

# Your Journey to Self-Determination

## Course 2: Finding Your Voice

### Lessons 1-4

## Lesson 1

### Slide 1

#### **Narrator**

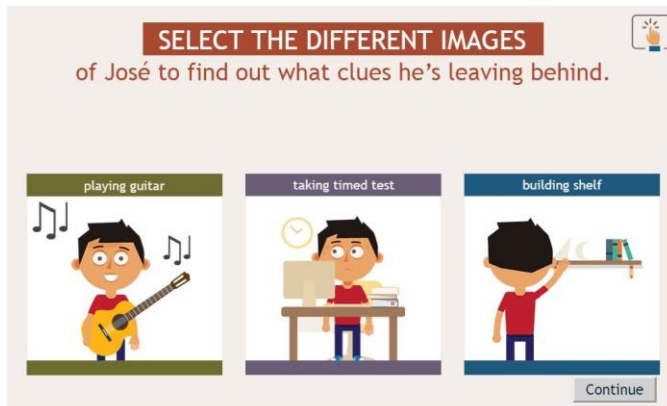
Welcome to the Finding Your Voice course. This course will give you some strategies to help you tell your story and stand up for yourself. In this first lesson, we will focus on a critical first step, self-awareness. Self-awareness is all about understanding yourself.

### Slide 2

#### **Narrator**

Learning about yourself never really ends. It involves experiencing life and paying close attention to how different experiences make you feel. You are already leaving clues behind. These clues can give you a pretty good idea of what you like, what you're good at and what you find challenging. So what do these clues look like? Our bodies' reactions to situations are very good initial clues.

### Slide 3



#### **Narrator**

Let's take a look at José and see how he reacts to a few situations.

[Playing guitar](#)

[Taking timed test](#)

[Building shelf](#)

## Slide 3 Responses

### Playing guitar-

It looks like José is having a great time. We don't know how good he is, but he's smiling and seems to enjoy playing the guitar. Playing the guitar is probably one of José's interests.

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### Taking timed test-

It looks like José is sweating. He also is glancing at the clock. These responses are clues that timed tests cause José stress. Timed tests are probably one of José's challenges.

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### Building shelf-

José is proud of the shelf he made and happy that his sister asked him to make her one just like it. These are clues that José is good at building things. This is probably one of José's strengths.

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## Slide 4

### Narrator

Think about some of the clues José has left behind. What questions might you ask to learn more about his interests, strengths, and needs based on the clues he's left behind so far? [Hint](#) about José's interests. [Hint](#) about José's strengths. [Hint](#) about José's needs.

[Continue](#)

## Slide 4 Hint

**Interests** - Because José was smiling, we can say that José probably likes playing the guitar. This could be one of his interests. To find out more about his possible interest in playing guitar, you might want to ask: What type of music does he enjoy the most? How long has he been playing? See if you can come up with even more questions.

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**Strengths** - Because José hears positive comments about his woodworking, and gets asked to make something else, this could be one of José's strengths. To find out more about this possible strength of his, you might want to ask: What can he build? Has he used other materials to build things? See if you can come up with even more questions.

[Go back](#)

**Needs** - It looks like José had some anxiety taking a timed test. This might be one of his challenges. To find out more about his needs related this possible challenge, you might want to ask: Does he have anxiety doing other school tasks? Does he always have anxiety taking timed tests? See if you can come up with even more questions.

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## Slide 5

### Narrator

One way to learn more about yourself is to try new experiences. How will you know if you enjoy cooking if you never try to read a recipe and cook something? Trying new experiences can open up a world of possibilities. Many people have a fear of the unknown. You might think a new experience will be terrible until you try it. Often, what we imagine is a lot worse than reality.

The challenge for you this week is to explore a new experience. What is something that you don't have much or any experience with that you might want to try?

## Slide 6

### Narrator

There are questions for you to think about before, during, and after a new experience.

## Slide 7

### **Narrator**

Questions you should ask yourself before any new experience include: How can I make this experience happen? Do I need to learn more about it before trying it out? Do I need some support from a trusted adult or friend? Is this activity safe?

## Slide 8

### **Narrator**

During a new experience, be sure to pay attention to any clues that you may be leaving behind. Ask yourself: What physical and emotional responses am I having during this activity? You may want to try a new experience several times to see if your reactions change.

## Slide 9

### **Narrator**

After any new experience, ask yourself: Is this an experience that I enjoyed? Was this activity easy or difficult? If it was difficult, what made it difficult? Is this something I could see myself doing again? Doing often? What clues did this activity give me about my interests, strengths, preferences, and needs? What questions do I need to ask myself to learn more about my interests, strengths, preferences, and needs? It might be helpful to keep a journal and write down your reactions and thoughts about each new experience.

Before moving on in this course, print out the “New Experience” handout on your dashboard that goes along with this course and complete the activity.

## Slide 10

You’ve completed your first lesson of the *Finding Your Voice* course.

# **Lesson 2**

## Slide 1

### **Narrator**

Once you understand your interests, strengths, how you learn best, and what you find challenging, you have some really important information.

So, what do you do with this information? You set goals! This lesson will help you better understand how to set goals for yourself and identify the supports you may need to reach these goals.

## Slide 2



### Narrator

You are more likely to reach your goal when it is S.M.A.R.T. SMART goals are specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and timely.

Let's break it down. Goals should be specific. They need to say exactly what is going to happen. Goals should be measurable. You should be able to say to yourself, "I know I've reached my goal when blank happens." Goals should be attainable. With hard work, you should be able to reach your goal. If it is really unlikely for you to achieve your goal within a certain time period, even with hard work, you should not set this goal for yourself. Goals should be relevant. In other words, the goals you set for yourself need to be important to you. If it doesn't really matter to you, you're probably not going to put forth the effort needed to achieve your goal. And lastly, goals should be timely. Goals should include a deadline. When will you accomplish this goal?

## Slide 3

### Narrator

Here are some common goals students have set for themselves. Think about how these goals can be improved. Select the Make SMART buttons to see some examples.

I will get better at turning my homework into my teachers. [Make SMART.](#)

I will improve my math grade. [Make SMART.](#)

I will be on time to my classes more. [Make SMART.](#)

I will make some friends. [Make SMART.](#)

## Slide 3 (Make Smart)

**I will get better at turning my homework into my teachers.**

Made SMART- This semester, I will turn in 8 out of 10 of my assignments on time in all of my classes.

[Go back](#)

[Continue](#)

**I will improve my math grade.**

Made SMART- This semester, I will get at least a B on all my math quizzes and tests.

[Go back](#)

[Continue](#)

**I will be on time to my classes more.**

Made SMART- This semester, I will be in my classes before the bell rings 9 out of 10 times.

[Go back](#)

[Continue](#)

**I will make some friends.**

Made SMART- This semester, I will sit by someone in the cafeteria during the lunch period and practice my conversation skills two times a week.

[Go back](#)

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## Slide 4

**Narrator**

Now it's your turn... Write one SMART goal for yourself.

## Slide 5

**Narrator**

Once you have written your goal, you need to develop an action plan. This means figuring out what steps you need to take to reach your goal. Part of this includes identifying the resources and supports that can help you reach your goal. Remember Gabby and how she needed a quiet place to work on her research project. Well, Gabby's goal was to get at least a B on her social studies research project. One of the steps she needed to take to reach that goal was to find a quiet place to work on it. Gabby quickly identified her mom as one of her supports. Gabby and her mom then identified possible resources and supports that were available to her. Gabby decided that the library was her best option for a quiet place

to work. Gabby is also discovering that Monique, one of the librarians, is very helpful. She has been teaching Gabby how to find articles and books related to her research topic. Monique is another support for Gabby.

## Slide 6

### Narrator

Now think about one of your own goals. What are some of the resources and supports in your community that can help you reach it?

## Slide 7

You've completed your second lesson of the *Finding Your Voice* course.

## Lesson 3

### Slide 1

#### Narrator

In this third lesson, we'll go over some strategies that can help you tell your story to others.

### Slide 2

#### Narrator

In order to have a greater say in what happens in your life, you need to find your voice... In other words, you have to be able to share information about yourself with others. Many people find it helpful to create a written document that provides a snapshot of who they are. Adults often create resumes or profiles to share with the public or possible employers. You might find this helpful too! You might not want to share the document with everyone but it can help you think about ways to share information about yourself with others.

## Slide 3

**PROFILE**



**Name:** José  
**Age:** 16

**Interests:**  
Music and Woodworking

**Goals:**

- To get at least a B in woodworking class this semester.
- To get a construction job at my uncle's company this summer.

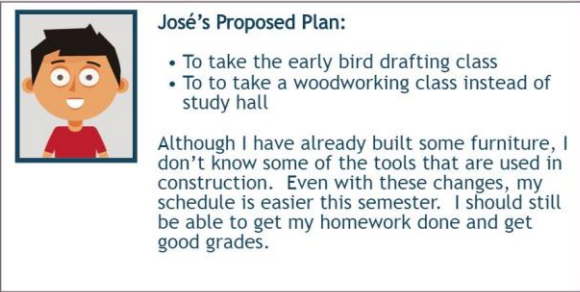
**Strengths:**  
Math and Building Things

### Narrator

So what does a profile look like? Profiles are relatively brief. They give people an idea about who the person is. Profiles often include a person's interests and strengths. Some may also include what the person needs in order to reach his or her goals. José's profile begins with his name and age followed by his goals and interests.

## Slide 4

**PROFILE (PAGE 2)**



**José's Proposed Plan:**

- To take the early bird drafting class
- To to take a woodworking class instead of study hall

Although I have already built some furniture, I don't know some of the tools that are used in construction. Even with these changes, my schedule is easier this semester. I should still be able to get my homework done and get good grades.

### Narrator

José has decided to add a bit more to his profile this time by creating a second page that includes his proposed plan for meeting his goals. His proposal includes what he wants to see happen and some supporting statements for why this plan will help him reach his goals.

## Slide 5

### Narrator

So what does your profile look like? Does your profile include your interests, strengths, and goals? What do you want to see happen by sharing your profile with others? What about preferences and



needs? Preferences and needs can be shared through your profile or follow up conversations with people.

## Slide 6

### Narrator

Many people get nervous when sharing personal information with others. Often, this comes from a fear of being judged or having a request denied. Our imagined fears are often a lot worse than what actually happens. There are, however, a number of ways to prevent or reduce anxiety, such as taking slow and deep breaths or my personal favorite—standing in a power pose before going into a meeting. Or maybe the best strategy for you will be to picture yourself sharing information with others and getting the best possible response. Still others may find that the more they tell their story, the less anxious they become. The key take-away here is to find out what works best for you.

## Slide 7

You've completed your third lesson of the *Finding Your Voice* course.

## Lesson 4

### Slide 1

#### Narrator

In this fourth lesson, we'll go over some different ways people communicate and give you some tips for creating assertive messages.

### Slide 2

#### Narrator

People have different communication styles. We are going to focus on just three of them. Passive communication is the first style we'll go over. Passive communicators don't share their opinions or stand up for themselves. This may lead to issues mounting up and possible feelings of depression or sudden outbursts. Next, we have the aggressive communication style. Aggressive communicators use a forceful manner to let people know what they think and feel. They tend to be demanding and threatening. And lastly, we have the assertive communication style. Assertive communicators share their feelings and opinions honestly and directly. They ask that their needs are met and they do it in a respectful way.

Assertive communication is almost always preferred over an aggressive or passive communication style.

Can you see why the assertive communication style is preferred? (long pause) Assertiveness is about balance. When you're assertive, you don't always get what you want, but you're able to stand up for yourself without stomping on other people in the process. The key to being assertive is that you value yourself and you value others, too.

## Slide 3



### Narrator

Before moving on, let's do a quick knowledge check. Match the following examples with the communication style that fits the best.

1. "Whatever you think is best."
  - A. [Passive](#)
  - B. [Aggressive](#)
  - C. [Assertive](#)
2. "I am upset that you didn't ask me to come with you. Even if I am busy, I still like to be asked."
  - A. [Passive](#)
  - B. [Aggressive](#)
  - C. [Assertive](#)
3. "You had better help me now! I can't wait for you to finish your game."
  - A. [Passive](#)
  - B. [Aggressive](#)
  - C. [Assertive](#)

## Slide 3 Responses

1. "Whatever you think is best."

**Response for Option A. (Passive)-** Correct. This example is considered passive.

[Continue](#)

**Response for Option B. (Aggressive)-** Incorrect. This example is considered passive. When you use a statement like this and haven't shared your thoughts or opinions, you are communicating in a passive way.

[Continue](#)

**Response for Option C. (Assertive)-** Incorrect. This example is considered passive. When you use a statement like this and haven't shared your thoughts or opinions, you are communicating in a passive way.

[Continue](#)

2. "I am upset that you didn't ask me to come with you. Even if I am busy, I still like to be asked."

**Response for Option A. (Passive)-** Incorrect. Example 2 is considered assertive. When you share your thoughts and opinions in a direct and respectful way, you are using assertive messages.

[Continue](#)

**Response for Option B. (Aggressive)-** Incorrect. Example 2 is considered assertive. When you share your thoughts and opinions in a direct and respectful way, you are using assertive messages.

[Continue](#)

**Response for Option C. (Assertive)-** Correct. This example is considered assertive.

[Continue](#)

3. "You had better help me now! I can't wait for you to finish your game."

**Response for Option A. (Passive)-** Incorrect. Example 3 is considered aggressive. Statements that are said forcefully and judge a person's character are viewed as aggressive messages.

[Continue](#)

**Response for Option B. (Aggressive)-** Correct. This example is considered aggressive.

[Continue](#)

**Response for Option C. (Assertive)**- Incorrect. Example 3 is considered aggressive. Statements that are said forcefully and judge a person’s character are viewed as aggressive messages.

[Continue](#)

## Slide 4



### Narrator

Now that you know that assertive messaging is the way to go, here are some quick tips for how you get there:

Use “I” statements.

Avoid blaming the other person. For example, “You made me angry” is aggressive while “I feel angry” is assertive.

Focus on behaviors.

Avoid the desire to slip into interpretations like calling the other person rude or insensitive. Comment on their behaviors or words without labeling them. For example, the statement “You have not returned any of my calls this week” keeps the focus on the behavior.

Keep your responses short.

The longer you talk, the more likely you are to slip into either passive or aggressive techniques.

Monitor your tone of voice and non-verbal messages.

You can choose just the right words and ruin it with a sharp tone or aggressive posture.

Listen.

Pay close attention to what they have to say as well. If you do not listen, you may be more likely to become aggressive or not have an appropriate response.

Try to maintain appropriate eye contact.

Too little eye contact and you could be perceived as dishonest. Too much eye contact and you could come across as aggressive. In most communities in the US, fairly steady eye contact with brief breaks every few seconds is probably appropriate. Some people find it easier to look at a focal point close to someone's eyes but not directly into them, such as slightly above and between a person's eyes.

## Slide 5

### **Narrator**

So how do you think you are doing with assertive communication? It isn't always easy for people to recognize when they are slipping into an aggressive or passive communication style. I like to call on a trusted family member or friend to help me notice when I go down one of those paths. Once I become aware of it, I can then think about how I could have said things in a more assertive way. Just like other skills, this one will take time and practice to develop.

## Slide 6

You've completed your fourth lesson of the *Finding Your Voice* course.