

**Indian Institute of Technology Kanpur**

**National Programme on Technology Enhanced Learning (NPTEL)**

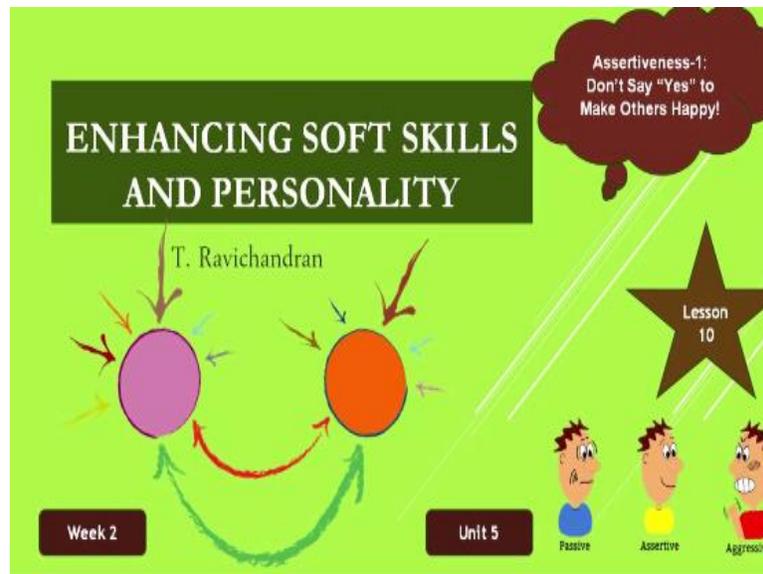
**Course Title  
Enhancing Soft Skills And Personality**

**Lecture - 10  
Assertiveness-1: Don't Say "Yes" to Make Others Happy!**

**by...  
Prof. T. Ravichandran  
Dept. of Humanities and Social Sciences**

Hello hi welcome back to my coats on enhancing soft skills and personality this is the last lecture for the second week this is unique number five and lesson number ten totally in this lesson.

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I am going to introduce a new concept and which is a very important concept as far as developing your personality and enhancing your soft skills are concerned it is on assertiveness subtitled don't say yes to make others happy and before we begin as I do always I will try to give a brief highlight of what we did in the last lesson.

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**Highlights OF THE LAST LESSON**

- Dealt with various aspects of overcoming procrastination.
- 1. Break it into pieces (eat the elephant bite by bite)
- 2. Do the difficult first (eat that frog/veggie)
- 3. Use *Kaizen* principle
- 4. Create a positive environment to work
- 5. Set goals that you want
- 6. Find out why you want that goal
- 7. Declare your goal
- 8. Maintain records of accomplished goals
- 9. Turn difficult tasks into games
- 10. Treat yourself
- 11. Procrastinate positively
- 12. Above all, just do it!
- 13. And if you start something, finish it! (Remember: Zeigarnik Effect!)

Dr. T. Prabhakaran, Professor, H20 Department, IIT Kharpur, India

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In the last lesson I dealt with various aspects of overcoming procrastination and discussed about 13 aspects to begin with I asked you the question if you have to do some over whelming task that is if you have to eat the elephant what would you do you have to break it into pieces that is you have to eat the elephant bite by bite you have to break any overwhelming task into manageable small units and then planet within the feasibility time and start doing the first activity.

In terms of working it on a small piece small task and then the second one do the difficult task first once you have broken that into pieces and then identify various tasks identify the most difficult one and then start doing that first this is what is called by briantracy has eat that frog and then there are other writers who call let us eat that veggie I also said that you should use Kaizen principal in case you are feeling so lazy and so stuck not even to start so case in principle is to do something at the same time at least for a minute each day consistently.

And this consistency will slowly make you develop interest into the subject and may to work wonders within let us say two weeks of time you will be gaining that flow now the next aspect of overcoming procrastination is to create a positive environment to work your work will progress

only if you are able to create a positive environment if the table is too untidy if the surrounding environment is completely unclean you will not be able to focus.

So I suggested that you try to keep the most important activity on your table keep the table clean do it at least twice in a day so that you are able to focus and finish that most important task first eat that frog and then go to the next one now apart from all these things you will not be able to overcome procrastination if you do not set goals that you really want so you need to ask whether you really want the goals whether you really want to achieve those goals and it is not if you can delegate that to someone do that.

If you can avoid doing that do that but once you know that it is the goal that you want only then even Kaizen principally will work you will develop interest in that code the next step of identifying whether you really want the goals or not is to find out what you want that good so like for instance somebody wants to reduce her weight just because she wants to wear a good dress so you identify why you want this and for what purpose because once you know why you want the goal you will try to achieve it anyhow and then the next step is to declare your goal.

So do not keep the goal with yourself and try to declare this to as many friends as many of your peer group as possibly by declaring what happens there is a kind of pressure that you put around you and there is a kind of moral responsibility that you live up to the expectation of others that you have created on your own so try to declare your goal and maintain records of accomplish two goals.

So whenever you achieve small things keep a log book maintain a record so in case of reducing weight if you reduce from 160 or 260 give a picture of you even you frame it in a golden frame and then keep something for your memory and that will keep you motivating to take difficult task now in case you think that the task is too difficult try to turn difficult tasks into games try to use play mode try to make it fun so try to introduce looking at it in a serious manner.

So make the task dividable and then involve a group and then use certain rules that you will use it in games and then make it look like a game the next important thing is free to yourself it is

very important that once you accomplish your task you should treat us which you should reward yourself so again in case of reducing weight if you have achieved a target and so for if you are being depriving yourself of eating ice creams do that so once you know that you have achieved a very impossible task it is time to treat yourself so that will again try to motivate you to achieve tougher task further apart from all these things.

I also added a very interesting aspect of procrastination I said to question it positively so what is this positive procrastination negative procrastination will mean you not only delay but also deny positive procrastination will mean you are delaying but not denying doing the work but you are doing some other work and then you are making a trade of now there were six other tiny tasks which is which appeared to be quite difficult.

And now this one big frog of a task that is looking so ugly and so unpleasant now you just trade off you say that okay let me finish those six small jobs and then come back to you so you are you're delaying you are procrastinating it a good purpose in your mind that you will do something else to break the monotony to gain some slow and then come back with some renewed energy to do this task so procrastinate positively where you do not deny the dark but then you believe for a time being said that you are going to come back with renewed energy.

And then you will be able to do it much better and more creatively the last two points that I wanted to discuss was above all just do it I am trying to make you do a task by giving lot of suggestions but the most important one is the will to do it just do it no matter what and then the last Golden Rule I was suggesting to you is that if you start something finish it and in that context I suggested that you should remember the garnet effect which always implies that whenever we have some unfinished tasks our mind is wired rewired to go back to that unfinished task and unless you finish that task completely mind will keep on leaking into your memory.

It will keep on nagging you it will keep on telling you oh that is left unfinished so on the negative side it is this gigantic effect that if making you blue to TV serials and make you watch it again and again because of that feeling what happens next but on a positive note you can use this to beat procrastination if you remember that your mind is not going to leave you it is going to

make you come back and then it is going to remind you and then it is not going to give you complete each piece so once you realize that you will not skip because for your own comfort you will go back complete the work in fact as I said before if you start something finish it so don't leave anything unfinished with these tips with these suggestions I hope that you are able to overcome procrastination now having overcome procrastination you have also learned how to manage time and at the beginning we started with having the growth mindset.

Now the next important aspect of developing enhancing your personality as well as soft skills is related to being assertive now in this lesson I am just going to introduce the concept of assertiveness without talking much about assertiveness and at the end of this lesson I will just leave with the definition and one small exercise for assertiveness but I just want you to think about it and then let us start by asking this simple question have you ever said yes when you really wanted to say no look at the situation you said yes to your vanilla flavored ice cream.

When you actually wanted a mango flavor you said yes to an ice cream when you actually wanted a hot cup of coffee you said yes to the man or the woman of others choice when you actually wanted to marry someone yell the life partners choice itself was not of your own choice somebody said that he must be a good choice or she looks good for you and you tested that but you did make the choice.

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**HAVE YOU EVER SAID "YES" WHEN YOU REALLY WANTED TO SAY "NO"?**

- ✓ Said "Yes" to an engineering course when you really wanted to pursue a career in Fine Arts?
- ✓ Said "Yes" to a job because all others think it's good for you!
- ✓ Said "Yes" to signing a petition because your colleagues wanted you to do so?
- ✓ Said "Yes" to a protest because all your friends are participating in it?

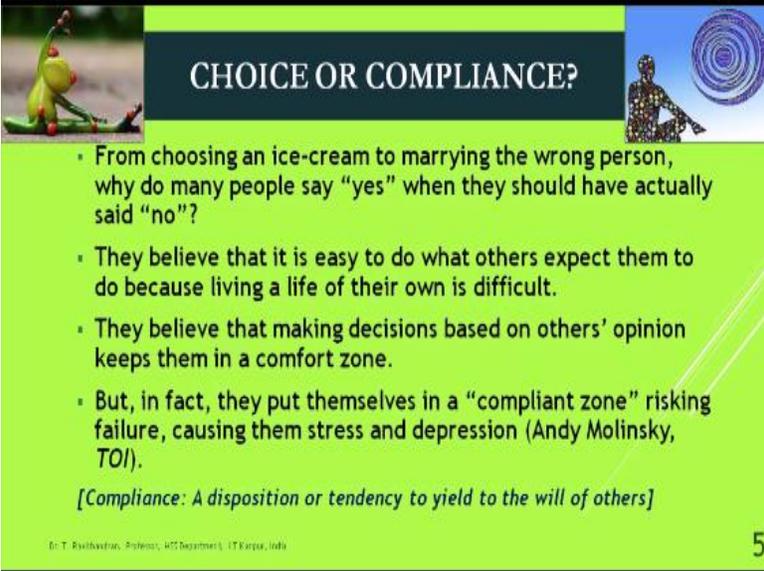
Dr. T. Ravishanker, Professor, IIT Department, IIT Kanpur, India

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You said yes to an engineering course when you really wanted to post your career in finance so it is not necessarily in engineering course any course not of your choice but somebody chose that for you, you said yes to your job because all others think it is good for you even the job you say yes because everybody around you thought that it is a good job for you, you said yes to signing a petition because your colleagues wanted you to do so also in your inner heart you thought that is not the right thing to do but everybody wrote on the petition signed and then they brought it to you help it you just sign it you said yes and find you said yes to your protest because all your friends are participating in it.

You did not even think whether the protest is going for a good cause or a bad cause or whether it is really related to your innermost goals aspirations or not just because everybody did it you wanted to jump into it now these are occasions where you have said yes where you will be saying yes when you really wanted to say no there could be many other occasions I just highlighted some of the most important ones especially the South Asian the Indians tend to say yes under pressure from society and people around.

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**CHOICE OR COMPLIANCE?**

- From choosing an ice-cream to marrying the wrong person, why do many people say “yes” when they should have actually said “no”?
- They believe that it is easy to do what others expect them to do because living a life of their own is difficult.
- They believe that making decisions based on others’ opinion keeps them in a comfort zone.
- But, in fact, they put themselves in a “compliant zone” risking failure, causing them stress and depression (Andy Molinsky, TOI).

*[Compliance: A disposition or tendency to yield to the will of others]*

Dr. T. RaviSankar, Professor, IIS Deemed to be Univ., IT Karpur, India

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Now if this a real choice are actually amounting to compliance no compliance is a disposition or tendency ill to the will of others are we really choosing something in saying yes or are we actually leading to the will of other snow if you observe this carefully from choosing an ice cream to marrying the wrong person one too many people say yes when they should have actually said know whether it is simple choice of an ice cream or a lifelong choice of marrying a person why do they just say yes when they should have said no mostly because they believe that it is easy to do what others expect us to do.

Because living a life of our own is difficult so it is easy to follow a set pattern it is easy to maintain the status quo it is easy to do what people have been doing for ages than do something that is different and looking originally so that may be uncomfortable and that is the belief and these people believe that making decisions based on others opinion keeps them in a comfort zone so they think that only when you follow the decisions of others you will be able to live in a comfort zone but in fact they put themselves in a compliance zone risking failure causing them stress and depression.

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**HOW DO WE FALL INTO THE COMPLIANCE TRAP?**

Andy Molinsky: "You've learned to behave in ways that you were expected to behave, perhaps by your parents, or your extended family, or your culture. Over time, through repetition, and by dutifully fulfilling others' expectations, you internalise these behaviours as your own, even if they don't actually reflect who you are" (TOI).



*We fall into the Compliance Trap thinking that "the known devil is better than an unknown angel."*

*But, happiness in life depends on your ability to risk meeting that "unknown angel"!*



Dr. T. R. Indrasari, Ph.D., MEd., MSc., ITK, Korpri, Indonesia

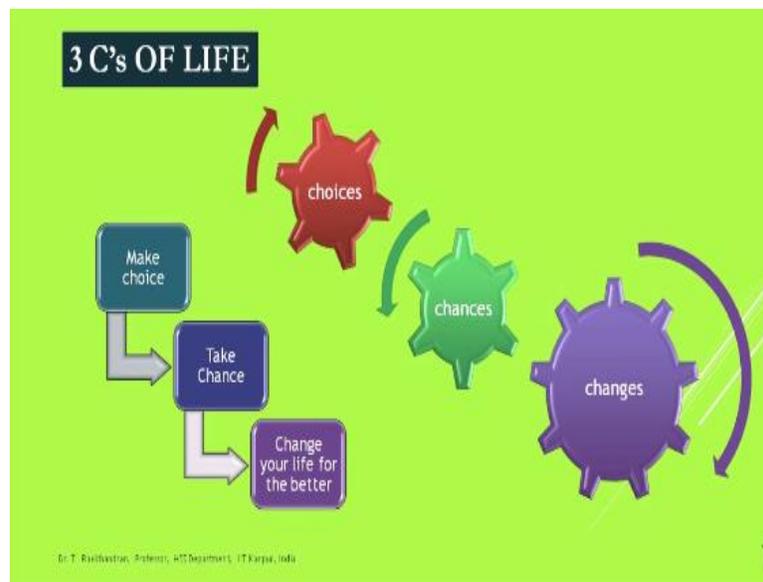
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There is an article on Times of India where there is a very good interesting view by Andy Molinsky who analyzes as how do people fall into this compliance trap what do we get into this trap of saying yes, yes, yes also we should have said no, no, no so to go from Andy Molinsky you have learned to behave in ways that you are expected to behave so this is how you fall into the compliance trap you have learned to behaving this that you are expected to behave perhaps by your parents or your extended family or your culture overtime through reputation and by dutifully fulfilling others expectations.

You internalize these behaviors as your own even if they do not actually reflect who you are so the problem here is your strongest innermost needs and desires are not actually met that it is not your interest but you are actually complying to the expectations of others and whatever choices you make do not reflect the real you and we often fall into this compliance trap thinking that the known devil is better than an unknown angel meaning something that is bad if you have known that for 10 years 20 years.

So thinking that this man takes liquor but otherwise he is good so Marion king is okay because he is earning quite a good amount of money so thinking that he has only this limitation then getting married to somebody who is totally unknown so the known devil is better than an unknown angels the known choice with its own limitations it is better than a choice that you will make with some unforeseen risk what people often think and by that kind of thinking they actually fall into this compliance trap but happiness in life depends on your ability to risk meeting that unknown angel.

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The more you are able to risk mating this unknown angel that is the unforeseen benefit you are not able to see that at hand now but then once you take the risk so you certainly get some benefits so if you are able to identify that work on it take the risk so then only will be able to have happiness Prague in your life now life itself comprises three C's the first c is amounting to micro of choices and based on the choices you actually take chances and depending on the chances that you take mostly chances in the form of opportunities that you utilize your ability to take risk even to the extent of taking unknown unforeseen activities which come to you in the form of opportunities.

So these are the ones that will contribute to changes and once you make choice take chance and then you will be able to change your life for the better if you skip making choice that is the first aspect of life and if you give that completely to somebody else so you are not going to the second one you are not taking the chance you are not going to experience and you are not even taking any further about changing your life for the better now having said this I would like to look at the next aspect how to make your own choice.

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**HOW TO MAKE YOUR OWN CHOICE?**

**First, don't say YES, when you want to say NO!**

*You say YES because—*

- You don't want to hurt others.*
- You want to make others happy.*
- You want to show that you care for others more than yourself.*
- You want others to feel pleased in your company.*
- You want to show others that you are obedient & respectful.*

Dr. T. Prashastha, Professor, HCT Deshmesh, IT Karpur, India

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So I said that first make choice and then take chance and then try to change your life but how to make your own choice the first and the foremost lesson Maxine is that don't see yes when you want to say no in fact there is a very brilliant book written on this title I have given a reference to that at the end it is about assertiveness and it differentiates assertiveness from aggressiveness do not see yes when you want to say no and it, is a must read book now why do you say yes you see yes because you do not want to hurt others hurting others will make you feel bad.

So you do not want to hurt others you want to make others happy you want to show that you care for others more than yourself especially people who are delivered you just want to show them that your happiness is much more important than mine so you want to show that you care for

others more than yourself you say yes because you want others to feel pleased in your company it is that appeasement policy that you want all others around you to be happy so you say yes, yes, yes to whatever they want you to do and in terms of elders in terms of boss in terms of higher authority you want to show others that you are obedient and respectful you.

You do not want to appear to be disobedient disrespectful to elders or senior people so you want to show that you are actually a very nice person a very good person so in order to show that you keep on saying yes but do not say that when you want to say no and that is the first step in making a choice of your own.

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**CHOOSE GROWTH**

*In any given moment, we have two options:  
to step forward into growth,  
or to step back into safety.  
Growth must be chosen again and again;  
fear must be overcome again and again.*

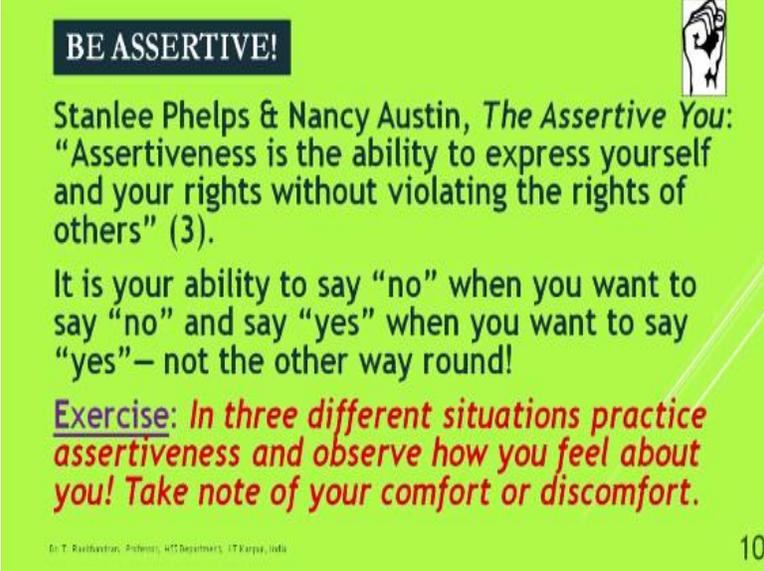
*~Abraham Maslow*

Dr. T. Ravi Chandran, Professor, IIC Department, IIT Kharagpur, India

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Now in any given moment choose growth there is a famous quote from Abraham Maslow to whose self-actualization theory we had discussed in the previous course you can take a quick look at that if you wish but then at this point a very famous psychologist and then he says in any given moment we have two options to step forward into growth or to step back into safety you step forward into growth or you step back into safety it's amounting to saying yes and taking risks are saying no and then going back to safety growth must be chosen again and again fear must be overcome again and again.

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**BE ASSERTIVE!**

Stanley Phelps & Nancy Austin, *The Assertive You*:  
"Assertiveness is the ability to express yourself  
and your rights without violating the rights of  
others" (3).

It is your ability to say "no" when you want to  
say "no" and say "yes" when you want to say  
"yes"— not the other way round!

**Exercise:** *In three different situations practice  
assertiveness and observe how you feel about  
you! Take note of your comfort or discomfort.*

Dr. T. Radhakrishnan, Professor, IIT Department, IIT Kharagpur, India

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So his conclusion is the choose growth so going back to safety is fear but then try to overcome that again and again all it amounts to is telling you that you should be assertive there's another interesting book that I want you to read completely that is written by Stanley Phelps and Nancy Austin the assertive you what is assertiveness according to these authors to code from them assertiveness is the ability to express yourself under your rights without violating the rights of others assertiveness is the ability.

To express yourself and you are right without violating the rights of others it is creating a win-win situation it is not like I lose using or I lose I respect my right as well as I will not violate your right and allow me to respect my right it is my right to say yes and I want to say yes and no when I want to say no in other words assertiveness is your ability to say no when you want to say no and say yes when you want to say yes it is not the other way around that is you say no when you actually want to say yes and you say yes when actually you want to say no.

Now in this context I would like to conclude by giving you one small exercise it is just fun the practical tasks you can do it what I want to tell you and what I want you to do this place in three different situations practice assertiveness and observe how you feel about your service take note

of your comfort or discomfort so what do I mean by this three different situations maybe one situation when you go and then ask for a favor from someone it may be your classmate or somebody in another situation that you are dealing with some higher authority in another situation you are dealing with somebody a government employee who need not respond to you at all so any three different situations where normally you are compelled to say yes try to say no and in certain cases.

You are compelled to say no for example a simple thing like there is a very aggressive friend of you who always says that let us all take coffee but you want to take P or you want to eat the chocolate or something so when everybody says if you have the courage to say no, no I think I should be or taking the chocolate I don't want to have tea or coffee so say no say yes in situations three different situations where normally you are avoiding doing that and when you do that take note whether you are feeling comfortable and you see the behavior of others.

And whether they are comfortable with you or they are feeling some sense of discomfort or they feeling annoyed or they are trying to threaten you or are they accepting you now see how people would react and then you at first try to show assertiveness now this is just the beginning and I want to continue telling you more about assertiveness and then learning how to actually see know how to be the real assertive person and why it is important to be an assertive one.

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**THE ROAD NOT TAKEN**

*Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—  
I took the one less traveled by,  
And that has made all the difference.*



*~Robert Frost*

Dr. T. Ravichandran, Professor, HSS Department, JTK College, India

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Let me conclude this with another interesting thoughts from the most famous American poet Robert Frost and one of his most famous poems the road not taken concludes with these three lines it goes like this two roads diverged in a wood and I took the one less traveled by and that has made all the difference so to Road actually implies two choices diverged in a wood so in a word is like a very unknown part a new journey where the destination is not very clear and you have to make either this or that and everybody was choosing.

The one that is traveled by so many people the beaten track the persona of the boy in case he took the one less traveled by although it was initially not clear but he says and that has made all the difference implying that it has completely transformed him it has completely brought lot of positive growth in his life implying that may be the ones who took the beaten track may not be as happy as he is at the end or may be most of them are regretting because they took the beaten track unlinking so keep this thought in your mind and try to travel the less traveled road as far as possible.

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**MUST READ BOOKS . . .**

Herbert Fensterheim & Jean L. Baer. *Don't Say Yes when You Want to Say No*. London: Dell, 1975

Stanley Phelps & Nancy Austin. *The Assertive You*. Mumbai: Jaico Publishing House. *Reader's Digest* commissioned special edition.

"Why You Should Not Live By Others' Rules." <https://www.pressreader.com/india/the-times-of-india-new-delhi-edition/20170129/282604557568159>.

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Because that will make all the difference must read books one is don't say yes when you want to say no the other one is the assertive you I also give the link to the article why you should not live by others rules so try to take a quick look at do order and then try to get this books and then form a small library of your will not read it not at the time of the course itself but even whenever you get crying even after the course is over also you can read them because these are books that will help you change your life not only now but forever wish you all success and I take leave of you now thank you for watching this video.

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