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PURPOSE, POTENTIAL & PERFORMANCE

C.R.E.A.T.E. C.H.A.N.G.E.

April 2011

"The only healthy communication style is assertive communication."

Jim Rohn

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The Theme for 2011's Power Choice© is CREATE CHANGE ~May = Turn-around

What kind of results will we achieve when we assert ourselves in a positive, effective manner?

In this month's issue, we intend to provide you with some tips and tools that can help you assert your power in a manner that will lead you to extraordinary personal and professional results.

Definition of ASSERT

"To state an opinion, claim a right, or establish authority. If you assert yourself, you behave in a way that expresses your confidence, importance or power and earns you respect from others."

From the Oxford English Dictionary

"The basic difference between being assertive and being aggressive is how our words and behavior affect the rights and well being of others."

Sharon Anthony

"The practice of assertiveness: being authentic in our dealings with others; treating our values and persons with decent respect in social contexts; refusing to fake the reality of who we are or what we esteem in order to avoid disapproval; the willingness to stand up for ourselves and our ideas in appropriate ways in appropriate contexts".

Nathaniel Branden

"Let's build bridges, not walls".

MLK, Jr.

***ASSERT Yourself in a Positive Manner
to CREATE CHANGE***

The Choice is Yours – Assert Rather than Being Passive or Aggressive

Laura Novakowski



**“Don't tell me what you're not, or
what you're against! Tell me who
you are and what you stand for.”
Mario Cortes**

Ever wonder why...

- ...the promotion has gone to someone else?*
- ...you aren't respected?*
- ...you aren't heard?*
- ...you aren't valued?*
- ...you are taken advantage of?*
- ...people don't seek you advice or assistance?*
- ...you aren't included or invited?*
- ...others don't take you seriously?*

If any of the above points raise a flag for you, then the next question becomes. *How I can change any or all of the above to a more positive thought and feeling?*

A simple answer, learn to assert yourself.



Source: Great FX

On the lower left-hand corner of the **Assertiveness Triangle**, one will behave passively. Expecting others to invite them, notice them, even stand up for them, without being asked. The passive individual **expects** others to notice (because they certainly are not clearly stating their feelings or thoughts). Unfortunately, most people are not mind readers. And so the passive person goes on through work, life and relationships acting and feeling like a victim and powerless. After all, they have chosen to abdicate control and responsibility for their actions and ultimately their success. In their mind, **they personally have no choice**.

On the lower right-hand corner of the **Assertiveness Triangle**, one will behave aggressively. Often taking and demanding control, this style totally disregards what others think or feels. An attitude of “*my way or the highway*” prevails because this person has a strong need to make others less to make themselves more. They often think and act as if they are the only one that could possibly be right, successful, or powerful. In their mind, **they will leave others no choice.**

Passive/Aggressive behaviors only serve to make the individual and others uncomfortable. These two styles alienate, divide and destroy teams, companies, families and communities.

Now, at the top of the **Assertiveness Triangle**, one will behave in a manner that demonstrates positive self respect and self confidence. Simultaneously, the individual’s behavior towards others will be respectful and understanding. These individual think, feel and behave as if **they always have choices** in any given situation. At the same time, they mutually respect and appreciate that **others always have choices** in their thoughts, actions and behaviors as well.

When we assume an assertive position, we appreciate ourselves and others and as a result we will exude...

- confidence, not cockiness
- sense of self, not selfishness
- sense of power, not aggression
- collaboration, not confrontation

From **wisdomcommons.org**

Assertiveness means being positive and confident about ourselves-- our ideas, opinions and talents--and expressing these in the service of our values. It means acting on aspirations and exercising abilities, recognizing that each person is expressive and affirmative in a unique way.

Assertiveness is the positive form of aggressiveness. When we are assertive, we have the strength to resist negative or hurtful influences. We think for ourselves, ask for what we need, and speak up to protect our selves and others.

When we practice assertiveness, we practice self-esteem, citizenship, and valor. Though it may not always seem so, to be assertive is to be a blessing in the world.

The choice is ours to make. What choice will you make?

Laura R. Novakowski, RN, MBA, President
Positive Power Strategies, Inc.
Release Potential to Create Positive Change
ACTS™ to Promote Accountability!
<http://www.positivepowerinc.com>
laura@positivepowerinc.com

ACTS®
is a proven process that Positive Power Strategies, Inc. helps individuals, companies and communities to find ways to “Navigate their way with strategies, resources and actions that lead to personal and professional health and wealth.”



Assert Your Values

Leanne Hoagland-Smith

The roots of language continue to fascinate me. Assert is one of those words that has been almost corrupted through its modern definition. This word's origin is Latin and means "to join or to bind" and is a far cry from today's dictionary or even personal definitions.

With the recent news of the continued lack of demonstration of positive core values by many leaders from the business to the political worlds, there appears to be a lack of joining or binding positive core values to demonstrated behaviors. Imagine what would happen if each of us asserted our values to our behaviors?

During the past year, Laura Novakowski and I have worked on asserting the values to specific attributes or talents within a particular assessment tool The Attribute Index. Additionally when we work with clients, we continually ask what behaviors are demonstrated within the positive core values statement. The articulation of these behaviors also extends to expectations respective to job descriptions and performance appraisals.

For example, the word punctual is in many job descriptions and is even in some values statements through its synonyms of on time, timely, etc. This word could be asserted by being in the building:

- 10 minutes before work time
- But getting coffee at 8:00am and not at the workstation
- And at the workstation at 8:00am

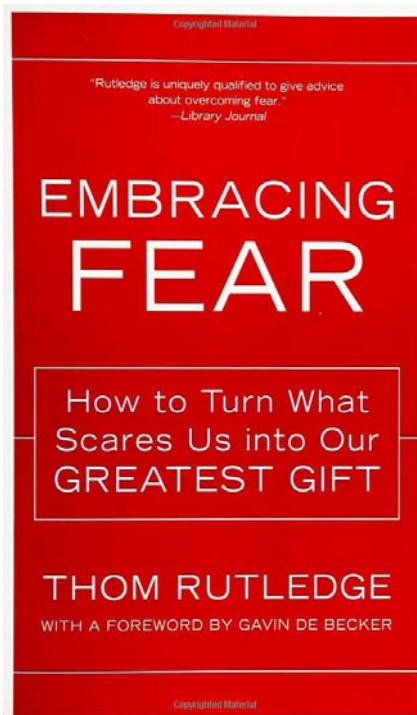
Asserting the values to the behaviors is critical because this action helps to ensure consistency. Inconsistency is probably the greatest challenge any individual or business faces. Maybe this is why continuous improvement plans such as *Lean* or *Six-Sigma* have become more and more popular. Even at **Four Six-Sigma** quality, this translates into 20,000 lost articles of mail every hour to 5,000 incorrect monthly surgical procedures for a major hospital.

Possibly the greatest obstacle to asserting values to behaviors resides within each individual. The commitment to this assertion can be overwhelming. No one wants to point the finger at someone else. Yet, if individuals do not assert the agreed positive core values then the results of the past will continue to be manifested. What this also suggests is each individual may need to become a better self-leader who is more self-aware, more self-regulated and more motivated. For when we can assert the values to the behaviors while our individual behaviors are still emotionally aware of the feelings of others, then those positive core values will remain strong throughout the organization and within each individual. Just imagine the places you or your organization could go through this power choice.

Leanne Hoagland-Smith, M.S. Chief Results Officer

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Assert Yourself: Turning Your Fears Around Judy Rienzi

Book Review: **Embracing Fear** by Thom Rutledge

Thom Rutledge is talking to his son about his career as a psychotherapist and explains *"I stand with people as they face their fears. I help them lift their heads and look directly and carefully at the walls of resistance engineered and constructed by fear"*.

We all possess two types of fear. Healthy fear informs us of real dangers as they come into view. It is clear, direct, to the point, and is here to protect and guide us.

Neurotic fear, or imagined fear, talks to us about every possible negative outcome. It is the self defeating voice in our head that holds us back from asserting ourselves in health, in relationships, in our careers, socially-in every aspect of life. Neurotic fear prevents us from taking risks in life supposedly to protect us from disappointment and embarrassment. We may not be in control of what might happen, but we are in charge of how we will respond. Asserting ourselves and working through neurotic fear will determine our level of satisfaction, fulfillment, and happiness.

Thom Rutledge explains that we *"sleep walk through life"*, that is, we take the path of least resistance. He calls this *"living by default"*. Instead we must wake up and live by decision. Even so, we self sabotage ourselves when living by decision because the internal resistance is still there.

In his workshop, he uses guided visualization called *"The Wall"* *"to help make tangible the experience of standing in the presence of resistance and fear"*. The wall becomes a metaphor of what keeps us stuck. The wall does not provide the answers; it is the questions that arise within us that do the work. These questions can be transformed into powerful tools that attract useful information.

Interestingly, the author doesn't ask us to get rid of our inner critic. Rather, he wants to acknowledge it, perceive ourselves as separate from this critic, and disagree with it. He asks us to assert ourselves, plow through it, and refuse to be paralyzed by it. Fear is a normal part of life and trying to rid ourselves of fear is a waste of energy. We can triumph over fear by asserting ourselves and live by decision and not by default.

Judy Rienzi RN, MS
Health Promotion Associates
www.healthpromotionassociates.com
judy@healthpromotionassociates.com

Be Assertive - without being Aggressive

Laura Canter

"The basic difference between being assertive and being aggressive is how our words and behavior affect the rights and well being of others.

~ Sharon Anthony

Assertive

- 1) Inclined to bold or confident assertion; aggressively self-assured.
- 2) Confident and direct in claiming one's rights or putting forward one's views.
- 3) Given to making assertions or bold demands; dogmatic or aggressive.

As you can see by the definitions, there is a fine line between being assertive (positive) and being aggressive (negative). How can we be sure we are being *confident* in our decision making and not being overly *dogmatic* in our approach to different viewpoints?

People who are strong in the character strength of **Non-Judgment and Open-Mindedness*** are critical thinkers. They enjoy making decisions and are able to make the right decision by thinking through and examining all sides. These people do not jump to conclusions, they are able to change their mind when new information comes their way and they weigh all evidence fairly. Their decisions are not just based on their needs or wants alone.

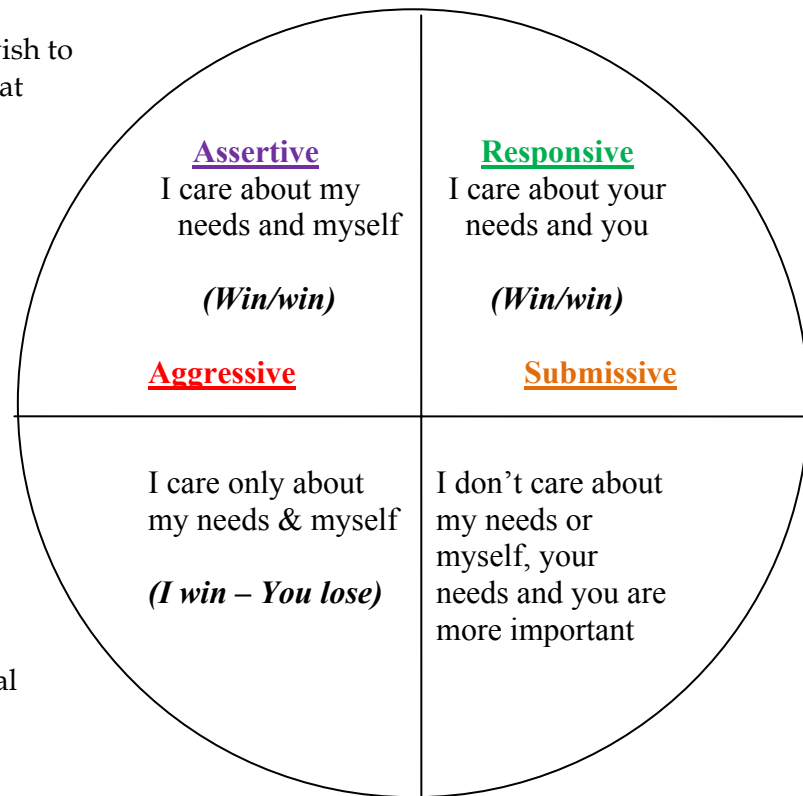
If you want to become good at being assertive you need to understand the underlying reasons behind your purpose and the purpose of those around you. What do I mean by this? Well, to quote Glinda from the Wizard of Oz - "Are you a good witch or are you a bad witch"?

What is your intent? What outcome do you wish to happen? Look at the diagram to the right: what category best suits your thinking?

Are you only concerned with your needs? Or are you concerned with everyone's needs? To find balance and be more assertive - we need to consider not only our needs but, also the needs of others around us (i.e. self awareness).

Everyone has different communication preferences as well. So the old saying - *treat others how you wish to be treated*, would be more correct and more productive if said - *treat others how they wish you to treat them*.

Being assertive means you are good at persuading others. You take other's emotional needs into consideration and play to their



communication preferences. People who are good at the *Art of Persuasion* bring others around to their way of thinking and win agreement for what they want to achieve by having a high level of emotional intelligence and social intelligence. Here are some tips to help improve your assertiveness by using the *Art of Persuasion*:

Reciprocity – The old, I’ll scratch your back if you scratch my back. Humans are actually programmed to showcase reciprocity. If you do something positive for me now, I will be more likely to do something positive for you in the future. Other mammals are programmed for this trait too – funny enough bats showcase reciprocity all the time in their colony.

Commitment and Consistency – We like people who are consistent reliable, and commit to their values - *listen to me now, because I represent what you believe in* – or – *listen to me now, because you have listened to me in the past and it has worked well.*

Social Confirmation – the power of our peers. Just because we are adults does not mean we are not still influenced by our social cohort - *listen to me because other people who are like you also value my opinion* (this is why celebrity endorsements can be so appealing).

Like-o-Meter - early on in childhood we develop a **Like-o-Meter** ~ *I either like it or I don't*. So the likeability factor of the individual leader becomes critical when trying to get someone to listen to your point of view and persuade them to follow.

Authority Figures – Once again, stemming from childhood, we are more likely to listen to and be influenced by authority figures. However, if we have lost faith in the leadership or integrity of our authority figures, we are unlikely to see this tip used effectively in persuasion.

Scarcity – It’s an old salesman technique, but its effective ~ *Hurry and listen to me now before you miss an opportunity for success!* The time sensitivity can persuade people to act fast and not necessarily tap into critical thinking areas of the brain.

*“The way we communicate with others
and with ourselves ultimately determines the quality of our lives.”*

Anthony Robbins

Laura Canter
☞ [Canter Associates](#)
Positive Performance Consulting...
Corporate, Life & Sport
Email: llcanter1@gmail.com
Website: www.canterassociates.org

**For more information
about the **Values in Action Institute's
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discovering your strengths
please contact Laura Canter.*