proactive at work. Plan your work goals and the steps necessary to achieve them. Create goals which will stretch you and utilize your skills to the maximum.
2. **Make sure you can do the job.** Two sets of obstacles can interfere with the effective accomplishment of your job. The first set are external blocks and interferences from the work situation. The second set are internal obstacles — bad work habits, poor discipline, an inability to concentrate.
3. **Take charge of your anxieties and fears.** Too many inappropriate emotional reactions will ultimately interfere with work performance. High tensions result in fatigue; irritability, produces poor judgment. Avoiding a task out of unrealistic self-doubt may interfere with the achievement of your work goals.
4. **Take responsibility for good interpersonal relations.** Peter Drucker once said he didn't know many considerate people, but he knew a lot of people who could act considerately. Good manners and sound interpersonal relations are the lubricants which keep the work flowing smoothly. A request gets the job done as well as a demand.
5. **Understand the system in which you work.** Achievement of your work goals requires an understanding of all the forces at work in your organizational environment. Learn to negotiate the system. Develop skills that enable you to work through, within and around existing system constraints.

*Adapted from Fensterheim, H. & Baer, J.. *Don't Say Yes When You Want to Say No*, 1975.

CREATING ASSERTIVE STRATEGIES

In your groups, each person will have a turn at being a Presenter and being a Strategist. (Your facilitator will instruct you on the allotted time for each Presenter.) Each Presenter will tell their group about a situation where they struggle to be assertive. As the Presenter, you decide how much detail you wish to share with your group. You need to tell them enough so they have a good grasp of the situation. Limit your description to no more than half of your allotted time as the Presenter. The members of your group may ask questions to clarify and aid in understanding; however, if a question makes you uncomfortable, you have the right to elect not to answer.

When the Presenter has finished describing the situation, it is time for the Strategists to go to work. The Presenter should be prepared to record all suggested ideas, on a piece of paper, a shared document, or a flip chart. Your Strategists will brainstorm assertive options and ideas for the Presenter's scenario. Strategists should be specific. For example, if you were to suggest using the "Achieving Cooperation" skill, what words would you use? Remember, in brainstorming any idea has merit and deserves to be heard.

Each time a Strategist offers an option, the Presenter is to record it. The Presenter should record each idea just as the Strategist said it. Do not edit or change the language. If something is unclear, the Presenter may ask questions for clarification. THE PRESENTER IS NOT ALLOWED TO DISCOUNT, EVALUATE, "YA, BUT," OR JUDGE ANY OF THE OPTIONS OFFERED. THEY ARE TO LISTEN AND RECORD.

When the Strategists have exhausted ideas, the Presenter should thank them and put the document away. A new Presenter will now step up and describe his/her situation, etc., and this cycle will continue until each member of the group has been a Presenter.

And what do you do with the document with all the strategies? Let it sit for a day or two; then pull it out, read it over, and you decide if there is a strategy you would like to pursue.

A PERSONAL ASSERTIVE ACTION PLAN

Reflecting on what you have learned about yourself and assertiveness, list below 1 or 2 behaviors you want to adjust in order to increase your assertiveness:

1.

2.

3.

Here are a few thoughts to support your efforts:

Assertive individuals "are confident that, ultimately, they will not be influenced beyond the degree to which they wish to accept influence."

— Stanley M. Herman

"If you always do what you have always done, You will always get what you have always got!"

"Not everything that is faced can be changed easily, but nothing can be changed until it is faced."

—James Baldwin

"Our behavior is a function of our decisions, not our conditions."

— Stephen R. Covey

"Never play another person's game. Play your own."

—Andrew Salter

ASSERTIVENESS INVENTORY

Part One

For items 1 — 30, assume a personal /social setting and mark **one** letter (a, b, or c) for each item. Try to be honest in describing yourself rather than trying to pick the “right” answer.

1. If I want something that I'm not getting, I'm likely to:

- a. feel helpless and give up.
- b. concentrate on finding ways to work toward it.
- c. get angry and insist on having what I want.

2. I think the best way to relate to close friends is to:

- a. accommodate to their needs.
- b. ask them for what I need and expect them to ask for what they need.
- c. expect them to accommodate to my needs.

3. I think the best way to relate to new people is to:

- a. see what kind of people they are before deciding how to relate to them.
- b. impress them with my skill and knowledge as soon as possible.
- c. be open and direct from the beginning.

4. When I feel hurt by something a family member has done, I tend to:

- a. tell him/her my feelings and discuss it with him/her.
- b. avoid saying anything to him/her about it.
- c. find a way to get back at him/her.

5. If I am concerned about how my friend feels about me, I'm likely to:

- a. tell my friend of my concern.
- b. ask someone else to find out how my friend feels about me.
- c. accuse my friend of not caring about me.

6. When my opinion is questioned, I tend to:

- a. back down and wish I hadn't said anything.
- b. defend my opinion and prove I'm right.
- c. explore the question in an active interchange.

7. If I want a book a friend borrowed a long time ago, I'm likely to:

- a. tell him/her I'd like to have it back.
- b. let him/her keep it and buy another copy.
- c. demand it back and refuse to loan him/her anything else.

8. When I'm asked to do something I think is inappropriate, I usually:

- a. criticize the person for asking me to do such a thing.
- b. go along with it even though I feel uncomfortable.
- c. state my concerns about it.

9. When someone calls me by the wrong name, I usually:

- a. tell him/her my name immediately.
- b. ask him/her why he/she can't get my name right.
- c. figure it's not worth saying anything about.

10. I think the best way to deal with competition is to:

- a. try to do my very best.
- b. avoid competition as much as possible.
- c. try to win no matter what.

11. When someone is very demanding, I believe it is best to:

- a. refuse to be pushed around and tell him/her to leave me alone.
- b. tell him/her how I feel about demands.
- c. go along with the demands if I possibly can.

12. If I want to walk along a path being blocked by people talking, I'm likely to:

- a. tell them to get out of the way.
- b. go some other way.
- c. ask them to let me pass through.

13. If I disagree with someone else's opinion, I am likely to:

- a. tell him/her he/she is wrong.
- b. give him/her my opinion on the subject.
- c. let it pass and say nothing.

14. When someone's kidding is at my expense, I tend to:

- a. retaliate by kidding the same way.
- b. state my feelings about the kidding.
- c. smile to cover my feelings.

15. When I'm asked to volunteer my services for a charity, I tend to:

- a. say I refuse to be imposed on.
- b. do it whether I want to or not because I hate to refuse.
- c. decide on the basis of my time and interest.

16. If an unpleasant job has to be done around the house, I think it is best to:

- a. force someone else to do it.
- b. do it by myself without saying anything.
- c. discuss it with others involved.

17. If I want to end a phone conversation, I am likely to:

- a. say I have something else to do now and can't talk any longer.
- b. say I don't have all day to talk on the phone.
- c. half-heartedly participate in the conversation and hope it will end.

18. If the hostess serves a dish I dislike, I think it's best to:

- a. try to eat it anyway.
- b. say how much I dislike the dish.
- c. decline it in favor of something else.

19. If I want a certain seat in a restaurant, I am likely to:

- a. ask for the seat I want before being seated.
- b. get up and move to the seat I want without asking anyone.
- c. hope I get it, but accept whatever I get.

20. When I don't want to do what my friends plan, I think it's best to:

- a. do what I want and let them do what they want.
- b. insist that they do what I want to do.
- c. go along with the majority.

21. When I am asked where I want to go to eat, I usually:

- a. insist on going to my favorite place.
- b. decide where I'd like to go and suggest it.
- c. say it doesn't matter.

22. When asking someone for a favor, I feel it is best to:

- a. feel free to ask without any expectations.
- b. insist that others do whatever I need.
- c. ask only if it is absolutely necessary.

23. I think the best way to handle a “put-down” is to:

- a. ignore it and pretend not to have noticed.
- b. tell the person how I feel about it.
- c. retaliate and give it right back.

24. When someone cuts in line in front of me, I usually:

- a. say nothing to him/her.
- b. tell him/her I don't want him/her to cut in line in front of me.
- c. demand that he/she move to the back of the line.

25. If I want better service at a restaurant than I'm getting, I'm likely to:

- a. gripe about the service to myself but say nothing to anyone else.
- b. be sarcastic to the waiter and not leave a tip.
- c. ask for whatever service I need.

26. When someone interrupts me in the middle of a sentence, I tend to:

- a. ask him/her to wait a moment until I finish.
- b. wait until I get another chance to finish what I was saying.
- c. tell him/her it's rude to interrupt me.

27. In giving my opinions to others, I feel it is best to:

- a. present my opinions in an absolute way so they can't be questioned.
- b. say that I may be wrong, but that I think “so and so”.
- c. state my opinions without focusing on whether they are seen as wrong.

28. If I want to leave a party when no one else has left, I'm likely to:

- a. try to break up the party.
- b. go ahead and leave when I want to leave.
- c. stay until someone else leaves first.

29. If I want something very badly, I am likely to:

- a. hint at what I want and hope to get it.
- b. ask for it in a very direct way.
- c. insist that I get it.

30. When a friend asks me to do a favor that creates a problem for me, I usually:

- a. pretend it's no problem and go ahead and do it.
- b. tell him/her I refuse to be taken advantage of.
- c. acknowledge the problem it creates and explore alternatives.

ASSERTIVENESS INVENTORY

Part Two

For items 31 — 60, assume a work setting and circle one letter (a, b, or c) for each item. Try to be honest in describing yourself rather than trying to pick the “right” answer.

31. If I want my superiors to notice my work, I am likely to:

- a. demand to be recognized for my work.
- b. work very hard and hope they recognize it.
- c. inform them of my work and commitment to the job.

32. If I am part of a discussion group, I am likely to:

- a. leave most of the discussion to others.
- b. try to control the outcome of the discussion.
- c. take an active part in the discussion.

33. I feel the best way to get what I want is to:

- a. be patient and hope things will work out.
- b. force conditions to suit myself.
- c. work to change the situation.

34. In being responsible for other people, I think it is best to:

- a. give them clear guidelines to follow.
- b. offer suggestions and assume they will do the right thing.
- c. tell them precisely what they must do and how to do it.

35. If I have authority over others, I am likely to:

- a. exercise my authority as needed.
- b. try to avoid using my authority.
- c. relish the authority and use it at every opportunity.

36. If I am proud of a job I've done, I am likely to:

- a. share it with those who are interested in my work.
- b. make a point of bragging about it at every opportunity.
- c. say nothing about it, but hope people will notice.

37. When I am pressured to hurry with my work, I am likely to:

- a. feel overwhelmed and just give up.
- b. take it out on anyone or anything that interferes with me.
- c. work as diligently as possible.

38. If I want more challenging work to do, I am likely to:

- a. hint that I am caught up and could take on something else.
- b. say that I want more challenging work and believe I can handle it.
- c. gripe about the boring job I have and insist on something challenging.

39. If I want to know what my boss thinks of my work, I am likely to:

- a. complain to my boss that I never get any feedback on my work.
- b. ask my boss for a performance evaluation.
- c. ask a co-worker to find out what my boss thinks of my work.

40. When someone points out a mistake to me, I usually:

- a. feel embarrassed and try to keep others from knowing.
- b. appreciate his/her pointing it out and focus on correcting it.
- c. get angry and accuse him/her of being too critical.

41. If I want to present my position on a question to others, I'm likely to:

- a. try to justify my position.
- b. state what my position is and how I reached it.
- c. insist that they accept my position.

42. When I am asked a question and don't know the answer, I tend to:

- a. say I don't know.
- b. apologize for being so dumb.
- c. blame someone else for not telling me.

43. If I hear that someone has told lies about me, I think it is best to:

- a. tell him/her what I heard and ask him/her about it.
- b. tell some lies about him/her, too.
- c. say nothing to him/her, but avoid him/her in the future.

44. When it comes to getting a job done right, I think it is best to:

- a. rely on others to lead the way.
- b. trust no one but myself to do it.
- c. join with others in sharing responsibility for getting it done.

45. In sharing new ideas with others, I think it is best to:

- a. offer the ideas: "Don't you think.. .."
- b. state the ideas: "I think."
- c. strongly present the ideas: "The best way is"

46. When my judgement is questioned, I usually:

- a. say I resent this attack on my ability.
- b. deal with the questions to the best of my ability.
- c. go blank and don't know what to say.

47. If I make a mistake, I think it is best to:

- a. hide it and hope no one finds out.
- b. try to learn from it.
- c. blame it on someone else.

48. When the boss doesn't take my suggestions seriously, I usually:

- a. wish I hadn't made a suggestion and not make any more.
- b. demand to be taken seriously.
- c. restate my suggestion and my seriousness in making it.

49. I think the best way to deal with difficult people is to:

- a. interact with them in a straightforward way.
- b. be just as difficult as they are.
- c. stay away from them as much as possible.

50. I believe the best way to handle a problem is to:

- a. insist that it be settled immediately.
- b. ignore it as much as possible.
- c. get as much information about it as possible.

51. When my boss asks me to tell a story I'm uncomfortable with, I usually:

- a. refuse to do it and say I shouldn't have been asked.
- b. feel I have no choice but to do it without question.
- c. acknowledge my discomfort with the situation.

52. If I want a day off work for some personal business, I am likely to:

- a. take off and say I was sick.
- b. explain my need and request the day off.
- c. mean to ask off, but never find a good time to ask.

53. When decisions are to be made, I believe it is best to:

- a. make decisions alone and dare anyone to challenge them.
- b. share the responsibility for making them.
- c. wait for someone else to make them.

54. If I want a group to listen to my ideas, I am likely to:

- a. clearly state my ideas as often as necessary.
- b. insist upon being heard because I know best.
- c. try once, but not again if they don't listen.

55. When my authority is questioned, I tend to:

- a. not take it personally.
- b. take the offensive and set out to attack the other person.
- c. get flustered and back off my position.

56. When I am asked my opinion about a new idea, I tend to:

- a. challenge the idea to show how smart I am.
- b. wait and see what others think of it before giving my opinion.
- c. ask questions to get more information about it.

57. I think the best way to get a raise is to:

- a. insist on my right to a raise.
- b. do good work and wait to be rewarded.
- c. do good work and ask for a raise based on the work.

58. When a person asks my opinion and I know what opinion he/she wants, I usually:

- a. give my honest opinion.
- b. say what I'm expected to say.
- c. accuse the person of not really wanting my opinion.

59. When I disagree with something I have been asked to do, I usually:

- a. demand to do it my way.
- b. state my opinion about it and discuss it further.
- c. do it anyway rather than get into a discussion.

60. If I plan to tell someone he/she is doing something wrong, I'm likely to:

- a. tell him/ her as clearly and quickly as possible.
- b. dread it and postpone it as long as possible.
- c. use it as an opportunity to tell him/her everything I don't like.

SCORING THE ASSERTIVENESS INVENTORY

1. Transfer your responses to the scoring sheet on the following page by circling the letter you chose for each item. ***Note that the letters appear in different orders and that the items have been grouped in scoring categories instead of appearing in sequence.***
2. Obtain the "Personal/Social Scores" by counting the number of circles in each column in the top half of the page and writing the totals in the boxes for "Personal/Social Scores" at mid-page. Obtain the "Total P/S Scores" by combining the scores in the three boxes.
3. Obtain the "Work Scores" by counting the number of circles in each column in the bottom half of the page and writing the totals in the boxes for "Work Scores." Obtain the "Total Work Scores" by combining the scores in the three boxes.
4. For the "TOTALS" of Beliefs, Initiating, and Responding at the bottom of the page, add the "Personal/Social Scores" and "Work Scores" for each of the three areas.
5. Obtain the "GRAND TOTAL" by adding the "Total P/S Scores" and "Total Work Scores."

NOTE: Each box will contain three sub-scores: an "Na" score for "Nonassertive", an "As" "Assertive", for Assertive, and an "Ag" for "Aggressive."

SCORING SHEET

PERSONAL/SOCIAL SCORES

<u>Beliefs</u>	<u>Initiating</u>	<u>Responding</u>
2. a b c	1. a b c	4. b a c
3. a c b	5. b a c	6. a c b
10. b a c	7. b a c	8. b c a
11. c b a	12. b c a	9. c a b
16. b c a	13. c b a	14. c b a
18. a c b	17. c a b	15. b c a
20. c a b	19. c a b	21. c b a
22. c a b	25. a c b	24. a b c
23. a b c	28. c b a	26. b a c
27. b c a	29. a b c	30. a c b

Na As Ag

Na As Ag

Na As Ag

Total P/S Scores

Na As Ag

WORK SCORES

<u>Beliefs</u>	<u>Initiating</u>	<u>Responding</u>
33. a c b	31. b c a	37. a c b
34. b a c	32. a c b	40. a b c
43. c a b	35. b a c	42. b a c
44. a c b	36. c a b	46. c b a
45. a b c	38. a b c	48. a c b
47. a b c	39. c b a	51. b c a
49. c a b	41. a b c	55. c a b
50. b c a	52. c b a	56. b c a
53. c b a	54. c a b	58. b a c
57. b c a	60. b a c	59. c b a

Na As Ag

Na As Ag

Na As Ag

Total Work Scores

Na As Ag

Na As Ag

Na As Ag

Na As Ag

Na As Ag

Beliefs

Initiating

Responding

GRAND TOTAL

AT FIRST GLANCE: HOW DO YOU SEE YOURSELF?

Place a check by as many of the behaviors listed below that best describe how you act most often. If a behavior describes an action you use infrequently -- DO NOT check it.

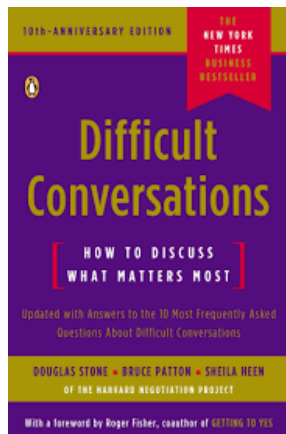
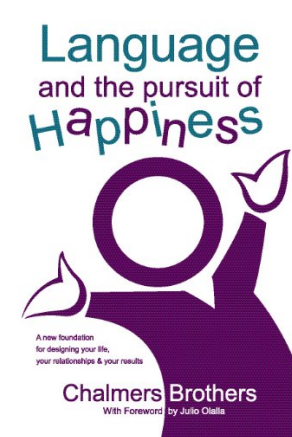
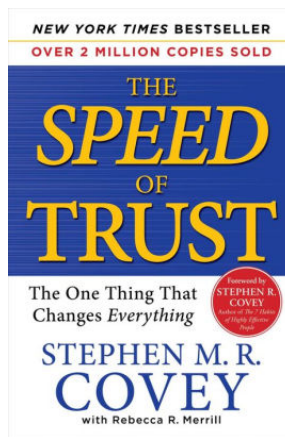
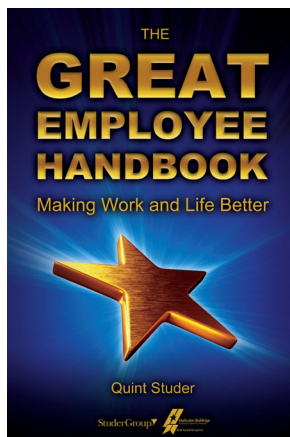
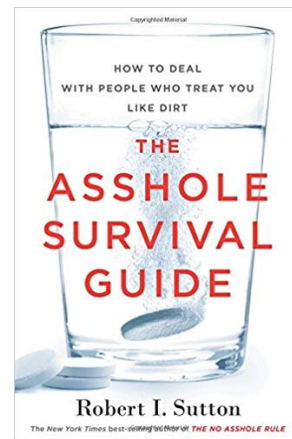
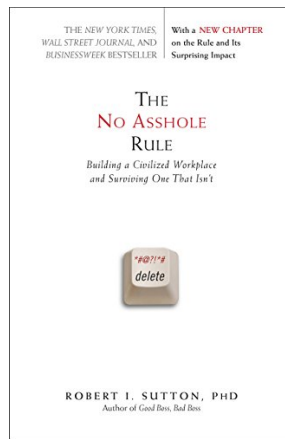
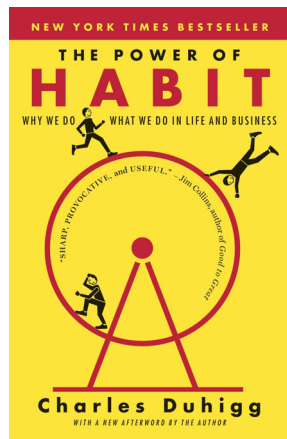
1. I know that I am more impatient and pushy than is appropriate.
2. I recognize that I am sometimes carried away by my desire to win, to prevail, to be in control.
3. I have been told by others that I should be more firm and should express myself more directly.
4. I have little difficulty in expressing myself succinctly, clearly and straightforwardly.
5. I am able to draw out other people, listen, and respond without compromising my own position or putting down theirs.
6. I try too hard to please people and to keep everybody happy.
7. Sometimes I express my anger by attacking others.
8. I have been told that I am too aggressive and I should try to be less abrasive.
9. I deal with conflict, disagreement, and anger without becoming overly tense or backing off and compromising inappropriately.
10. ____ I have no trouble asking questions or modifying my own position when I think it is appropriate and generally being open and available to other people.
11. ____ Sometimes I back down pretty easily.
12. ____ I find it hard to be direct; I tend to try to take a soft approach and avoid confrontations.
13. I find myself acting resentful and vindictive more often than I would like.
14. I am able to use my concern and empathy for others, in order to be cooperative and work effectively in teams or groups.
15. ____ There are quite a few times when, after a situation is over, I feel I should have acted more firmly in my own best interest.
16. ____ Sometimes I step on people's toes or rub people the wrong way.
17. ____ I become quite tense and nervous when I have to deal with conflict or unpleasant situations.
18. ____ I feel good about myself and I am able to go after what I want.

AN ASSERTIVE ASSESSMENT SCALE

How would you assess your behavior in these areas? How might someone else assess you?

	NONASSERTIVE		ASSERTIVE	AGGRESSIVE	
1. RATE OF SPEECH	1	2	3	4	5
	too slow		in tempo with circumstances		too fast
2. PITCH	1	2	3	4	5
	weak		well-modulated		shrill
3. VOLUME	1	2	3	4	5
	too soft		appropriate to surroundings		too loud
4. PAUSES	1	2	3	4	5
	too many		natural with pace		too few
5. TONE	1	2	3	4	5
	whining wavering		firm warm		demanding cold
6. EYE CONTACT	1	2	3	4	5
	averted downcast		open direct		narrowed staring
7. GESTURES	1	2	3	4	5
	clammy hands fluttery, fidgety		relaxed natural		abrupt finger-pointing
8. STANCE	1	2	3	4	5
	keep you arm's length, stay on edge, periphery		sensitive to personal space of others integrates into a group as appropriate		in your face make an entrance
9. POSTURE	1	2	3	4	5
	stooped lean for support		erect well-balanced		rigid hands on hips
10. FACIAL EXPRESSION	1	2	3	4	5
	forced smile worried		open, warm smiling		tense, sullen few smiles

Reference Books





Colorado Springs

6005 Delmonico Drive, Suite 250
Colorado Springs, Colorado 80919
719.667.0677

Denver

1290 Broadway, 15th floor
Denver, Colorado 80203
303.839.5177

Loveland

5250 Hahns Peak Drive, Suite 140
Loveland, Colorado 80538
970.223.4107

Phoenix

2231 E Camelback Rd, Suite 211
Phoenix AZ 85016 Main
602.955.7558

Salt Lake City

423 West 300 South, Suite 200
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