

Assertiveness Training — Workbook

This workbook translates every module of the Assertiveness Training course into hands-on exercises, structured reflection tools, and templates you fill out for your own life. Work through each section in order — each one builds on the last. The final Action Plan and templates give you a durable system to carry forward beyond the course.

Understanding the Communication Spectrum

Map your current communication style, score your assertiveness baseline, and identify the blocking beliefs that most frequently stop you from speaking up.

Exercise: Communication Style Audit

Think of four recent situations — one from work, one from a personal relationship, one with a service provider, and one in a group setting. For each, write down what you said (or didn't say), then classify the response as passive, aggressive, passive-aggressive, or assertive. Be honest — classify what actually happened, not what you wish had happened.

- Describe the situation in one sentence and write down your exact response (or silence).

- Which style did your response represent — passive, aggressive, passive-aggressive, or assertive? What in your behavior signals that classification?

- What was the cost of that response? (Resentment, damaged relationship, missed outcome, etc.)

- Write the assertive version of the same response in one to two sentences.

Worksheet: Rathus Assertiveness Schedule Domain Tracker

After completing the full 30-item RAS, transfer your sub-scores for each domain below. Rank the domains from lowest to highest. Circle your two lowest-scoring domains — these are your primary focus areas for the 30-day practice plan in Module 4.

Complaining score (items 1, 7, 13, 19, 25):

Refusing requests score (items 2, 8, 14, 20, 26):

Expressing positive emotion score (items 3, 9, 15, 21, 27):

Initiating contact score (items 4, 10, 16, 22, 28):

Standing up to authority score (items 5, 11, 17, 23, 29):

Expressing disagreement score (items 6, 12, 18, 24, 30):

Total RAS score:

My two lowest domains (primary focus areas):

My baseline date (to compare at Day 30):

Checklist: Blocking Belief Reframe Checklist

- Identified at least two blocking beliefs from the six listed in the lesson
- Completed an ABC log for three real situations where I failed to speak up
- Wrote a challenged version of each blocking belief with evidence against it
- Wrote the new B (belief) for each situation and the new C (behavior) it would produce
- Chose the one blocking belief most likely to interfere with my 30-day practice and wrote a daily reframe cue for it

Core Assertiveness Techniques

Practice the DESC script, Broken Record, and fogging in written and spoken form before applying them in real situations.

Exercise: DESC Script Practice Lab

Choose three real situations where you need to make an assertive request — one at work, one in a personal relationship, and one that feels especially difficult. Write a full DESC script for each. Then read each one aloud and time how long it takes. Aim for 30–45 seconds per script — longer than that usually means over-explaining.

- Write the Describe component: what specific, observable behavior are you addressing? (One factual sentence, no interpretation.)

- Write the Express component: what is the impact on you? Use an I-statement starting with 'I feel' or 'I notice'.

- Write the Specify component: what exactly do you want to change? One concrete, actionable request.

- Write the Consequence component: what positive outcome will result? Avoid threats — state a natural benefit.

Exercise: Pushback Simulation — Broken Record and Fogging

For each of your three DESC scripts above, write out three likely pushback responses the other person might give. Then write your Broken Record reply and your Fogging reply for each pushback. This prepares you for the real conversation so you are not improvising under pressure.

- Write three realistic pushback lines the other person might say after your DESC request.

- Write a Broken Record reply for each (same core message, different framing, calm tone).

- Write a Fogging reply for the most guilt-inducing pushback — acknowledge the grain of truth without reversing your position.

- Identify which pushback you are most worried about and rehearse your Broken Record response out loud five times.

Checklist: Nonverbal Assertiveness Week-1 Audit

- Completed the one-week Sorry Audit — logged every apology (necessary vs. unnecessary)
- Identified my three most common unnecessary apology phrases
- Wrote assertive replacements for each unnecessary apology phrase

- [] Recorded a 60-second video of myself delivering a DESC script and reviewed posture, eye contact, and vocal pace
- [] Checked voice tone on statements — ends flat or dropping, not rising
- [] Reduced filler words ('um', 'sorry', 'I just') in at least three real conversations this week

Boundaries — Setting, Holding, and Communicating Them

Build your personal boundary map across all life domains and write ready-to-use scripts for setting, enforcing, and repairing each tier.

Worksheet: Personal Boundary Map

List at least eight boundaries you currently hold or want to establish — at least three from work, three from personal relationships, and two from other life areas (health, finances, social media, etc.). Classify each as Firm (Tier 1), Flexible (Tier 2), or Preference (Tier 3). Then write the exact script you will use to state each one.

Boundary 1 description and domain (work/personal/other):

Tier (Firm / Flexible / Preference):

Stating script (exact words):

Boundary 2 description and domain:

Tier:

Stating script:

Boundary 3 description and domain:

Tier:

Stating script:

Boundary 4 description and domain:

Tier:

Stating script:

Boundary 5 description and domain:

Tier:

Stating script:

Boundary 6 description and domain:

Tier:

Stating script:

Boundary 7 description and domain:

Tier:

Stating script:

Boundary 8 description and domain:

Tier:

Stating script:

Exercise: No-Script Selection and Practice

Identify three upcoming situations where you need to say no. For each, choose the appropriate no-script from the five in the lesson (Direct, Reasoned, Empathic, Alternative, Time-Limit). Write out your exact no in one sentence. Practice delivering it out loud — once at a normal pace, once at 20% slower.

- Describe the request and who it is from.

- Which of the five no-scripts fits best, and why?

- Write your exact no in one sentence (no more).

- What is the most likely pushback? Write your Broken Record response to it.

Checklist: Boundary Enforcement Readiness Checklist

- Identified my three most frequently violated boundaries
- Written the three-step enforcement sequence (restate, name the pattern, consequence) for each violated boundary
- Confirmed that my stated consequence is something I will actually follow through on
- Written a relationship-repair statement for my highest-stakes boundary that acknowledges their reaction without reversing my position
- Identified one person I have been avoiding asserting a boundary with and committed to a date to do it

Advanced Applications and Long-Term Practice

Apply assertiveness to feedback conversations and workplace dynamics, then build your personalised 30-day practice plan with daily logging and milestone targets.

Worksheet: SBI Feedback Preparation Sheet

Identify two pieces of feedback you need to give — one to a peer or direct report, one upward to a manager or client. For each, complete the SBI framework below, then write the full feedback statement in two to three sentences. Review it for any personality judgments (replace with behavior descriptions) and any vague terms (replace with specific observables).

Feedback recipient 1 and relationship:

Situation (specific event, date/time if possible):

Behavior (exact observable actions or words):

Impact (concrete effect on you, the team, or the outcome):

Full SBI statement (2-3 sentences):

Feedback recipient 2 and relationship:

Situation:

Behavior:

Impact:

Full SBI statement:

One piece of criticism I received recently that I want to respond to assertively:

My assertive response (acknowledge accurate part, clarify if needed, respond to the behavior point):

Exercise: 30-Day Practice Plan Design

Using your two lowest RAS domain scores as the primary focus, design your four-week graduated practice schedule below. For each week, name the specific situations you will use as practice opportunities. Be specific — write the real context (Tuesday team meeting, Friday call with client X, dinner conversation with partner) rather than generic categories.

- Week 1 low-stakes situations: list three specific daily contexts where you will practice preference-boundary assertiveness.

- Week 2 flexible boundary situations: name two recurring situations where you will practice DESC scripting and write the script for each.

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- Week 3 refusal practice: identify six upcoming requests (two per day for three days) where you will practice saying no using a specific no-script. Name the requester and the no-script you will use.
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- Week 4 high-stakes rehearsal: name your one highest-leverage assertiveness gap, write the full DESC script, and set the real-life delivery date.
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Checklist: 30-Day Completion Milestones

- Day 1: RAS baseline completed, domain scores recorded, two focus domains identified
- Day 7: Week 1 log complete — at least 15 low-stakes assertive acts logged
- Day 7: Sorry Audit reviewed — unnecessary apology replacements written
- Day 14: Two DESC scripts delivered in real situations — written debrief completed for each
- Day 21: Six refusal situations completed — no-script used recorded for each
- Day 28: High-stakes DESC script delivered in real life
- Day 30: RAS retaken — domain sub-scores compared to baseline, delta recorded
- Day 30: Next 30-day focus area identified based on remaining gaps
- Ongoing: Daily Assertiveness Log maintained — one entry per day minimum

Your Action Plan

1. Complete the Rathus Assertiveness Schedule today and record your domain sub-scores in your workbook
2. Identify your two lowest RAS domains — these are your Week 1 and Week 2 practice priorities
3. Complete the Communication Style Audit for four recent real situations
4. Write an ABC log for three situations where you failed to speak up and draft the reframed belief
5. Write DESC scripts for three real upcoming requests you need to make
6. Run the Sorry Audit for one full week — log every apology, classify it, and write the assertive replacement
7. Build your Personal Boundary Map with at least eight boundaries across work, personal, and other domains
8. Write no-scripts for three upcoming refusal situations and rehearse each out loud
9. Complete the SBI Feedback Preparation Sheet for two pieces of feedback you need to give
10. Launch your 30-day graduated practice plan on a set start date and log one entry in the Daily Assertiveness Log every day

