



Becoming a Master of Persuasion

by Brian Tracy

Persuasion power can help you get more of the things you want faster than anything else you do. It can mean the difference between success and failure. It can guarantee your progress and enable you to use all of your other skills and abilities at the very highest level. Your persuasion power will earn you the support and respect of your customers, bosses, coworkers, colleagues and friends. The ability to persuade others to do what you want them to do can make you one of the most important people in your community.

Fortunately, persuasion is a skill, like riding a bicycle, that you can learn through study and practice. Your job is to become absolutely excellent at influencing and motivating others to support and assist you in the achievement of your goals and the solving of your problems.

You can either persuade others to help you or be persuaded to help them. It is one or the other. Most people are not aware that every human interaction involves a complex process of persuasion and influence. And being unaware, they are usually the ones being persuaded to help others rather than the ones who are doing the persuading.

The key to persuasion is motivation. Every human action is motivated by something. Your job is to find out what motivates other people and then to provide that motivation. People have two major motivations: the desire for gain and the fear of loss. The desire for gain motivates people to want more of the things they value in life. They want more money, more success, more health, more influence, more respect, more love and more happiness. Human wants are limited only by individual imagination. No matter how much a person has, he or she still wants more and more. When you can show a person how he or she can get more of the things he or she wants by helping you achieve your goals, you can motivate them to act in your behalf.

President Eisenhower once said that, "Persuasion is the art of getting people to do what you want them to do, and to like it." You need always to be thinking about how you can get people to want to do the things that you need them to do to attain your objectives. People are also motivated to act by the fear of loss. This fear, in all its various forms, is often stronger than the desire for gain. People fear financial loss, loss of health, anger or disapproval of others, loss of the love of someone and the loss of anything they have worked hard to accomplish. They fear change, risk and uncertainty because these threaten them with potential losses. Whenever you can show a person that, by doing what you want them to do, they can avoid a loss of some kind, you can influence them to take a particular action. The very best appeals are those where you offer an opportunity to gain and an opportunity to avoid loss at the same time.

There are two ways to get the things you want in life. First, you can work by yourself and for yourself in your own best interest. You can be a “Robinson Crusoe” of modern life, relying on yourself for the satisfaction of your needs. By doing this, you can accomplish a little, but not a lot. The person who looks to himself or herself completely is limited in his or her capacities. He or she will never be rich or successful.

The second way to get the things you want is by gaining and using leverage. Leverage allows you to multiply yourself and get far more out of the hours you put in rather than doing everything yourself. There are three forms of leverage you must develop to fulfill your full potential in our society: other people’s efforts, other people’s knowledge, and other people’s money.

You leverage yourself through other people’s efforts by getting other people to work with you and for you in the accomplishment of your objectives. Sometimes you can ask them to help you voluntarily, although people won’t work for very long without some personal reward. At other times you can hire them to help you, thereby freeing you up to do higher-value work.

One of the most important laws of economics is called “Ricardo’s Law.” It is also called the Law of Comparative Advantage. This law states that when someone can accomplish a part of your task at a lower hourly rate than you would earn for accomplishing more valuable parts of your task, you should delegate or outsource that part of the task.

For example, if you want to earn \$100,000 a year, in a 250 day year, you need to make \$50.00 per hour. That means you must be doing work that is worth \$50.00 per hour, eight hours per day, 250 days per year. Therefore, if there is any part of your work, like making photocopies, filing information, typing letters, or filling out expense forms, that is not valued at \$50.00 per hour, you should stop doing it. You should persuade someone else who works at a lower hourly rate to do it for you. The more lower level tasks you can persuade others to do, the more time you will have to do tasks that pay you higher amounts of money. This is one of the essential keys to getting the leverage you need to become one of the higher paid people in your profession.

Management can be defined as “getting things done through others.” To be a manager you must be an expert at persuading and influencing others to work in a common direction. This is why all excellent managers are also excellent low-pressure salespeople. They do not order people to do things; instead, they persuade them to accept certain responsibilities, with specific deadlines and agreed-upon standards of performance. When a person has been persuaded that he or she has a vested interest in doing a job well, he or she accepts ownership of the job and the result. Once a person accepts ownership and responsibility, the manager can step aside confidently, knowing the job will be done on schedule.

In every part of your life, you have a choice of either doing it yourself or delegating it to others. Your ability to get someone else to take on the job with the same enthusiasm that you would have is an exercise in personal persuasion. It may seem to take a little longer at the beginning, but it saves you an enormous amount of time in the completion of the task.

The second form of leverage that you must develop for success in America is other people's knowledge. You must be able to tap into the brain power of many other people if you want to accomplish worthwhile goals. Successful people are not those who know everything needed to accomplish a particular task, but more often than not, they are people who know how to find the knowledge they need.

What is the knowledge that you need to achieve your most important goals? Of the knowledge required, what knowledge must you have personally in order to control your situation, and what knowledge can you borrow, buy, or rent from others?

It has been said that, in our information-based society, you are never more than one book or two phone calls away from any piece of knowledge in the country. With on-line computer services that access huge data bases all over the country, you can usually get the precise information you require in a few minutes by using a personal computer. Whenever you need information and expertise from another person in order to achieve your goals, the very best way to persuade them to help you is to ask them for their assistance.

Almost everyone who is knowledgeable in a particular area is proud of their accomplishments. By asking a person for their expert advice, you compliment them and motivate them to want to help you. So don't be afraid to ask, even if you don't know the individual personally.

The third key to leverage, which is very much based on your persuasive abilities, is other people's money. Your ability to use other people's money and resources to leverage your talents is the key to financial success. Your ability to buy and defer payment, to sell and collect payment in advance, to borrow, rent or lease furniture, fixtures and machinery, and to borrow money from people to help you multiply your opportunities is one of the most important of all skills that you can develop. And these all depend on your ability to persuade others to cooperate with you financially so that you can develop the leverage you need to move onward and upward in your field.

There are four "Ps" that will enhance your ability to persuade others in both your work and personal life. They are power, positioning, performance, and politeness. And they are all based on perception. The first "P" is power. The more power and influence that a person perceives that you have, whether real or not, the more likely it is that that person will be persuaded by you to do the things you want them to do. For example, if you appear to be a senior executive, or a wealthy person, people will be much more likely to help you and serve you than they would be if you were perceived to be a lower level employee.

The second “P” is positioning. This refers to the way that other people think about you and talk about you when you are not there. Your positioning in the mind and heart of other people largely determines how open they are to being influenced by you.

In everything you do involving other people, you are shaping and influencing their perceptions of you and your positioning in their minds. Think about how you could change the things you say and do so that people think about you in such a way that they are more open to your requests and to helping you achieve your goals.

The third “P” is performance. This refers to your level of competence and expertise in your area. A person who is highly respected for his or her ability to get results is far more persuasive and influential than a person who only does an average job. The perception that people have of your performance capabilities exerts an inordinate influence on how they think and feel about you. You should commit yourself to being the very best in your field. Sometimes, a reputation for being excellent at what you do can be so powerful that it alone can make you an extremely persuasive individual in all of your interactions with the people around you. They will accept your advice, be open to your influence and agree with your requests.

The fourth “P” of persuasion power is politeness. People do things for two reasons, because they want to and because they have to. When you treat people with kindness, courtesy and respect, you make them want to do things for you. They are motivated to go out of their way to help you solve your problems and accomplish your goals. Being nice to other people satisfies one of the deepest of all subconscious needs, the need to feel important and respected. Whenever you convey this to another person in your conversation, your attitude and your treatment of that person, he or she will be wide open to being persuaded and influenced by you in almost anything you need.

Again, perception is everything. The perception of an individual is his or her reality. People act on the basis of their perceptions of you. If you change their perceptions, you change the way they think and feel about you, and you change the things that they will do for you.

You can become an expert at personal persuasion. You can develop your personal power by always remembering that there are only two ways to get the things you want in life, you can do it all yourself, or you can get most of it done by others. Your ability to communicate, persuade, negotiate, influence, delegate and interact effectively with other people will enable you to develop leverage using other people’s efforts, other people’s knowledge and other people’s money. The development of your persuasion power will enable you to become one of the most powerful and influential people in your organization. It will open up doors for you in every area of your life.

Brian Tracy is one of America’s leading authorities on the development of human potential and personal effectiveness. He is a dynamic and entertaining speaker with a wonderful ability to inform and inspire audiences toward peak performance and high levels of achievement.

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Brian Tracy has been empowering business and sales professionals by sharing his knowledge all over the world. His techniques will allow you to reach your goals and achieve the unthinkable. Brian, a former Edmontonian, has graciously allowed us to access and share from his vast wisdom and experience.

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