

How you  
can create  
your place  
in the world

Women  
on the

**MOVE**

Sandi Givens

Women on the Move: How to Create Your Place in the World.  
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# FOREWORD

to Women On The Move

By Fabian Dattner

We have been born in challenging times. There is constant background noise in our lives: work, change, competition, achievement, children, health, husbands, lovers, friends, cooking, cleaning, holidays, investments, spiritual wellness ... all vying for part of our attention, our innovation, experience, thoughtfulness and engagement.

We are incredibly busy, incredibly engaged and sometimes, incredibly tired and not just a little lost. Is this all there is? Is this all I am? What happened to who I thought I could be, who I wanted to be?

Some of us see a glass ceiling above us and wonder if we will ever reach our potential; some of us feel like we are caught by the 'sticky seat' syndrome (so good, we are irreplaceable where we are). Some of us just feel that we are not reaching our dreams and yet we are unsure how to affect change to do so.

Like many women, I have had periods of questioning the path I am on, and perhaps not infrequently, the load I carry as I walk along. At times I have loved much of my journey and have felt clear about my purpose, my values, what motivates me in what I do, my sense of achievement - and how best to fulfil those key preferences. I have understood how to negotiate my way out of difficulty, how to have my voice heard, how to get through both imagined and real barriers in pursuit of my ambitions.

I have also sometimes felt caught, unable to move, confused.

In my journey so far, I have had guides, mentors and aids that have helped me make choices that have built who I am. They have come in many shapes and forms - from an old lady on a BBC documentary who at 93 reminded me that life doesn't end until it ends, or my father who filled me with a sense of the endless possibility of life, or my first boss who taught me the power of leader as teacher.

These mentors and coaches have been the difference that has made a difference in my life - sometimes to overcome very considerable challenges I have had to face, sometimes just to remind me that I am ok and it is worth fighting on.

There have also been the silent coaches and supporters and they have been the countless hundreds of books I have read on change, leadership, strategic process, organisational dynamics, and personal development. Out of these many readings, a select few stick out as having been of particular value. For me, the value has been in the simple, eloquent (often highly motivating) style with which ideas for developing myself have been expressed. Such books provide engaging and highly pragmatic help in areas where I have been struggling.

I think for many people, Women On The Move may be such a guide. A woman has written it who clearly knows what she is talking about. Every bit as important, however, is that Sandi Givens genuinely cares about people, about women reaching the outcomes they aspire to. That makes this book one that might be kept on a desk, by the phone in the kitchen, beside a bed, or even (and we all know that sometimes it is the only quiet spot) in the lavatory! In these private spaces, it will be carefully gone through, note book in hand, to work out how specifically it helps each reader move through their dilemmas to reach a simple and eloquent plan for change (wherever it is relevant).

Clearly Sandi's advice is to treat the book as a tool, to work it through in a way that works for the reader (and not for the author). Don't be afraid of breaking those 'book' boundaries that distant authorities established for us - namely "don't mark the page"; the behaviour that was, once upon a time, considered to be a sacrilege. Today, and certainly in this book, it is the author's advice on how to make the tool really work for you.

Well, from my model of the world, it is sound advice. Go for it, have fun marking the sections that are most relevant, filling in the lists, making notes in the columns, developing a plan for your future, with the quiet and focussed (and highly pragmatic) support that Sandi is giving you, at your leisure, in your own time, with you and your outcomes as a focus.

Nice for a change I think!

Fabian Dattner

June 2002

# DEDICATION

This book has been a labour of love - a journey that has both challenged and excited me.

Along the rough roads, climbing the rocky mountains and crossing the raging rivers, I've been blessed to have the unshakable reassurance of two exceptional people...

Alan - my soul mate and the wind beneath my wings

and

Jesse - our son and the most precious gift I've ever been given

Thank you both for your gifts of love, encouragement and support.

In Memory of  
Sheila Roberts

- A woman who made a difference -

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I have learned, grown and been supported by some wonderful people in producing this book.

With deep gratitude, I wish to acknowledge ...

- ❖ Helen and Lachlan Macdonald - who blew wind into my sails when I was becalmed.
- ❖ Robyn Henderson - who gently and unwittingly challenged me to 'just do it!' - and helped me get started!
- ❖ My reviewers who kept their promise to me to be 'gently ruthless' in their feedback - Carly Anderson, Melissa Bourke, Adie Courtney, Petrina Dodds-Buckley, Charles Dunstan, Colin James, Libby Mackie, Jill Parker, Debbie Rainbow and Andrea Waugh. Thank you all - your suggestions and comments have been invaluable.
- ❖ Jock Macneish - for so generously offering his insightful visual interpretations to my messages - and so very much more!
- ❖ Countless adventurous and inspiring women who have participated in my seminars, shared their stories and continue to work on creating the life they desire.
- ❖ My colleagues in the National Speakers Association of Australia who continue to teach and inspire me.
- ❖ Two uniquely brave women - my mother and sister. My eternal thanks for your models of courage and for helping shape the woman that I am.

# ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Sandi Givens is an exceptional communicator who is keenly dedicated to assisting others in achieving their goals.

She is an experienced Professional Keynote Speaker, Learning Facilitator and Coach who has held managerial positions in the Retail, IT and Training industries.

Sandi sincerely believes an individual's potential is limited only by their beliefs and negative interpretations of past experiences.

As a wife, mother, friend and businesswoman, Sandi 'walks her talk' and continues to challenge herself to move out of her own 'Known Zone' in order to further her learning and growth.

For more information about how you can benefit from Sandi's teachings, visit her at <http://www.sandigivens.com.au>.

Sandi can be contacted on +61 3 9844 4612, or via email at [knowledge\\_able@bigpond.com](mailto:knowledge_able@bigpond.com).

Enjoy your journey of discovery - Because People Matter.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sandi". The lettering is cursive and fluid, with a large, looping 'S' at the beginning.

# WHY THIS BOOK

As a young girl, when adults asked me what I wanted to be when I grew up, I was very clear and consistent in my response.

"I want to be a mother, a teacher and I want to write a book!"

Always those three, always in that order.

Well, although not a conventional teacher within the educational system, the majority of my professional working life has been spent in the corporate world of adult learning. With a background education in Psychology and Sociology and experience in Human Resources, I have always felt passionate about how we can reduce conflict through improved interpersonal skills.

My second dream came true in 1994 when together my husband and I were blessed by the birth of our son. I have often reflected upon how my most significant learning and growth have occurred during these years as a mother.

And so, I still had that third goal to achieve. What would my writing be about? Who would read it? How would I market it? For many, many years I have felt 'there's a book in me somewhere' - I just needed to find it!

Many potential topics passed through my mind while my motivation ebbed and flowed. Outlines scribbled on trains turned yellow as they lay on my desk, catching a daily dose of sunshine. And still no book was born.

I suppose it was my experience of the first year of motherhood that made clear to me what my book would be about. I found a topic for which I had enough passion to carry me through the countless hours of writing and re-writing and the steep learning curve of every new author.

I'm not what I'd call an 'earth mother'. I don't consider myself a particularly enthusiastic mother of small babies. I need feedback. That delightful little person whose skin was so soft and eyes so full of wonder most certainly pulled on my heart strings. Yet I longed to really experience two-way communication with him!

I also longed for adult conversation and the stimulation and challenge of my work.

These longings were accompanied by a long and painful journey through Post Natal Depression. My son and I were hospitalised in a Mother & Baby Unit for four months while my husband somehow (thankfully) found within him the ability to continue to love, support and care for me.

This book is not about my experience of PND. It is about many of the things I learned during my time of recovery.

It is also about what I have noticed over the years in my experience as a Corporate Trainer and Speaker regarding women and their self-image.

Often in training sessions when introducing themselves I found women would use the word 'just'. "I'm Mary and I'm just the receptionist at work." "My name is Sue and I just handle all the accounts payable and receivable." I honestly don't remember a man ever saying "I'm Fred and I just work as the foreman in the factory."

Why do we do this? The word 'just' demeans and diminishes the words that follow, which, in these examples, are how we are describing ourselves. Could this possibly be genetic, or is it a learned behaviour? And if it is learned, where, how and why did we learn it - and what is needed to unlearn it?

Another thing I noticed in my workshops was that women behaved differently when they were in mixed gender groups. Men seemed to have the same levels of outspokenness and confidence whether in all-male groups or when combined with women. Conversely, women adopted dissimilar qualities in these two types of gatherings. When learning alongside men, they were more reticent to voice their opinions and ask questions. They exhibited less courage and adventurousness in their acquisition of new skills.

In all-female groups, however, an amazing transformation seemed to take place in many women. It was as if they let down their guard, allowing themselves to be more authentic and express themselves more fully. They gave themselves permission to connect and share with each other in very honest ways.

They appeared to believe more fully in their capacity to offer advice and guidance to others and more willing to listen to what others had to say. I'm not saying this applied to all women in the workshops. But it certainly applied to enough women to make the difference quite noticeable.

Again, I asked myself the question 'why?'. Have women learned that it is more important to hear the opinions of men? That no matter how hard we try, we as women are less likely to be taken seriously or be seen as having value we can add? What in our upbringing and collective experiences has led us to behave in this way? Or are we in fact imposing these limitations on ourselves despite a society that would support and give us fair hearing?

I will continue to be fascinated by the myriad of possible responses to these questions. I doubt I will ever find conclusive answers regarding what has led us to where and how we are now.

However, through my life's journey, my reading and my research - and through the experiences of thousands of other women - I have found some answers as to what we can do to change things for ourselves.

We can choose to take different actions, speak up more confidently and contribute more fully. We may not know exactly how we will do this - that's what this book is going to help you explore.

But the first step in any journey - especially one of change - is to determine whether or not we have the motivation to do whatever is required of us in order to achieve our goal. Is what we want impelling and appealing enough to us to take a few risks along the way in its pursuit? Are we ready to challenge some of our long-held beliefs about ourselves, other people and the world we live in? Do the benefits of achieving the changes far outweigh the costs we might incur in the process?

For me the answer to these questions has been a resounding 'Yes!'.

I trust this will be the case for you, too.

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# MAKE THE MOST OF YOUR INVESTMENT

How many of us have numerous books lining our shelves that are packed with great ideas? And how many of these are in the same 'mint condition' as the day we bought them?

That's the problem with books. While we act in ways that cherish them, the wisdom they hold remains separate to us. I believe this mind set about how we treat books originated in the days when they were indeed expensive treasures that were only affordable to the fortunate few. This is no longer true in our world today.

So, first, I'd like you to shift your thinking about what this book really is. Right now, it's no more than another volume of print that is at risk of joining the others gathering dust on your bookshelf. Please - save it from this fate!

I want you to make this book yours. As you read it, get involved with it, let it challenge you - and let yourself challenge and debate its messages. Throughout your reading, ask yourself these questions:

Does this sit well with me? Do I agree with this?

If so, how specifically can and will I use it?

If not, why not? What needs to be different for me to be able to use this idea?

In point form then, to ensure you get maximum value and benefit from **your** book, here are some things you can do ...

1. Get a highlight pen and some coloured textas.

Research has proven colour accelerates learning and increases retention by up to 78%. You want to be able to open the book and look at it - not read each word - and have your attention quickly drawn to those parts you've identified as being the most useful to you.

2. As you read, highlight, underline, write notes in the margins, draw symbols (arrows, pairs of eyes, stars - anything!). Add whatever you like and need to inject your interpretation and meaning to what you read.

3. Open the book in multiple, random places and gently bend the spine so the pages open fully. Yes, this will crumble the outside of the spine! But don't worry - this book has been produced with the intention that it will be well used! You want the pages to be able to lie as flat as possible when opened so it is easier to read and write on them.
4. Purchase a notebook with blank pages. This will be your Learning Journal.

Create three sections in it with post-it flags or dividers and label them:

### **Activities**

### **Insights and Ideas**

### **Commitments**

#### Activities Section

Throughout this book there are many activities and exercises for you to do. Yes, you can simply read and think about them. But true understanding and learning occurs more rapidly and effectively when we physically do something.

#### Insights and Ideas Section

Allow your mind to wander and let your writing flow freely in this section. You may be amazed by what your unconscious mind suddenly and unexpectedly reveals to you. As a minimum (and whenever suggested in this book), visit this section at the end of each Chapter you read before moving on to the next.

#### Commitments Section

You have probably heard the saying "There's power in knowledge". I don't agree - and let me demonstrate to you why by asking you a few questions. Just answer them in your own mind as you read them.

## Commitments Section (continued)

Right now in your life, do you know it would probably be a good idea to exercise more regularly and/or become more fit and healthy?

Right now in your life, do you know it might be useful to eat a more balanced diet? Or drink less alcohol?

Right now in your life, do you know it would help you feel better to spring-clean your wardrobe, tidy your workspace and/or throw away paper and other things you don't need any more?

Now here's the really important question:

If you know these things would be useful to you - why haven't you done them?

You see, my point is this: knowledge is **not** ultimately what is the most useful to us. It is the **actions we take based on that knowledge** that will make a difference in our lives. Power lies in **actions**.

So this section on Commitments, then, is the most valuable part of your Learning Journal.

As you travel through the ideas in this book, write down the commitments to yourself that you are prepared to make. As a minimum, do this after reading each Chapter.

Let this section of your Learning Journal become your map that will lead **you to your desired future**.





# SELF-ASSURED PERSONAL EXPRESSION

You have a Right to have Limits and draw Boundaries

## Purpose of this Chapter

How many times have we caught ourselves saying 'yes' when we wanted to say 'no'?



What comments and behaviours have we tolerated outwardly while inwardly we have seethed for untold periods of time?

Have we 'held it all in' only to find ourselves exploding unpredictably, often aiming our furor and frustration at an innocent party?

Do we frequently find the various aspects of our lives in conflict with each other and constantly attempt to achieve an elusive 'balance'?

We know there is a better way though we may frequently feel at a loss to know what to do and say to assert ourselves without feeling guilty or igniting an argument.

In fact, in becoming more self-assured in the way we express ourselves, we face three major issues:

1. Having the **courage** to say 'no' and state our limits
2. Having the **ability** to say 'no' and state our limits (i.e. using the 'techniques') and
3. Breaking the **habit** of saying 'yes' and attempting to be all things to all people at all times.

This chapter will give you some practical strategies and tools to start claiming your rightful freedoms.

If you want:

- ✓ Greater self-esteem, confidence and self worth
- ✓ Increased respect for yourself and from others
- ✓ More fulfillment and satisfaction in your life . . . and a host of other benefits,

then this Chapter is for you!



## What keeps us locked in?

Whereas most of us would say we like the idea of being assertive - and perhaps have at times tried to do this - we frequently find ourselves caught in old, habitual patterns of behaviour. Why is this so?

### Breaking habits is challenging

The brain has formed incredibly strong associations between behaviour, emotional states and a variety of situations we have experienced throughout our lives. When the behaviours support the attainment of desired results in our lives, this is a good thing! Our 'auto-pilot' actions get us what we want and are so reflexive, we save ourselves the energy and thinking time many of these situations would otherwise necessitate.

In cases where these actions do not lead us to our desired outcomes, our conscious choice may be to do something different.



Meanwhile, however, our strong and influential unconscious mind has made connections based on past experience within less than one second.

Stimulus + past emotional response =  
past behavioural response.

It is challenging and, at times, frustrating work changing these triggers - but it is possible!

### Resistance to change

This is an all-too common phenomenon amongst human beings. This resistance may be based in either the conscious or unconscious mind.

Without doubt, it is easier to keep doing what we have done in the past. But choosing to do what is easy or hard is not the issue here. The issue is the question we must ask ourselves: Is what I'm doing getting me what I want more often than not?

Never be  
afraid to go  
out on a limb.  
That's usually  
where the  
fruit is.

Unknown

## The big, bad four letter word: F E A R

It is both understandable and natural that we may be fearful of being rejected by others, being seen as hard to get along with, and being the subject of gossip, ridicule and scorn. Or perhaps we are more worried about causing an argument, ill will and bad 'vibes'.

Certainly, when we assert ourselves, there is no guarantee that it will all be smooth sailing. Often, though, when we examine our fears more closely, we can see that many of these are irrational fears - we are assuming any or all of these to be the guaranteed natural consequences of simply speaking our minds about something.



Before letting your fear of the consequences stop you from expressing yourself, take time to examine the true probability of your fears coming to fruition - and consider the consequences of not saying what's on your mind.

## The big, bad five letter word: G U I L T

"I'll feel guilty if I don't help out. It's like letting the team down."

"They won't be happy that I've disagreed with them, and then I'll feel guilty about the anger and frustration I've caused."

"My boss won't like it if I say my family comes first - I may lose my job, and we need the money."

"My family complains I'm home late so often and I feel guilty that I've missed so many events that are important to them."

The list goes on. This emotion, possibly more than others, can keep up locked in old, established behaviours.



## But look! You already can do it!

When you look at your life as a whole, you will no doubt find there are situations in which you behave and react assertively. The different contexts in which we are all assertive and non-assertive will vary from one person to another, proving there are no particular events that in themselves are easier to handle than others. What is worth an investment of your time is to reflect on **what are the key differences in these two types of situation for you.**

Character grows in the soil of experience, with the fertilisation of example, the moisture of desire, and the sunshine of satisfaction.

Unknown

When I did this, I discovered that I usually found it easy to be assertive on behalf of others - my co-workers, my family, my friends - irrespective of what the overall problem or issue was. My waterloo was doing the same thing for myself.

People generally saw me as confident, assertive and outspoken, but what they didn't necessarily see was that these characteristics were usually only evident when I was speaking for someone other than myself. My time, my energies and my focus were strongly other-directed. For me, the eventual outcome was a prolonged period of ill-health which I know was caused by many factors - and I believe was exacerbated by my inability to stand up for me as much as I did for others.

### Journal Activity

In the Activities section of your Learning Journal make two lists - Situations in which I behave quite Assertively and Situations in which I wish to be more Assertive.

What are the key differences in these two types of situations?

Are you currently more other-directed? Do you find you can be more assertive at work than in your personal life (or is it the other way around)? Are you more outspoken about 'things' than emotions? Is defending your own point of view more challenging for you than speaking up about issues that do not directly concern you?

Really tease out what the critical differences are for you.

And take strong note of (and congratulate yourself for) the times in which you are already expressing yourself in a confident and self-assured manner.

## Rights and Responsibilities

As adults, we know we have rights. There are things that we are entitled to, decreed by our culture and the society we live in. The challenge is to exert them in the situations that are causing us anguish.

When was the last time you consciously thought about the things in life to which you are entitled as a human being? Consider the following 'Bill of Rights' (perhaps even reading them aloud and noticing how strongly - or not - you believe in them).

## My Personal Bill of Rights

As a human being, I deserve and have the right to ...

- Be treated with respect and courtesy.
- Have and express my own opinions and feelings.
- Be listened to and taken seriously.
- Ask for what I want and say what I believe.
- Say 'no' and draw boundaries for myself without feeling guilty.
- Make mistakes and learn from them.
- Change my mind and alter my decisions.
- Refuse to answer personal, intrusive questions.
- Respond to statements and behaviours that abuse my rights.
- Protect myself physically and emotionally.
- Have my own values, beliefs and priorities.
- Receive value for money - including information and advice from professionals in an ethical and respectful manner.
- Have a personal life that I keep separate from my business life, if this is what I choose.

### Journal Activity

Go to the Activities section of your Learning Journal and create your own personal Bill of Rights. You may want to draw from the above list and/or add some additional ones that are unique to you and your situation.

Now give some consideration to what you have written.

How firmly do you believe each of these statements?

How actively and overtly do you act in ways that support your beliefs about what are your rights?

Is it time to write some new Commitments to yourself . . . ?

## The Ten Commandments for Reducing Stress

1. Thou shall not be perfect, nor even try to be.
2. Thou shall not try to be all things to all people.
3. Thou shall leave things undone that ought to be done.
4. Thou shall not spread thyself too thin.
5. Thou shall learn to say 'no'.
6. Thou shall schedule time for thyself and thy supportive network.
7. Thou shall switch off and do nothing regularly.
8. Thou shall be boring, untidy, inelegant and unattractive at times.
9. Thou shall not feel guilty.
10. Thou shall not be thine own worst enemy, but be thine own best friend.

(From the Heyfield News, February 2002)



## Responsibilities

Obligations, or responsibilities, go hand in hand with the rights we lay claim to. Other people have the same (and additional) rights to those mentioned in this Chapter. You have a responsibility to ensure you are acting in a manner that is respectful of the other party(ies) as well as yourself.

## Advantages and Disadvantages

The advantages of being more assertive in your life are many. How many of the following would you like?

- Increased self-esteem, self respect and sense of self worth
- Increased respect and trust from others
- Increased trust in yourself and your abilities
- More fulfillment in what you choose to do in your life
- People knowing what you stand for and trusting of your word
- Being regarded as someone with integrity
- Having others know you mean what you say
- Increased confidence
- Less stress and better health
- Feeling less torn between the various aspects of your life
- Increased inner calm and ability to cope with pressure
- Being able to enroll others in your plans
- Less a Victim, more a Victor

**"Pick battles  
big enough  
to matter  
- small enough  
to win."**

Jonathan  
Kozol

And the disadvantages? Yes there are some ...

- Your change in behaviour may at first 'shock' others who are accustomed to the 'old' you. They may need time to adjust to your new responses.
- With some people, you will be 'rocking the boat'. Remember, human beings generally dislike change - and that includes changes in the way you speak and deal with them!
- You may lose a few 'friends' (though I would question the depth of their friendship if this were the case).
- You may not get what you want. Even the most perfectly assertive, diplomatic, fair and reasonable people in the world have disappointments. There is no guarantee of having your needs totally met just because you've spoken your peace. (I am keen to add, though, that I can guarantee you will feel better about yourself for having voiced your true thoughts and feelings about an issue.)

### Journal Activity

Return to the *Activities* section of your Learning Journal and create two lists: Pros and Cons.

Brainstorm all the possible benefits and drawbacks for you of changing your communication with others to something that is more open, honest and direct. Draw from the above lists if you like - and add some that are specific to you.

You may find it helpful to think about particular situations and people with whom you want to be more assertive.

When you're ready, return to this point in the book . . .

So, with both the pros and the cons to consider, how do you decide with whom and in what circumstances you will assert yourself? Simply stop and ask yourself these two questions?

- **What are the likely consequences if I'm truly assertive in this instance?**
- **What are the likely consequences if I choose not to assert myself in this instance?**

The answers to these straightforward questions may just quickly and easily give you the guidance you need.

### Journal Activity

Consider what you wrote in the last Activity and now write a brief description of at least one situation in which you want to more confidently assert yourself.

Then, brainstorm some answers to the above two questions in respect to this specific instance.

Can you now make a decision about what your future actions will be?

Continue doing this with other situations you want to deal with in a more self-assured manner . . .

## Characteristics of Assertion

So how will I know I am being assertive and not aggressive or submissive?

Measure your actions against these criteria for the acid test.

Assertiveness is:



### Polite

Being assertive is not a license to be rude or disrespectful to anyone.

### Honest

Speak your truth and say how you feel about the other person's actions (or statements). Do stick to what is relevant - suggesting that they remind you of a neighbor's child who frequently throws tantrums is not going to get you any closer to your outcome.

### Direct

You already know that 9 times out of 10 people don't pick up on the 'hints' you've made about issues that are troubling you. Skip the hints and tell it like it is for you.

### Clear

The most effective way to be clear in your communication is to be brief. When someone has rambled on and on to you, remember how you just 'tuned out' after a relatively short period of time?

### Clean

Clean communication is without blame - to the person you are speaking with or anyone else, for that matter.

### Persistent

This is probably the most important and least apparent quality of assertiveness. I came across a wonderful saying about this once - When all else fails, the only thing left to try is again<sup>1</sup>.

Some people may succeed because they are destined to....

But most people succeed because they are determined to.

Unknown

# Strategies for Assertiveness

## 1. Make a list of your Negotiables and Not Negotiables

An example is probably the best way of illustrating this point.

Let's say you frequently miss your regular Thursday night squash match with friends as a result of having to work overtime at short notice. You believe it is possible for many of these 'crisis tasks' to be completed at other times (and still meet the required deadlines) with a small amount of extra planning. You are paid for the overtime (or receive time off in lieu) but that isn't the real issue for you. Your health and personal commitments have taken a back seat to work priorities for so long now, it seems taken for granted that you will always be available when requested.

So, your Not Negotiable is this: you cannot work late on Thursdays.

And what about your Negotiables? This is entirely up to you. In this example, they could include the following:

- You can work late any other night of the week with little or no notice.
- You can take work home on Thursday night, complete it after your squash match and bring it completed to work on Friday morning.
- You can shorten your lunch break on Thursdays (and/or other days).
- You can start earlier on Thursdays (and/or other days).
- You can take work home on two weekends a month.

Got the idea? If you are very clear on what is no longer negotiable for you, it is almost easy to be assertive about these things. If you are worried about being seen as aggressive, dogmatic or an unwilling, uncommitted 'team player', remember your offerings in the Negotiable basket give plenty of indication that you are willing and keen to find a mutually acceptable solution to the issue.

The key thing to remember is this: do your best to have a minimum number of things in your Not Negotiable category and a maximum number of things that are up for grabs. Your bargaining power is much stronger this way, you clearly communicate your willingness to pursue

## Journal Activity

Select a situation you wish to work with.

In one simple, clear statement, write your Not Negotiable point.

Then brainstorm as many Negotiables as you can. When you believe you've listed all of them, then stretch yourself to see if you can come up with at least two more!

Do this for at least one or two other situations of conflict now while you have your mind in this pattern of thinking.



## 2. Be prepared to be a 'Broken Record'

In the case of saying 'no' - to a task, a deadline or a request of any kind - you may need to repeat your refusal several times in order for the requestor to get the message you are unswayable on the issue. (Again, this is a lot easier when you are clear the issue is something about which you are not negotiable.)

Phrases like

*"I'm sorry I can't do that by 5pm today. I can have it for you by 10am tomorrow."*

and

*"I'd do it if I could and in this instance I can't. What I can do is ..."*

may help.

The Broken Record (or Instant Replay) technique is essentially saying the same thing over and over, clearly, congruently and politely until the requestor gets the message. Continuing to return the focus to what you can do will assist in avoiding an escalation of the issue.

(At the risk of being repetitive, a reminder: ensure you are being assertive about something that is truly **not negotiable** for you.)