

ATC Bareboards 2021

DOORMATS ANONYMOUS

Written & directed by Jonathan Solomon

Characters

Gina Gretel – A Self-Assertiveness Instructor with more than a good share of quirkiness.

Gina: Welcome! Oh I forgot the confetti. Anyway, I'm Gina Gretel, your instructor. Ok, let me see (gets a piece of paper and pen from her satchel bag). I have three people on the attendance list and your name is?

Gina: Oh I so feel your pain. The dreaded open plan office. The distractions! You can really see and hear the really long conversations that your colleagues have at the expense of getting any work done. Even the pot plants are more productive. Oh I miss the days when you could have your own office with a door.

Gina: Yes, exercises. A few of these exercises will require acting. I love acting. In fact I used to be an actress in a small theatre company until I had to do deal with this director, and whilst he was very intellectual and had truckloads of charm, he was very controlling. Plus he was known to sleep with all the cast. And the technical crew. They have loose morals too. And they all caught something. What was it called? Shame, that's what is was called. Oh what am I doing? I'm rambling again. Yes, so that situation with the controlling director will be another story, for another class, for another day. Oh and by the way I used to be a psychologist but something happened. Would you believe there's something called transference, and people were called in but that is also another story, for another class, for another day. Where was I? Oh yes, exercises. For our first exercise, I want you all to write down on your clipboard how much you value yourself as a dollar figure.

Gina: Absolutely. You must see that you have extraordinary value in yourself. Put it this way. Each of you has a treasure trove deep inside you that is worth at least untold billions. Pretend that your heart is made of gold and rubies, that your brain is full of diamonds protected by an opal skull and that your butt is full of glossy sapphires. You all have inherent value. ...

Which brings us to exercise two. Now the world is constantly throwing challenges at us in all directions. Horizontally, vertically and diagonally. You never know at which angle some random object is just going to put a halt into your confidence. Just like that basketball that cruelled my PE teaching prospects. But anyway, one of my all-time favourite quote is from the Roman Emperor Marcus Aurelius. He wrote: "Be like the rocky headland on which the waves constantly break. It stands firm, and round it the seething waters are laid to rest." So everyone stand up.

ATC Bareboards 2021

Gina: Yes. Stand up and what I would like you to do is pretend that you are a rocky headland. And I'm the waves.

Alexandra, Brett and Cassandra take on interesting poses as rocky headlands.

Gina starts acting like waves. Then she approaches Alexandra.

Gina: Whoosh! I'm a big wave that is about to overwhelm you. How does that feel?

Alexandra Appleby – *Recently married young woman but has a controlling husband.*

Alexandra: *(Reads out form)* "The participant hereby releases Gina Gretel, the Self-Assertive Extraordinaire, from all legal claims and will not hold Gina Gretel, the Self-Assertive Extraordinaire, responsible for any consequences, real or imagined, that may occur from taking this class".

Alexandra: Hello everyone. I'm Alexandra and I recently got married, coming up to four months. I'm here because I really want to know how to live with my husband. He has, oh how should I say this, a bit of a temperament. He can be really controlling. He doesn't know that I'm here doing this course. He thinks I'm doing the shopping. And I feel so overwhelmed. I hope to achieve an understanding of how to deal with my husband's behaviours. That's my story.

Alexandra: I think I'm worth \$399.

Alexandra: Well, it's hard to come up with an exact amount but I compared myself to a cordless vacuum cleaner which was on sale recently. And I thought yes that's me. The only value I see in myself is when I do the housework because doing the housework is the only time I make my husband happy.

Alexandra: Yes. My husband has just found out where I am.

Brett: I thought your husband said he didn't know you were here.

Alexandra: Well he clearly does now. He's just arrived in the carpark and is searching the premises.

Cassandra: That's insane.

Gina: Your husband is here? The controlling husband?

Alexandra: That's right.

ATC Bareboards 2021

Brett Beer – *A man in his thirties who has a difficult boss in a stationery company.*

Brett: My name's Brett and I'm an office worker for a stationery company. I'm here because I'm in a situation at work with a boss who is unreasonable and really mean. I feel like he doesn't like me. In fact I don't think anyone likes me in the office. It's an open plan office

Brett: Yes. It can get bad. But I was hoping to find a way to become more assertive and maybe people will start treating me respectfully. I hope to bring about some change so that I can enjoy working in an office, for once.

Brett: I think I'm worth \$1,245.

Gina: That's still quite a small amount. How did you arrive at that figure?

Brett: Well, I was thinking from the perspective of my "net worth". I added up all my assets and liabilities and I have to say that my liabilities have made their presence known and felt.

Gina: Brett, I'm not sure I like your hair cut. It makes you look terrible. But yet, no haircut in the whole world can make you look attractive. You remind me of a blob. A blob with no striking features. And your physique, clearly you don't look like the men that embrace the cover of sports magazines. *Brett starts to look horrified.*

Gina: And now let's move onto your personality. Or do you even have one? You have as much personality as a box of cereal. You have the personality of the no-brand variety. No scratch that. You're more basic than that. I'm surprised anyone could have a conversation with you lasting more than... *Brett starts to cry and curl up in a ball on the ground.*

Gina: Oh, I was hoping for something juicy. Maybe Brett can tell me something a bit more interesting. Do you have anything juicy to tell me about your dirty little secret?

Brett: Yes. There's a pretty big one. I look back and I can't believe I engaged in that sort of activity. It was so unsafe.

Gina: Do go ahead Brett.

Brett: I was in my bedroom. And my bedroom has plush white carpeting (pauses).

Gina: Yes please continue.

Brett: I somehow had this idea of making freshly squeezed beetroot juice in my bedroom. And then can you believe it? I knocked a jar of the juice all over one

ATC Bareboards 2021

side of the bedroom. It left this huge colourful stain. So I went to buy a bookshelf that covered the stain. I'm still horrified because I live in a rental. I'm doomed to live in that place until the day I die.

Cassandra Crowley – *A university student who lives with a controlling mother.*

Cassandra: My name is Cassandra and I'm a university student. I am not sure how to say this. I mean family is important. It's important for everyone. But there's this one person I have trouble standing up to. And I'm not sure how to say this delicately.

Gina: Here you can say what you like Cassandra.

Cassandra: Alright. Here goes. My mum doesn't know my boundaries and I need to stand up to her. And I'm here to learn how to protect my boundaries. I hope to achieve independence. One day. In the future. It's my very faint light at the end of the tunnel. And that's why I'm here.

Cassandra: Oh I'm so ashamed to mention this. Perhaps this class is not the right platform to share this. But here it is. I have cobwebs in the corners of my rooms and have never gotten around to cleaning them. I'm afraid of spiders.

Gina: And how about you Cassandra?

Cassandra turns clipboard to class. She has written \$25,000.

Gina: \$25,000 is definitely a much bigger figure. Well done Cassandra.

Cassandra: Oh oops I forgot to put in the negative sign (*writes in negative sign*). I think I am worth a debt of \$25,000.

Gina: Oh what a shame. And why is that the case?

Cassandra: University tuition fees. And my credit cards.