

Chapter 7: *S*

How to make your goal *Stated*

Life is tough! Would you agree? If you don't, you either have it too easy or you're in denial. More of the time, we put up with struggle rather than gain. Pain more than pleasure. Failure more than success. But life was never meant to be easy. I believe the reason for that is that every person on the planet has massive potential. And it's our life's purpose to realise that potential and share it with the world. Potential is within all of us, and it only reveals itself through taking action.

There are many people today, and I'm sure you know some of them, who love to talk; they talk about what they will do, or what they can do . . . but never actually get around to doing it. True potential is displayed when we are challenged and pushed to succeed in the face of obstacles and adversity. And the character and calibre of that potential is defined when we take action by following through on what we say we will do. Anything amazing that's been achieved in life didn't come around with a lack of effort. In many cases, the greatest discoveries and achievements in history took months, years or even decades to manifest. Life is all trial and error.

You need to realise your potential for yourself. No one can tell you what your true potential is. There are certainly people in the world who can help you discover your potential, coax it out and inspire you to act on that potential. But only we truly know deep within ourselves where our potential lies and what we're truly capable of.

If I were to have a central message for you in this part of The SMARTEST Method it would be to live with *Integrity and Assertiveness*. Easier said than done, but it can be done and this approach to your goal, and life in general, is essential in how you produce your own results in the short term and over the long term.

How I learnt to be Assertive

When I was starting out in my Youth Work career, I was a quiet, modest and somewhat insecure young guy. I was always nice to people, polite and tried to avoid confrontation where I could. Not really the preferred traits to be an effective Youth Worker, which I would learn as I went along. But early in my career, I had an experience at work one day which was a smack in the face to me that I had very little assertiveness and integrity.

At the time I was working in an office which was actually an old house. My fellow staff and I were allowed to park our cars in the front garden. One afternoon, I was alone at the office and heard a knock on the door. Expecting it to be one of our young clients, I willingly went and answered it. Upon opening the door, a woman and man stood there.

“Who are you?” she demanded of me. I struggled through my words for a moment, and then quietly responded;

“Umm, I’m Brian. Can I help you?”

She went on to explain how she was from the real estate agency that managed this property and introduced the man behind her as the landlord. He stood in silence however, allowing her to do all the talking.

“Why are your cars parked on the lawn here? Don’t you know that’s not allowed?”

“Oh, sorry, I—”

“You can’t park there at all. You need to move them now!” she said, cutting me off.

“Well, I was told we could park there” I said unconvincingly

“As a matter of fact you can’t. It’s damaging the property. The landlord is furious” she said, and as I glanced at him he nodded slightly in agreement, but still said nothing.

“Oh, okay I guess I could move it now. I’m the only one here right now, so I can’t move the other cars”

“Not good enough . . .” she said, and the conversation went on like this, where essentially this woman got stuck into me. I took it all, standing there looking pale and complacent, not trying to argue my case or defend my right to park there. I just kept saying “*sorry, sorry*” and complied with her requests. Confident she had ripped me a new one, the woman and man walked away and I retreated back into the office, feeling small.

After a short while, I sat there at my desk and started to feel angry. I kept replaying the scene over and over in my mind, telling myself what I should have said or should have done instead of copping those commanding requests. I then got down and became self-critical for not standing up for myself.