



Speak Up, Be Heard

How To Be More Assertive at Work
with Melody Wilding, LMSW

Thank you to the Women's ERG

BURBERRY



**A few notes
before we begin**

Which can you relate to?



1. You worry people will get upset if you speak your mind.



2. You don't know what to say or how to say it.




3. You think it won't change anything.

**You're not
alone**

...But you can
do something
about it

Today you'll discover

- 1 How to identify what assertiveness is (and isn't)
- 2 Understand the 3 types of communication so you can assess where you fall and what you need to improve
- 3 Learn the 8 keys to assertive communication so you can be more effective and confident



Give feedback
kindly and directly



Say no without overexplaining



Feel more confident
to seize opportunities

Hi, I'm Melody.

- I'm an executive and high-performance coach
- I'm a licensed social worker and professor of Human Behavior
- I'm author of the upcoming book *Trust Yourself: Stop Overthinking, Master Your Emotions, and Channel Ambition into Success*





NETFLIX

HBO



**They all have one
thing in common...**

They are Sensitive Strivers



- Think and feel more deeply
- Lifelong goal-oriented, high-achievers
- Thoughtful, intuitive, driven, hard-working
- Highly self-aware
- Have a rich inner world
- Deep capacity for empathy

But they also...



- Are self-critical
- Overthink everything
- Are easily overwhelmed
- Have trouble turning their mind off
- Put undue pressure on themselves to succeed

Because of their conscientiousness and thoughtfulness...

**Sensitive Strivers struggle
to speak up for themselves**

Does this resonate with you?



Assertiveness

What's the first word or phrase that comes to mind?

What has held you back from speaking up in the past?

We carry negative ideas about assertiveness because...



- **We're conditioned to be likable**

Play nice and don't rock the boat

- **Imposter Syndrome**

Who are you to have an opinion? Your ideas are no good. You're a fake.

- **Conflict is uncomfortable**

We don't like feeling negative emotions, so we avoid them

- **It depends on the context**

Speaking to your boss is different than approaching a colleague



The benefits of speaking up

- Reduce stress and avoid burn out
- Gain confidence and self-esteem
- Earn respect, influence and greater visibility
- Improve decision making
- Get better job opportunities
- Create a stronger network

Sometimes the most important thing you can do is speak up because you're setting a positive example for others

What
assertiveness
is (and isn't)

What is assertiveness?



The skill of expressing your needs, wants, feelings and opinions to others in a direct and honest manner.

It's also about...



**Standing your ground
and pushing back in a
diplomatic ways**

It's also about...



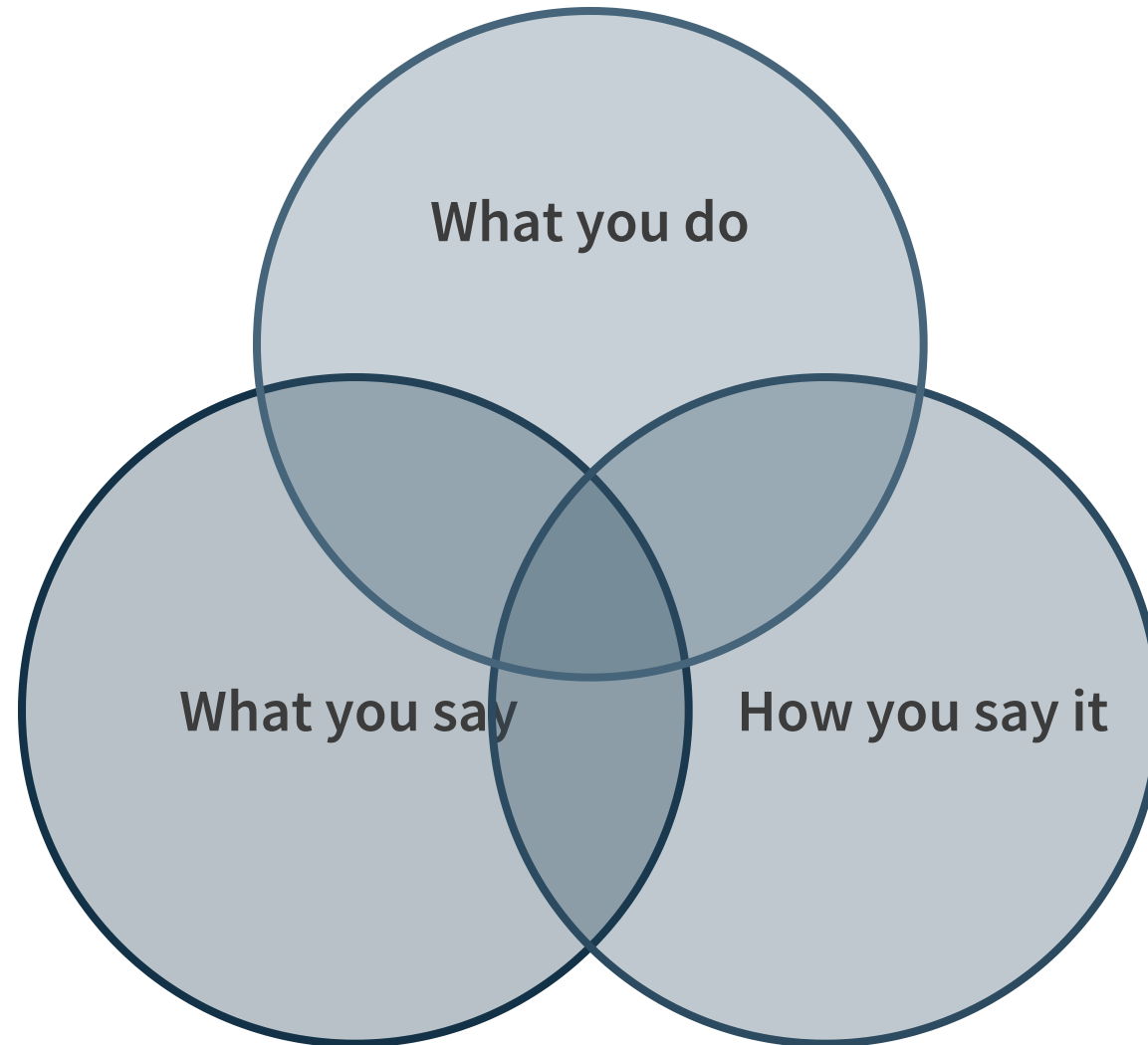
Ensuring you express yourself in a way that respects both yourself and others

It's also about...



**Finding a mutually
satisfactory compromise
(not a guarantee of a
positive outcome)**

The anatomy of assertiveness



3 Styles of Communication

PASSIVE

“Push over”
Stuffs feelings
Weak boundaries
Powerlessness

AGGRESSIVE

Overtly hostile
Inconsiderate of others
Rigid boundaries (my way)
Needs power

ASSERTIVE

Value self and others
Concise, clear delivery
Flexible boundaries
Emotionally aware and level

**Where do you think
you fall and why?**

8 Keys to
Assertive
Communication

#1 Speak on behalf of yourself



Avoid blanket language like “it’s not fair” or “you always...”

Use first person “I” statements to state your case directly without arousing defensiveness or blaming

#1 Speak on behalf of yourself



When we're running behind I...
I feel unappreciated when...
I would like...
My concern is...
What I'd like to see happen is...
I think...

#2 Use the 3-part assertion formula

STEP 1

Show you understand and summarize the facts of the situation

STEP 2

Indicate your stance towards the situation

STEP 3

State your request

#2 Use the 3-part assertion formula

Show you understand and summarize the facts of the situation

I stayed til 8pm working on the product launch for the last five days.

Indicate your stance towards the situation

I'm feeling burned out and my sense is that we need to re-evaluate the workload and resources dedicated to the project.

State your request

I have a few ideas for how we could approach this. I'd like to have a meeting with you to discuss. What time on Monday works best?

#2 Use the 3-part assertion formula

Assertiveness applies to positive behaviors, too

Show you understand and summarize the facts of the situation

I noticed you took care of the reports this week.

Indicate your stance towards the situation

This makes me really proud of you and I feel relieved.

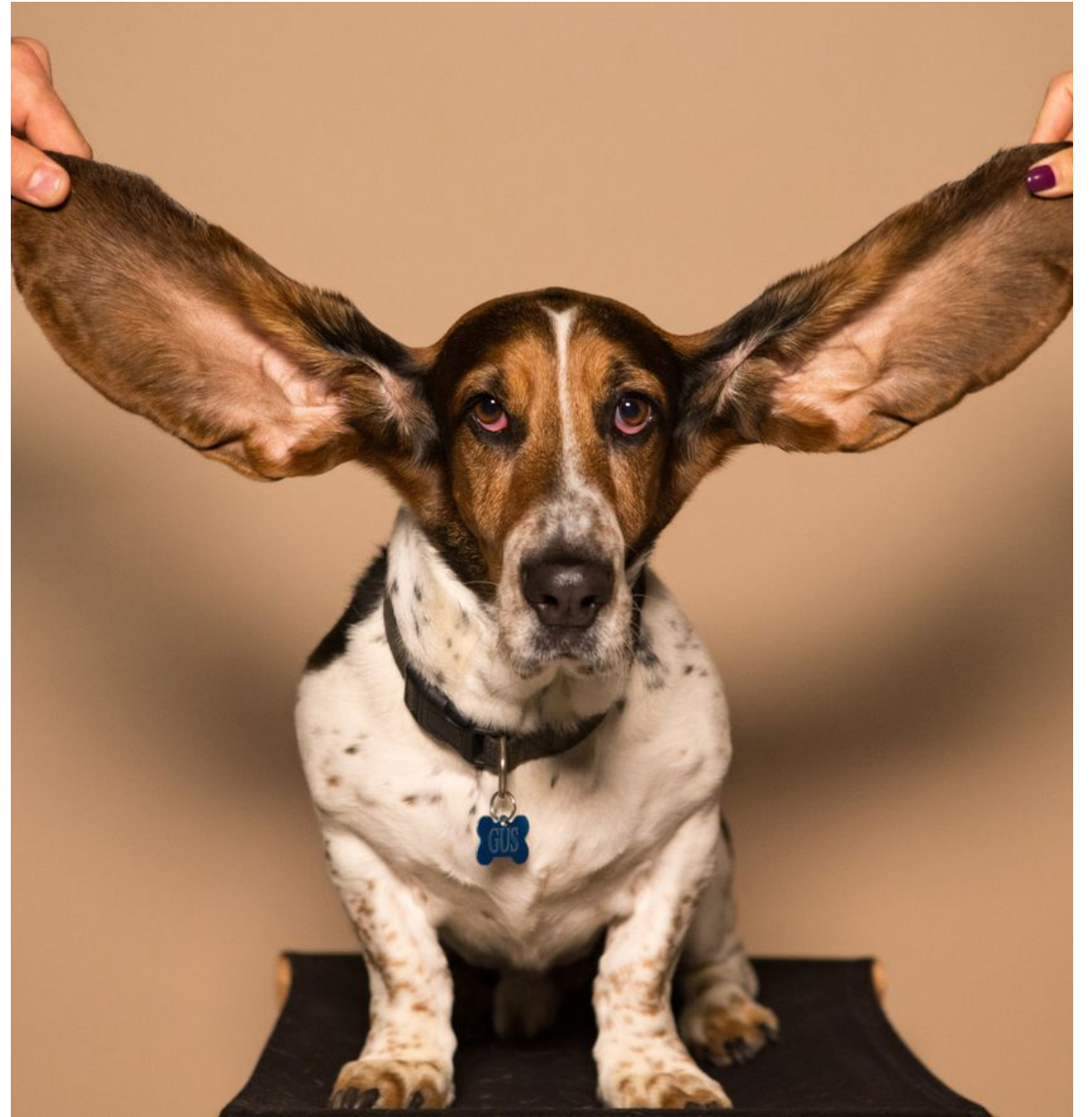
State your request

What can we do to make sure you can stay on top of the reports going forward?

#3 Listen well

Assertiveness is equal parts giving and receiving.

Active listening means fully concentrating on the other person



#3 Listen well



Reflecting

“What I’m hearing you say is...” or “It sounds to me like...”

#3 Listen well



Affirming

Smiling, nodding, or and brief verbal affirmations like “I see” or ”mmhmm“

#3 Listen well



Open-ended questions

What is your reaction?

What do you make of it?

What do you mean?

And then?

What else?

What would be helpful?
most?

What concerns you the

What would you like to be different?

#3 Listen well



Silence

Pause for 3 seconds before responding



Exercise: Practice active listening

- 1 Get into pairs.
- 2 One partner is going to talk for 2 minutes about a familiar topic.
Your favorite vacation, a pet, what you like most about your job
- 3 The other person can only respond using open-ended questions.
- 4 When I raise my hand, switch roles.

#4 Stop undermining yourself

- This may not be important, but...
- I know this sounds silly...
- I may be wrong...
- I was just wondering...
- Sorry, can I just add...



#5 Look for workable compromises



Seek to find an alternative, acceptable solution

Great for pushing back when you have too much on your plate or when you're negotiating salary

#5 Look for workable compromises



I understand that you'd like to talk right now. I need to finish what I'm doing. What about meeting in half an hour?

#5 Look for workable compromises



My goal is find a number that works for both of us. How can we get there?

#5 Look for workable compromises



I won't be able to meet. Here are some resources to check out.

#6 Be persistent



Stick to one firm, clear message and repeat if necessary



Also known as the broken record technique

#6 Be persistent

- I'm not able to do that.
- That's not relevant.
- I'm speaking.
- I'd be happy to talk about this later.
- What we can do is...



#7 Keep calm and carry on

① **Do you have all the information you need to make a decision?**

If not, what can you do to get a better understanding?

② **What would you do if there were no consequences?**

What assumptions are you making?

What would you regret not doing or saying?

③ **What does a successful resolution to this challenge look like?**

What's the worst that might happen?

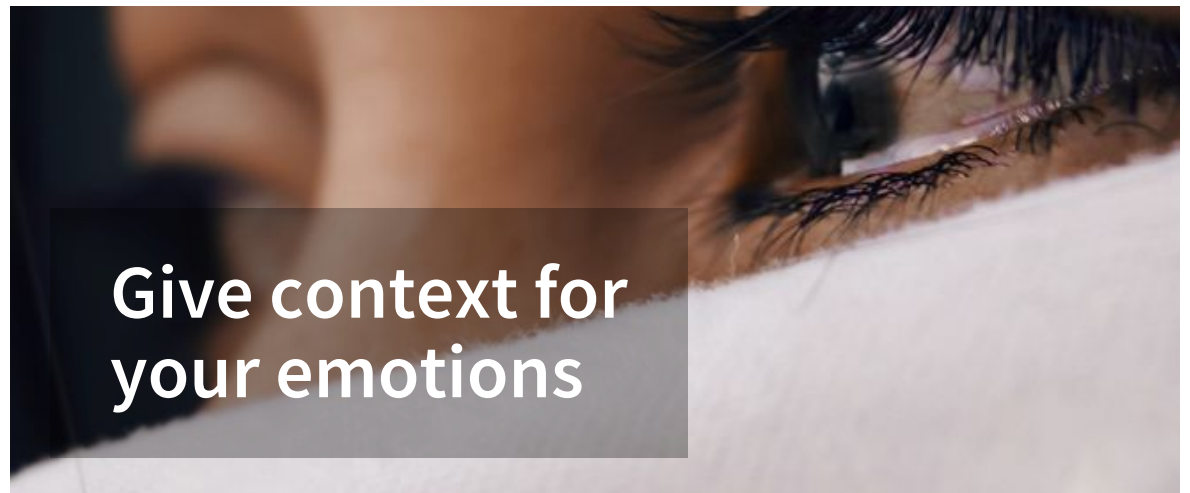
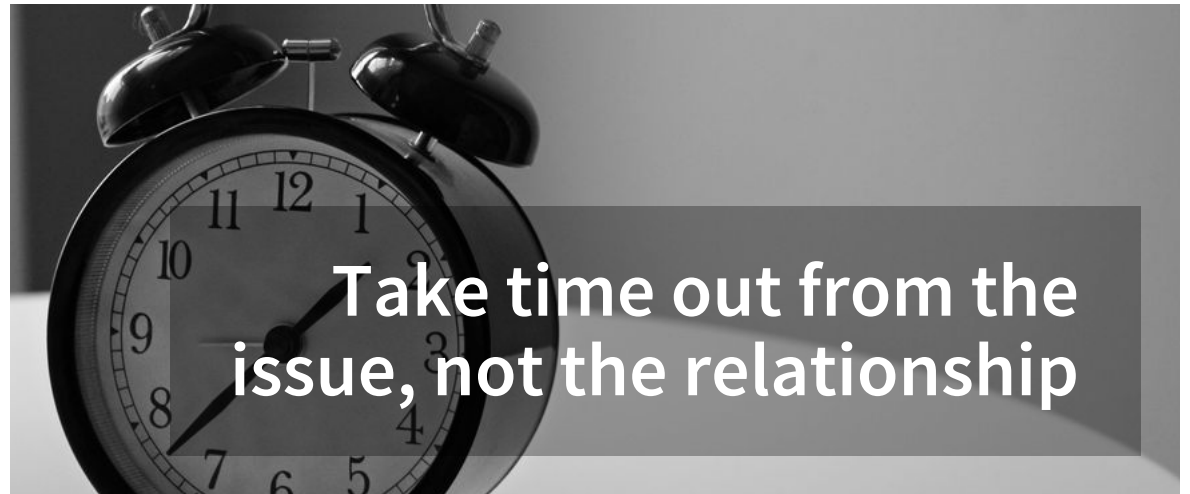
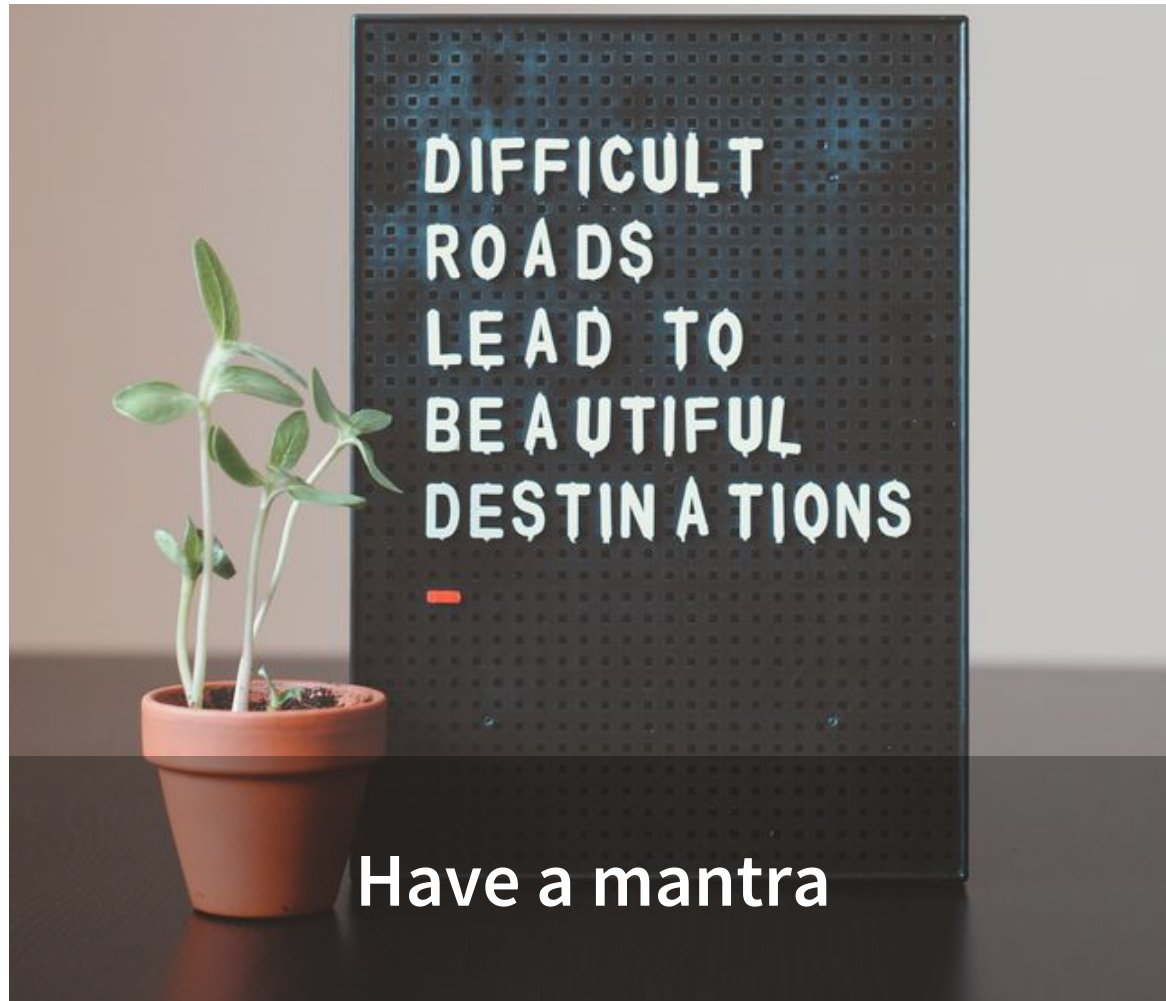
The best?

④ **How might the other person be feeling?**

What's your contribution?



#7 Keep calm and carry on



Exercise: Create your mantra

B₃ E₁

F₄ E₁ A₁ R₁ L₁ E₁ S₁ S

B₃ E₁

Y₄ O₁ U₁

- 1 Bring to mind a challenging work situation in which you want to be more assertive
- 2 Take 2 minutes to brainstorm your mantra.
It can be one word, or a short phrase. Free write— there is no right or wrong.
- 3 Consider questions like:
What are the words my “best self” would say to me?
What words are an expression of my identity?
What do I value?
- 4 Your mantra should be stated in present tense and as a positive statement.
“I can’t let my fear get in my way” becomes “I let go of the fear that is holding me back”

#8 Set boundaries



- **8 or above on anger, resentment, guilt, or frustration signals need for a boundary**
- **Be straightforward and neutral**
Don't ask for permission
- **Expect push back**
Allow people to be angry; don't rescue or change course
- **You always have the right to walk away**

#8 Set boundaries



- I appreciate you thinking of me for this project. I'll have to decline in order to focus on my other commitments
- That doesn't work for me.
- I would like you to respect my point of view.
- Thank you, I'm not interested.
- **Minimize prefaces**
 - I hope you won't be angry
 - I don't mean to offend you
 - To be honest
 - With all due respect

8 Keys of Assertive Communication

- 1 Speak for yourself
- 2 Use the 3-part assertion formula
- 3 Listen well
- 4 Stop undermining yourself
- 5 Look for workable compromises
- 6 Be persistent
- 7 Keep calm and carry on
- 8 Set boundaries

What's one
step you will
take today?

A close-up photograph of a person's hands typing on a silver laptop keyboard. The person is wearing several gold rings. The laptop is on a white desk. To the left of the laptop, there is a gold ampersand-shaped paperweight and a clear glass stapler. To the right, there is a notebook with colorful patterns. The laptop screen is blurred, showing a person's face. A white banner with black text is overlaid across the center of the image.

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Last thing

Presentation Feedback

Name _____

Email _____

1. The most valuable idea and how I'll apply it

2. One suggestion to make Melody's presentation better

- I'm interested in coaching with Melody
- I'd like to refer Melody to another organization/group she could speak at
- Add me to your email list to get your newsletter with information, resources, tips, & recommendations.

Please fill out the
feedback form!

You're invited...

melodywilding.com/community

Welcome to

THE HAVEN

a home for sensitive high achievers

Melody
WILDING

QUESTIONS?

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