

# BECOMING ASSERTIVE



Ultimately, assertiveness is about values - living ours, not someone else's.



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

# Assertiveness Involves

- Saying yes when you want to.
- Saying no when you mean no.
- Deciding on clear boundaries.
- Sticking to those boundaries.
- Handling conflict if it occurs.

# Assertiveness Does NOT Involve

- Violating the rights of others.
- Humiliating other people.
- Abusing other people.
- Aggressiveness in any form.
- Selfishness.

# Lack of Assertiveness

- low self esteem
- social phobia
- depression
- anxiety
- stress
- frustration
- resentment
- emotional outbursts
- damaged relationships

# Genuine Assertiveness

- higher self esteem
- less need for approval
- better relationships
- reduce stress
- progress at work
- socially adept

# Understanding Behaviour Patterns

## **Passive** behaviour symptoms:

- reluctant to express own opinions and feelings
- often feels used by others
- doesn't complain
- finds it hard to say 'no'
- agrees with what others think
- goes along with what others want to do
- 'collapses' in the presence of aggressive behaviour
- will compromise to get harmony

# Understanding Behaviour Patterns

## **Passive** behaviour causes:

- fear of rejection (even fear of rejection by persons unknown)
- fear of upsetting others
- feeling responsible (for others feelings, attitudes, beliefs)
- listening to our inner critic

# Understanding Behaviour Patterns

## **Assertive** behaviour symptoms:

- able to express desires and feelings
- able to work well with others
- able to disagree with others respectfully
- aware of the needs and desires of others
- able to make concessions to others
- able to express a concern or a need
- able to say 'no' to others without feeling guilty

# Understanding Behaviour Patterns

## **Aggressive** behaviour symptoms:

- frequently argues with others
- frequently gets angry
- easily finds fault with others
- readily complains
- expects others to accommodate their schedule
- works to a 'personal agenda' most of the time
- uncaring about the needs and feeling of others

# Exercise

1. Can you express negative feelings about other people and their behaviours without using abusive language?
2. Are you able to exercise and express your strengths?
3. Can you easily recognise and compliment other people's achievements?
4. Do you have the confidence to ask for what is rightfully yours?
5. Can you accept criticism without being defensive?
6. Do you feel comfortable accepting compliments?
7. Are you able to stand up for your rights?
8. Are you able to refuse unreasonable requests from friends, family, or co-workers?
9. Can you comfortably start a conversation with others?
10. Do you ask for assistance when you need it ?

# Thinking Assertively: Know Your Beliefs

Our beliefs about ourselves, other people and how the world works can often have us thinking unassertively.

These beliefs may have helped us cope with what we were experiencing at the time - now as adults we need to question the beliefs.

*Examples:*

*If I assert myself I will upset the other person and ruin our relationship*

*I will feel embarrassed if I say what I think*

*I shouldn't have to say what I need or how I feel: people close to me should know*

*If someone says 'no' to my request it is because they don't like me*

*It is rude and selfish to say what I want*

*It will all work out in the end, and anyway it's not my fault*

# Thinking Assertively: Know Your Rights

I have the right to:

Want

Make mistakes

Feel

Be angry

Express

Decide

Say no

Change my mind

# Assertiveness Technique #1: D.E.S.C

**D**escribe the actions or behaviour that you see.

**E**xpress why that behaviour is an issue.

**S**pecify the resulting actions or change of behaviour.

**C**larify the consequences for failing to change behaviour.

# Assertiveness Technique #2: Broken Record

It's sad but true that if you repeat yourself 3 times most people will capitulate.

Therefore it is useful to re-state what you said.

If you can find a way to say the same thing using different words -you will get through even more quickly.

NOTE: This technique is especially powerful with people who consider themselves to be superior to you.

# Assertiveness Technique #3: Fight Fire With Water

When someone is critical of you or your work and makes a statement such as:

*“You’re lazy...” “You’r always late...” “You’re stupid...”*

**Ask for more information.**

*“Really - in what way?”*

*“What exactly do you mean by that?”*

*“Is this a ‘one off’ or are you putting a label on me?”*

# Assertiveness Technique #4: Negative Assertion

When someone is critical of you or your work begin by making sure they hear that you agree:

Accept that a part of what they say is true.

THEM: *“If you think that, you must be stupid.”*

YOU: *“I wasn’t claiming be the smartest person.”*

THEM: *“You are always making mistakes.”*

YOU: *“Yes, I do make mistakes now and then.”*

# Assertiveness Technique #5: I Statements

I statements allow us to take responsibility for a situation without blaming others.

I statements make it clear how we feel.

*“I feel sad and scared when you get angry.”*

*“When you blame me, I feel alone”.*

*“I would really like it if...”*

*“I’m sure that we need to re-look at...”*

# Assertiveness Technique #6: Disagree Gracefully

I understand how you feel.

I would feel the same if it were me in your place.

I believe you would see it differently if you had more information.

Would you be prepared to listen to something you may not have been aware of?

# The Art Of Saying No

Saying **No** is **passive** when it is accompanied by weak excuses and realisations.

Saying **No** is **aggressive** when it is done with contempt.

Saying **No** is **assertive** when it is simple and direct.

# 4 Steps To Saying No

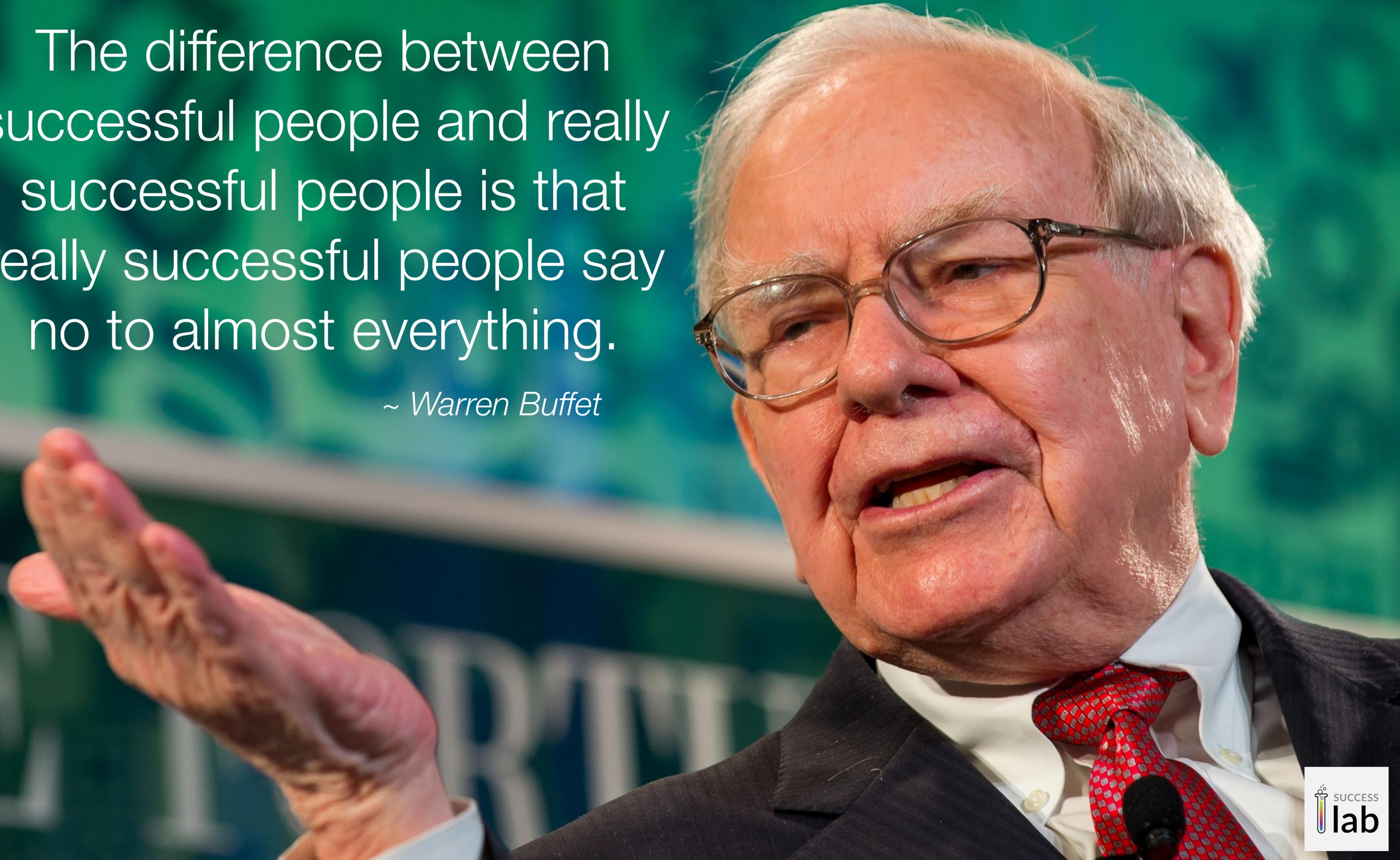
1. Listen to the request completely and without interrupting.
2. Clarify if needed. Say no immediately.
3. Give ONE clear and honest reason.
4. Offer to find an alternative.

# Tips For Saying No

1. Start your sentence with no.
2. Ask for time to consider your response.
3. Shake your head as you say no.
4. Frown when saying no (*a smile weakens it*).
5. Stand up if possible.

The difference between successful people and really successful people is that really successful people say no to almost everything.

*~ Warren Buffet*



# Assignments

<b>1</b>	Pick 2 of the 6 assertiveness techniques from this workshop to practice on a regular basis and commit to using them until you are comfortable with them.
<b>2</b>	Select one person you need to be more assertive with and commit to working with them until you get comfortable.
<b>3</b>	Practice saying no by putting 'no' as the first word in your reply sentence.