

POWER OF PERSUASION

Tips and techniques to
mastering the art of persuasion

BY BRIAN TRACY



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-Brian Tracy

Persuasion Power

Your ability to influence and persuade others to help you get the things you want in life is one of the most important skills you can develop. 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, co-workers, 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 or typing on a keyboard, 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. All truly effective people have mastered the art of getting lots of other people to work with and for them in the accomplishment of their objectives. And so can you.

Human Interaction

The opposite of being influential is having little or no influence at all on the behaviors of other people. It is the difference between being powerful and being powerless. 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 persuading others to help them. All successful people are persuasion experts. They give a lot of thought to how they can get other people to help them. They plan and strategize before they act. They define their goals clearly and then they choose the people whose cooperation they will need to achieve those goals. They then think

about what they will have to do in return to get the other people to help them. They put themselves in the shoes of the people they wish to persuade and influence, and then they use the Law of Indirect Effort. They achieve their goals of persuasion and influence indirectly.

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 Dwight D. 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.

The Fear of Loss

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, the anger or disapproval of others, loss of 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. People fear being taken advantage of because of the possible losses involved.

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. All selling is built on the persuasion powers of the individual salesperson. And everyone is in sales. Some people don't like the idea of selling for a living, nor do they like salespeople. But the fact is that everyone makes their living by selling something to someone, somehow, somewhere under some circumstances. The only question is, "Are you good at selling or are you poor at selling?"

Just "Ask"

The most powerful word in selling, persuasion and influence, is the word, "Ask." The world belongs to the "askers." It belongs to those men and women who are not afraid to stand up and ask for the things they want. Persuasive people know that the worst thing that can happen to them if they ask for something is that the other person can say "No." If the other person says, "No", all that happens is they are back to the same position that they were before they asked in the first place. By asking, they have everything to gain and nothing to lose. And it's amazing what you can get by simply asking.

Of course, you must learn to be a good asker. You must ask politely. You must ask positively. You must ask expectantly. You must ask with a pleasant tone of voice. You must ask in a friendly and cheerful manner. You must ask openly and honestly. You must ask in such a way that the other person feels comfortable considering your request. But you must ask. All persuasion and influence is based on a foundation of asking intelligently for the things you want from the people who can help you get them.

There are two ways to get the things you want in life. First, you can work by yourself, for yourself in your own best interest. You can be like a "Robinson Crusoe" of modern life, looking to yourself and relying on yourself for 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.

Leverage

The second way to get the things you want is leverage, getting it and using it. Leverage means that you learn how 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. They are called, "OPE, OPK and OPM." These letters stand for Other People's Efforts, Other People's Knowledge and Other People's Money. In every single case where a person goes from rags to riches over the course of his working lifetime, he has been able to leverage himself using one or more of these three. As a result, he has been able to accomplish more in a few years than many people accomplish in a lifetime. 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. The definition of management is "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 has a vested interest in doing a job well, he 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.

Ricardo's Law

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.

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, whenever you can find someone who can accomplish a part of your task at a lower hourly rate than you can earn for accomplishing more valuable parts of your task, you could delegate and outsource that part of the task to someone else.

For example, if you want to earn \$50,000 per year, in a 250 day year, that works out to \$25.00 per hour. For you to earn \$50,000 you must be doing \$25.00 per hour work, eight hours per day, 250 days per year. Therefore, if there is any part of your work, like making photo copies, filing information, typing letters or filling out expense forms that does not pay \$25.00 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.

Other People's Knowledge

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 they need to know to accomplish a particular task. More often than not, they are people who know how to find the people with the knowledge they need.

Henry Ford, who was once taken to court and accused of being an ignorant man because of his limited education, had the case thrown out when he explained to the judge that he could push any one of a series of buttons on his desk and call in the most knowledgeable people in the country in many particular areas. The judge agreed with Henry Ford that the ability to get the required knowledge was far more important than the ability to memorize it. What is the knowledge that you need to achieve your most important goals? Of the knowledge required, which 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. Just don't be afraid to ask, even if you don't know the person personally. Sometimes, you can call a couple of friends of yours and you can find someone who knows

someone who can help you. This type of networking can save you hours, weeks and even months of hard work trying to figure it out by yourself. Both in dealing with other people's efforts and other people's knowledge, you need to be an expert at persuading and influencing those other people to help you so that you can have more time to do the things that only you can do.

Other People's Money

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. Ross Perot, the Texas billionaire, was once a star salesman for IBM. He left IBM and started EDS with \$1,000. He had an idea for taking over the data processing functions of large organizations, but he had no money, no offices and no resources. He called on dozens of prospective clients and was turned down by every single one of them. Finally, he called on an old customer who agreed to retain his services.

The problem was that Ross Perot had no money with which to set up and deliver the services. So he asked his new customer if he would pay 50 percent of the fees in advance. The customer agreed and EDS was born. From that small foundation, based on asking and persuading, Ross Perot has built one of the largest fortunes in the world.

Your ability to use financial leverage of all kinds will be determined by your ability to persuade people to help you using their financial resources at the times when you need it the most.

Use Your Interpersonal Skills

Persuasion power means your ability to use your interpersonal skills to leverage yourself by tapping into other people's efforts, other people's knowledge and other people's money. And the key to getting each of these is simply to "ask."

Sit down and make a list of all the people you know, either directly or indirectly that you could ask for help. Ask for advice. Ask for ideas. Ask for guidance. Ask for insights. Ask for specific pieces of information. Be clear about what you want and then ask for what you need. You will be amazed at the things that you can get just from asking.

The Four "P's" of Persuasion

There are four "P's" to persuasion power in your work and personal life. They are power, positioning, performance and politeness. And they are all based on perception.

The first 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.

You should read books on power and influence in business and how you can develop it to help you to be more persuasive. Small changes in dress, posture, attitude, behavior and body language can have a strong influence on

other people in persuading them to help you with the things you want.

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.

Imagine two people who know you well sitting and talking about you. How would they describe you? What qualities would they feel that you have? What words would they use? And, most important, how would it be helpful for them to think about 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 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" in 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. Each person acts on the basis of their perceptions of you. If you change their perceptions, you will change the way they think and feel about you, and you will change the things that they do for you.

Become an Expert

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.

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Brian Tracy is Chairman and CEO of Brian Tracy International, a company specializing in the training and development of individuals and organizations.

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Brian Tracy has consulted for more than 1,000 companies and addressed more than 4,000,000 people in 4,000 talks and seminars throughout the US, Canada and 40 other countries worldwide. As a Keynote speaker and seminar leader, he addresses more than 250,000 people each year.

He has studied, researched, written and spoken for 30 years in the fields of economics, history, business, philosophy and psychology. He is the top selling author of over 45 books that have been translated into dozens of languages.

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He speaks to corporate and public audiences on the subjects of Personal and Professional Development, including the executives and staff of many of America's largest corporations. His exciting talks and seminars on Leadership, Selling, Self-Esteem, Goals, Strategy, Creativity and Success Psychology bring about immediate changes and long-term results.

Prior to founding his company, Brian Tracy International, Brian was the Chief Operating Officer of a \$265 million dollar development company. He has had successful careers in sales and marketing, investments, real estate development and syndication, importation, distribution and management

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