

When I Say No, I Feel Guilty – Manuel Smith – Outline

- **Foundation** – Reasons people are passive and get manipulated
 - Fight, flight (animal), or talk (human) – coping behaviors
 - People often use passive aggression or passive flight, with emotions of anger, fear, frustration, sadness, depression
 - When you're angry or afraid, blood supply goes away from problem solving brain and body prepares for action – interferes with verbal problem solving
 - Childhood development – as soon as you could understand your parents, you were trained to feel anxious, ignorant, and guilty – efficient way for parents to control behavior
 - Parents train you that you are good or bad based on behaviors – shifts responsibility off the parent's shoulders to an external authority who made up all the rules we should obey.
 - This is manipulative non-assertiveness
 - This effectively and efficiently keeps us out of real and imagined danger as children and makes the lives of the adults around us a lot easier.
 - Better parenting approach is kids should do it because that's what the parent wants – assertive
 - Our prime assertive right – no one can manipulate your emotions or behavior if you do not allow it to happen.
- **Assertive Rights** – a basic framework for healthy participation in human relationships. You have the right to:
 - **1 – Judge your own behavior, thoughts, and emotions, and to take the responsibility for their initiation and consequences upon yourself. You are the ultimate judge of all you are and all you do.**
 - The manipulator's basic tool: external structure. Need there be rules to cover every situation?
 - To those who are fearful of what others may do, and therefore feel that people must be controlled, your independence from their influence is quite disturbing.
 - If someone they relate to is not controlled by some external standard of behavior, they feel that their own goals, their very happiness, will be subject to the whim and mercy of the uncontrolled person. When we truly doubt that we are the ultimate judge of our own behavior, we are powerless to control our own destiny without all sorts of rules about how each of us "should" behave.
 - Manipulation of your behavior by other people is all variations of them saying you are not your ultimate judge
 - Structure/rules used to manipulate/judge your behavior, look at 3 types of relationships
 - Commercial/formal – most structured, rules in place before interaction
 - Authority – partially structured like boss/employee or parent/child – problems arise when the partial structure is used manipulatively outside initial bounds

- Equal interaction (friends, family, lovers) – no initial structure imposed beforehand. Mutually agreed upon compromises (structure) are practical ones. They don't have to be fair compromises, they just have to work.
 - A personally insecure wife may impose manipulative structure into the marriage in order to deal with her own fears of not being able to cope with the unknown. She may violate her husband's assertive right to be the judge of what he does by subtly, even condescendingly, treating him as if he were an irresponsible little boy.
 - She will allow him the freedom of working for a living, but in not trusting him, she will try to control everything else he does and make him feel guilty if he does not agree with her rigid methods of coping.
- Rather than a set of external rules, judging yourself is a system of "I like" or "I don't like" based on experience
- **2 – offer no reasons or excuses for justifying your behavior**
 - Childish belief underlying: you should explain your reasons for your behavior to other people since you are responsible to them for your actions. You should justify your actions to them. Their goal is to make you feel ignorant, and to get reasons from you that they can refute.
- **3 – judge if you are responsible for finding solutions to other people's problems**
 - Childish belief underlying: you have obligations to things greater than yourself, you should sacrifice your own values to keep these systems from falling apart. If problems occur with the system, they are your fault and not the responsibility of the system.
 - If you don't recognize your assertive right to choose to be responsible only for yourself, other people can and will manipulate you into doing what they want by presenting their own problems as if they were your problems.
- **4 – change your mind**
 - Childish belief underlying: you shouldn't change your mind after you've committed. You should justify your new choice or admit that you were wrong. If you were wrong your irresponsible and not capable of making decisions by yourself.
- **5 – make mistakes – and be responsible for them**
 - Childish belief underlying: You must not make errors, they are wrong and cause problems for others. If you make errors you should feel guilty and you are more likely to make more errors and problems. You can't make proper decisions so other people should control your behavior and decisions so you can make up for the wrong you have done to them.
 - Don't say you are sorry, just acknowledge the facts and that you made a mistake
- **6 – say "I don't know"**
 - Childish belief underlying: you should have answers about any possible consequences of you actions, otherwise you are ignorant, irresponsible, and need to be controlled.

- Manipulation based on you should know the answer are in phrases like what would happen if... what do you think... how would you feel if... what kind of person would do...
 - Nobody can know all and any consequences of behavior, if the manipulator needs to speculate, let them.
- **7 – be independent of the goodwill if others before coping with them**
 - Childish belief underlying: you must have the goodwill of people you relate to or they can prevent you from doing anything. You need the cooperation of other people to survive and it's very important to be liked
 - You'll never be loved if you can't risk being disliked
 - You do not need the goodwill of other people to deal with them effectively and assertively. People only remove their goodwill toward you if there is a payoff to them for doing so. If you respond as if your mate's withdrawal of goodwill affects your behavior, its withdrawal is a potent manipulative device for the other person and he or she will use it again
 - If you do not respond to the withdrawal of goodwill as a manipulative device, there is no payoff for it, except for venting anger (a transient state), and its frequency of use will diminish.
 - Your behavior does not have to be liked or admired by those you deal with, nor do you have to be anxious because you may not be liked
 - One cannot live in terror of hurting other people's feelings. Sometimes one offends.
- **8 – be illogical in making decisions**
 - Childish belief underlying: you must follow logic because it makes better judgments than any of us can make.
- **9 – say "I don't understand"**
 - Childish belief underlying: you must anticipate and be sensitive to the needs of others without them spelling out their needs. If you don't understand without constantly being told you are irresponsible and ignorant.
 - People who use this manipulation give you hurt or angry looks and silences, usually after a conflict where you did something the other person does not like. They make the judgment for you that
 - You are in the wrong
 - You should intuitively understand that they are displeased with your behavior
 - You should automatically understand what behavior displeases them and
 - You should change that behavior so they will no longer be hurt
 - Proper response is "I don't understand how x is related to y"
- **10 – say "I don't care"**
 - Childish belief underlying: you are a base, flawed human and you need to make up for this by striving to improve until you are perfect in all things. You must want to improve and if someone points out how you can improve, you are obligated to follow his direction.
 - If you set yourself up to be perfect in anything, you'll be frustrated and disappointed. You have the right to not be perfect according to anyone's definitions

- One man's perfection is another man's perversion
 - If you fall into the manipulative trap that you "should" want to improve your behavior (according to someone else's arbitrary choice of what constitutes improvement), you are then forced into giving reasons why you didn't do it perfectly to their definition.
 - I realize that I should want to keep things neat, but sometimes I just don't care.
 - Just tell me when I do something that's bothersome and I'll do the same for you. No beating around the bush! Just straightforward communication!
 - The only way to halt this manipulation is to ask yourself if you're really satisfied with your own performance, then make your own judgment on whether you wish to change.
- Assertive Social Conversation and Communication
 - Assertiveness correlated with being socially adept
 - Communication is the glue that keeps people together while a relationship grows into mutual support, counsel, productivity, excitation, and satisfaction
 - In order for any social relationship to develop, both of the partners must have at least a minimal level of assertiveness in dealings with each other
 - If a relationship fails, it's likely one of them did not assertively communicate wants, likes, dislikes, interests, things they do, things they want to do
 - The ability to talk about ourselves, who we are, how we live, and make other people comfortable in talking about themselves in the same way are assertive social skills
 - Communication block could be due to a history of frustration from past failures that inhibit you from talking and listening effectively
- Assertive Skills and Behaviors – skills are what enforce assertive rights
 - **Broken Record** (verbal persistence) – keep saying what you want over and over again in a calm repetitive voice, without getting angry, irritated, or loud. (be very clear about what you want before)
 - Technique/explanation
 - Don't get bogged down by "why" or logic, or requests for reasons
 - You must not give reasons or excuses or explanations as to why
 - Ignore guilt-inducing statements
 - Ignore all side issues brought up
 - Keep going until you get what you want, or a compromise
 - When other minor/side goals arise, use broken record to pursue those too
 - You didn't sign a contract that you will answer any question asked of you. You don't answer questions, you broken record.
 - Don't use with the police, judge, or as a violent crime victim
 - Examples
 - I want my meat – repeated 6 times
 - Call down the manager – repeated 4 times
 - **Workable Compromise** – keeping your self-respect and your boundaries when the other person is assertive as well
 - Technique/explanation

- Keep your self-respect, which will make you feel good, which increases your ability to cope
- The other person being assertive back to you means the issue getting settled on the real issues of the dispute, not on who is the best manipulator
- Whenever your self-respect is not in question, offer a workable compromise to the other person. You could:
 - Wait a reasonable time for a repair/replacement
 - Agree to do what the other person wants next time
 - Flip a coin to decide who does what and when
- If the end goal involves a matter of self-worth, there can be no compromise
- Examples
- **Free Information** – any information that has not been specifically asked for related to interests, desires, prejudices, what makes us happy, what worries us, our style of living (anything more than yes or no). Essentially these are clues as to what's important to someone
 - Technique – goes along with self disclosure
 - Listen to free information other people give you. Follow up on that free information. Gives you a topic to talk about and shows your interest in things important to them
 - Examples
 - Do you live near here? No – no free information
 - Do you live near here? No, I live in Santa Monica near the beach – free information is Santa Monica and the beach.
 - Good follow up is asking what she thinks or it or why she decided to live there (much better than asking about the place)
- **Self-Disclosure** – Assertively disclosing information about yourself – how you think, feel, and react to the other person's free information
 - Technique
 - Share information about yourself, particularly responding to free information
 - Talk about subjects that interest others or about ourselves in relation to the free information subjects shared – when it's negative things, it's negative assertion
 - Body language should be self-assured, adept at handling conflict, and confident
 - Assertive impact will be ineffective if you show observable anxiety cues (people saying one thing while their body says another)
 - Others (especially significant others) can sense your anxiety even if they can't put a finger on it
 - Lack of eye contact is most obvious. We've learned to look away from other person causing us anxiety.
 - Most people find it hard to look someone in the eye when answering a question or making a statement – look at ears if eyes make you too nervous.

- Can also be used in response to a manipulative leading question like: what kind of a person doesn't care for little children, crippled children?
 - Self-disclosure answer is: I don't know.
- Can also be an inquiry that's not a negative inquiry, just trying to understand
- Examples
 - I don't know much about Santa Monica (with follow up) how do you like living there?
 - I don't understand
 - I don't know
 - I'm not sure how I'll feel when x
 - I'm not interested in x [whatever diversion is suggested] I just want y [broken record]
 - I don't understand, what's the problem with x?
 - I still don't understand, what's impossible about x?
- Assertive Skills for Dealing with Criticism (the great manipulator) – cuts out reacting, panicking, and feeling anxiety from defending what we want to do instead of doing it. Generally, a person being criticized becomes defensive and denies the criticism. The criticism comes from not behaving according to the criticizer's nonassertive, arbitrary (right vs wrong), manipulative structure. Accepting that criticism means accepting whatever she thinks is wrong is actually wrong and you should change whatever she criticizes. This goes back to assertive rights of making mistakes and owning their consequences, and saying I don't understand. These skills also help you break habit of being defensive and angry when someone tells us something that we don't like.
 - **Fogging** (persistent, offers no resistance, does not fight back, no hard striking surfaces, unaffected) – agreeing within bounds and still do what you want – this is what you do instead of getting defensive and reacting to nonassertive criticism
 - Technique
 - Distinguish between 2 separate parts of nonassertive criticism
 - Actual truths (any truth) people tell you about your behavior (or mistakes/errors)
 - Agree with these actual truths
 - The arbitrary right and wrong tacked on to your behavior (or mistakes/errors)
 - Agree with the odds (any possible truth)
 - Agree in principle (general truths)
 - Agree that an error was stupid
 - Then add a comment about possible and general truths from the arbitrary right/wrong
 - Do not deny any criticism, do not get defensive, do not counterattack with your own criticism. Respond only to what the critic says, not what's implied. There's always a grain of truth in any criticism.
 - When the criticism is about something you don't have absolute evidence for, listen to what they tell you and give them the benefit of the doubt.

After all, they may be right, but I still have to make my own judgment and do what I decide

- Be comfortable when you are told a truth about your behavior in a critical fashion and the person doesn't spell out the right/wrong but implies that your behavior is wrong
 - By not being anxious about responding to implications or suggestions of wrongdoing, you need only deal with the actual truths about your behavior
- Be comfortable when a truth about your behavior is openly interpreted as wrongdoing by the other person's structure of right/wrong
 - Instead of accepting their structure of right/wrong, you can inquire into the other person's structure and ask what's wrong about your behavior (negative inquiry)
- Be comfortable about your errors. Your errors are stupid, but have nothing to do with right or wrong. (response is that's true, that was dumb of me to do x)
- Examples
 - W: You fooled around on the car all weekend. H: That's true, I do work on the car a lot. [foggng] W: Well, you shouldn't work on it all weekend. H: I don't understand, what is it about me working on the car a lot that's wrong? [I don't understand] W: Well, I want us to visit friends instead of staying home all weekend [finally got to her real issue].
 - Agreeing with the truth
 - That's true, I was doing x
 - That's right,
 - You're right,
 - (Additional comment about topic of the criticism)
 - I could improve x
 - I don't feel any x
 - I could feel more x
 - I could do x
 - I could be x
 - I do look x
 - I shouldn't be x
 - I am probably doing x
 - That may have been x
 - I may never be x
 - It could be x
 - I've made a x
 - I've done x
 - Sometimes I x
 - That's why I x
 - I used to x, now I y
 - I shouldn't x

- I should have x
- I did, didn't I
- It does, doesn't it
- There should be x
- That's not one of my strong suits
- I do have a lot of faults
- There are a lot of things I could improve
- I'm not perfect in anything
- Agreeing with the odds (any possible truth). Use when there's an assertion like "I'm sure you would..." You can be sincere in your answer because how sincere is a probability?
 - You could be right
 - Maybe you're right
 - That's probably true
 - I agree, if I didn't x then y
 - I guess you're right
 - You may be right
 - That seems like x
 - I can see why you think that
 - I can see that you do think that
 - I can understand why you would think that
 - I'm sure you feel that way
 - I'm sure x feels that way
 - I'm sure x thought y
 - I'm sure I will be x
 - I'm sure x is true
 - I'm not surprised you feel that way
 - Of course it is
 - Something like that would make me mad if I were in your shoes
 - I'm sure this upsets you
 - That's a point. You may just be right there.
 - Perhaps x is true/correct/right
 - Maybe
 - That's possible
- Agreeing in principal (the general truth in logical statements)
 - You're right, what you say makes sense, so when I feel the need, I'll do x (also add statements of own intention)
 - I wouldn't worry about it if I were you
 - I'm not worried about it
 - I expect I'll keep doing x
- **Negative Assertion** – assertively accept and own (self disclosure) your errors and negative points
 - Technique

- Modify your trained (childish) belief that guilt is automatically associated with making a mistake. Otherwise people will use your guilt to:
 - Have you seek forgiveness and make up for error
 - Or you'll deny the mistake with defensiveness and counter criticism
- We seldom respect our own feelings of worry and uncertainty. It's important to share true feelings we assume we should hide (dislikes, worry, ignorance, fear, etc)
 - This is not vomiting confessions of lack of self worth
- Voluntary disclosure of negative factors about yourself and your own ready acceptance of them is the most potent asserting skill in preventing manipulation
- People who can't cope assertively with criticism also have a hard time accepting compliments. Respond to those the same way: agree with the truth. For example, thank you, I think it looks nice on me too,
- Examples
 - Oh my, I did do x. What a very stupid/dumb/inefficient/wasteful/unproductive thing to do. I must be brain damaged.
 - You're right, I wasn't too smart in the way I handled that, was I?
 - I obviously messed that up, that was dumb of me.
 - I really goofed this time.
 - I really messed up, I always feel frustrated when something like that happens to me.
 - You're right, isn't that dumb?
 - It sure seems like that, doesn't it?
 - I've noticed that myself, I do x, don't I?
 - That was a dumb thing for me to do. I don't like x myself.
 - I was worried about that. X just doesn't suit me at all.
 - If other people react to your negative assertion by trying to convince you that you shouldn't or have no right to feel that way, the correct responses is perhaps so, but that's still the way I feel (fogging and broken record)
- **Negative Inquiry** – prompting criticism – eliminates right and wrong statements used to control your behavior. Prompts people to be more assertive and less manipulative toward you. Most useful with people close to you to break cycles of manipulation by leading them to be more assertive. Also desensitizes you to criticism from people you care about so you can listen to what they tell you.
 - Technique
 - Do not have any trace of sarcasm. That will cause negative inquiry to backfire.
 - Actively prompt further criticism about yourself, or prompt for more information about statements of "wrongdoing" in an unemotional, low-key manner. You're basically asking for more information about yourself or your behavior that may be negative. This also shows interest in the criticizer's point of view.

- Negative inquiry is non-critical of your spouse, prompts further critical statements, and examine her own right/wrong structure
- Contrast Sample Negative Inquiry vs Defensiveness
 - Negative inquiry: I don't understand, what is it about my fishing that is bad?
 - Explores her right/wrong structure, asks for more information and understanding
 - She is more likely for her to assert herself about the subject that really bothers her the most. The critical issue is then out in the open and can be dealt with assertively via compromise
 - Defensive response: What makes you think going fishing is bad?
 - Directs attention from you toward your wife and is sarcastic and belittling
 - Her response will be logical, good reasons to justify her criticism
- You're basically saying let's look at what I am doing that may be wrong or you don't like. You're also behaving as if criticism is not something to get upset over.
- Optimal end result is your wife re-examining and discarding her right/wrong structure and instead asserting her own wishes.
- Worst case scenario is a standoff. You can try to break that with follow up negative inquiry: I really don't understand, there must be some other reasons for me to not do x besides y and z. What else is wrong or what don't you like about me doing x?
- Examples
 - I don't understand, what is it about x that is bad/wrong/you don't like?
 - I don't understand, what did I do that was x?
 - Is it x or y that you don't like?
 - What is it about x that is bad/you don't like?
 - What is it I'm doing that makes me x?
 - What am I doing specifically that's x?
 - How did I screw up on x?
 - Anything else I'm doing that's x and I could improve?
 - Is that all you can think of now that makes me x?
 - Ok, let me see, it sounds like I'm doing x, right?
 - Do you think it's x?
 - How about y, or z, is that what you don't like about x?
 - Is there anything else about me that doesn't come off right?
 - Let me understand this, I do x?
 - You mean I just x?
 - Well, let me get this straight now, you're saying that I x?
 - It sounds like you're saying I'm x, is that right?
 - Is there anything else I'm doing besides x?

- Are you sure there isn't something about x you don't like?
 - What is it about what I'm doing that's different?
 - Will you tell me more about it?
 - Ok, maybe next time, we'll talk more about it
- Additional thoughts on dealing with difficult question based on WISNIFG – Advanced Skills
 - Questions designed to make you defensive – respond with self-disclosure and fogging or negative assertion.
 - Q: What is wrong with you that you would x? A: I don't know [self-disclosure], there could be something wrong with me [fogging], but you're right, doing x was not very sensitive of me [negative assertion].
 - Q: are you telling me I'm a liar? A: I believe you really feel that way [fogging] but I don't believe it [self disclosure]
 - Questions that imply something negative about you – respond with self-disclosure (and possibly fogging). Don't take the bait of applying the implication to yourself
 - Q: What kind of a person doesn't care for little children, crippled children? A: I don't know.
- TL;DR Summary of Assertive Rights – You have the right to:
 - 1 – Be the ultimate judge your own behavior, thoughts, and emotions, and take the responsibility for their initiation and consequences upon yourself
 - 2 – offer no reasons or excuses for justifying your behavior
 - 3 – judge if you are responsible for finding solutions to other people's problems
 - 4 – change your mind
 - 5 – make mistakes – and be responsible for them
 - 6 – say "I don't know"
 - 7 – be independent of the goodwill of others before coping with them
 - 8 – be illogical in making decisions
 - 9 – say "I don't understand"
 - 10 – say "I don't care"
- TL;DR Summary of Assertive Skills
 - **Broken Record** (verbal persistence) – keep saying what you want over and over again in a calm repetitive voice, without getting angry, irritated, or loud
 - "I want x" repeated as many times as needed
 - **Workable Compromise** – Whenever your self-respect is not in question, offer a workable compromise to the other person. Do not compromise a matter of self-worth
 - **Self-Disclosure** – Assertively disclosing information about yourself – how you think and feel. Make sure body language is congruent, eye contact.
 - Can also be a neutral inquiry, just trying to understand
 - **Fogging** – Agree with the truths in non-assertive criticism. Agree with actual truths about you and your behavior and admit mistakes or errors. For arbitrary right/wrong judgments tacked on to criticism, agree with the odds or principle (there's always a grain of truth). Don't respond to anything implied.
 - Agree with actual truth: That's true, that's right... I could, should x

- Agree with the odds/principal – for something that’s possible: you could be right, maybe you’re right, that’s probably true, I guess you’re right, you may be right, I understand why you think that, I see why you think that
- **Negative Assertion** – Assertively accept and own (via self-disclosure) your errors and negative points. Share true feelings we assume we should hide: dislikes, worry, ignorance, desires, and fears
 - I did do x, what a very stupid/dumb/inefficient/wasteful/unproductive thing to do, I didn’t handle that well, I messed that up, I goofed, that was a dumb thing I did
- **Negative Inquiry** – prompting criticism – inquire into structure of right/wrong structure in criticism, and ask for more information wrong/bad about your behavior. The critical issue can then be out in the open to find workable compromise
 - I don’t understand, what is it about x that is bad/wrong/you don’t like?
 - What am I doing specifically that’s x?
 - What else is wrong or what don’t you like about me doing x?