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# HOW TO CONVINCE PEOPLE

*Strategies on how to get what you want.*



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# Introduction

The art of being convincing. It is not only an art, but it is a technique that requires us to know exactly how to make people believe in what we say. In other words, to make others trust what we must share with them, they initially need to feel that what we have to say is credible, and hence, that *we* are credible. Convincing others is not only about knowing what we are talking about and speaking in a confident manner – it also entails listening to the other person and to what they have to say to ensure that we foster a feeling of mutual understanding, respect, and valuation of the other person’s ideas during the conversation. As such, there is much more to the art of convincing others – the aspects it involves will be explored throughout this book.

From the experience I have gained as a person particularly interested in convincing people and the techniques used to do so, there are three components to the art of convincing: we must first establish credibility to grasp our listener’s attention, have emotional intelligence to keep them engaged and involved in the conversation, and must use logic and empirical evidence to switch the conversation from one where we simply discuss our differing points of view to one where they are convinced that ours is the right one. As such, this book has been sectioned into three core sections, each covering one of these areas.

First, we will be looking at what establishing credibility means. More specifically, we will be exploring how you can establish more credibility in your field, namely by being on top of things, knowing what you are talking about, and the like. We will moreover explore how to appear more confident and avoid coming across as arrogant or condescending – something we tend to be guilty of when we are so focused on being right that we lose the ability to listen to the other and respect their stance – even if they are wrong. In the second section, we will explore this in more detail, paying particular attention to the need to react

appropriately, listen actively, and debate with emotional intelligence in order to come across as more convincing. Indeed, as you will see throughout this book, the art of being convincing is often done by letting others speak and listening to them as opposed to overbearing them with arguments – we are more powerful when we let others speak freely and appear more in control than if we try to interrupt them.

Then, we will look at using logic and empirical evidence. Whenever you are trying to convince someone, the key is to be convinced yourself. As such, this also means knowing how you are right and being able to share evidence for this. Now, this does not mean that you need to be walking around with charts and statistics in your pocket, but having a few empirical sources of evidence, as well as examples that are particularly convincing, will help you gain your audience’s support.

Ultimately, in order to be more convincing, you need to be convinced that your perspective is the right one. Once this is done, it is only a matter of using the right techniques, respecting the other, and staying well-read on the subject. That being said, these are concepts to explore in much more detail to ensure that you know exactly where to start and how to begin your journey towards improved persuasion skills.

## Chapter One: Establishing Credibility to Convince Others

Persuasion is a skill that helps you influence people and persuade people to make decisions. It uses logic and reasoning to convince others to accept your viewpoint. It is a skill that can be learned and used in a variety of situations, including business negotiations. Effective persuasion creates a lasting impact, which is why it takes long-term commitment and dedicated study. Persuasion as a skill is crucial for effective leadership. It allows you to influence, motivate, and move

team members towards the outcome you would like to see take place, something that is very powerful!

One of the most important qualities of a good persuader is the ability to communicate clearly. You should be able to convey your ideas clearly to your audience, and they will feel more trusting of you as a speaker if they understand your words and transparency – if they feel like you are being honest with them. Besides, you will sound more persuasive if you sound convinced too, something that becomes clear as you speak with eloquence and determination.

Persuasion is a necessary foundational skill that is highly valued in business. It is extremely important for any employee, as it can have a positive impact on many aspects of job performance. It's particularly crucial in leadership and teamwork situations, where your ability to persuade others is key to success as you may be required to convince others that your view is the better one. Otherwise, you may end up with a team that isn't 100% committed to the long-term mission and vision of your organization. Likewise, this is applicable to your personal life as well, or to salesmanship: without the ability to convince others to buy the product you are selling, you are not going to make it very far as a salesperson.

## To Be Convincing, Others Need to *Want to Be* *Convinced by You*

And for that, you need credibility. Credibility is an important characteristic to have when you're speaking to others. Whether you're arguing in a debate or speaking as a leader, it's important to maintain a high level of credibility in your speech – without it, no matter how important your message is, it is unlikely to be listened to by others.

Credibility is a quality that is necessary for gaining legitimate trust and reliance. It is a trait that every leader should strive for – and yes, as someone who is trying to convince someone else, you are a leader. You are leading the person towards a certain outcome, and you are leading the conversation in a certain direction.

Being dependable and able to provide information and decisions with integrity is essential to credibility. As with any other quality, actions speak louder than words. Performing poorly on promises and making poor strategic decisions will damage a leader's credibility – as such, to establish credibility, you need to match your words to your actions. Are you seen as someone who is in control of their life? Are you seen as someone in control of the things happening to you? Are you successful? These all contribute to your credibility.

The term credibility is a complex construct that has many facets. It involves objective and subjective components. According to Aristotle, "rhetoric" is a person's ability to make people believe. It consists of three components: the speaker's character, the object's message, and the receiver's perception of the speaker. The first component, Ethos, involves the speaker's character. This element contributes to credibility, since the speaker's intent is to make himself look credible. As such, your credibility is based on this: how can you make the other believe in your know-how? How can you make yourself look like you know what you are talking about? There are a few ways, but the bottom line is that you need to appear confident, and you need to know what you are talking about.

Another element of credibility is transparency. In business, organizations need to maintain consistent and transparent communication across all levels. Employees and stakeholders want to do business with organizations that are transparent, reputable, and have the right motives. Similarly, customers want to do business with

organizations with transparent financial statements. Whether you are a salesperson trying to get through to your customer, or just having a discussion with family members at Christmas dinner, credibility is important to the success of the conversation – being honest, transparent, and consistent with what you are saying will make you appear more credible.

## What Makes You More Credible?

Credibility is the ability to rely on a person. People need to know that they can count on a person's ability to deliver on their promises. Credibility can only be earned through consistent actions and messages. As such, you need to keep this in mind in your conversations – you cannot flip flop with your views, you need to stay consistent.

Credibility also involves having integrity and fairness. A person with integrity consistently acts and treats others with fairness. Intent is also a key factor. Those with good intentions will be viewed as credible and admired by others. But, if someone has bad intentions, their credibility will be in question. So, before you enter into a debate or discussion with someone, make sure that they understand your intention and that the former is positive. This is especially important in sales – you will have a hard time convincing someone of your credibility – and hence convincing them at all – if they feel that your intentions are negatively rooted in the first place.

Credibility is a key aspect of debate. Whether a speaker is credible or not depends on the evidence he or she presents. The evidence must be relevant to the assertion being made and be accepted by the audience.

In addition to being persuasive, a speaker must demonstrate knowledge about the subject. This can be done by citing authors or statistics – but

more on empirical evidence later. If a speaker is not knowledgeable about a particular topic, it is important to admit this early on. Although it might not seem important at first, it can help later in the debate – showing that you can admit your faults and that you do not know everything can help you show your audience that you are open for discussion and that you have integrity. More specifically, if you do not appear as someone who tries to sound like they know everything, you will have a much easier time engaging in productive debate with the other person as they will not feel like they need to defend themselves or prove that they *too* know something. Be smart about your attempts to convince – making the other feel small, dumb, or not as educated as you won't get you anywhere.

## Confidence Supports Credibility

Credibility is not only about showing to your audience that you are knowledgeable, but also about *how* you do so. Showing confidence will help you appear as a credible, knowledgeable, and qualified person to discuss the topics you are discussing, and hence, will make it much easier for you to convince the other person that what you are telling them should make them reconsider their position on the matter at hand.

Appearing confident gives you a sense of self-worth and the courage to face challenges – a difficult client who is especially suspicious and demanding, a person who won't let you finish your sentences, or a family member who keeps dismissing you when you try to discuss something with them. In addition, when you look confident, you inspire the people around you to listen to your views and trust your knowledge. Whether you are speaking in public or at a party, appearing confident can boost your self-esteem and inspire others to give you the benefit of the doubt, even if they truly doubt your stance! As a result, people who

appear confident are more likely to succeed at being convincing than those who lack it.

One way to exude confidence is to adopt the right tone. Human beings have an inherent ability to convey intentions via tone of voice. A confident tone of voice is a powerful signal that can be used to communicate persuasiveness, expertise, and trustworthiness. Identifying your own unique tone of voice is an essential step in developing yourself as a convincing person. A clear tone of voice commands respect, while a confused tone of voice will test the patience of your audience, will give them more ammunition to counter-argue, and will leave you feeling worried that they are going to "win" the debate or discussion. While most people will find speaking in an authoritative tone intimidating, a confident tone, on the other hand, can help to establish your authority and self-assurance. Whether you're being interviewed for a job or persuading an apartment owner to rent you a unit, learning to speak in a confident tone will help you make an impact. The tone also includes the speed at which you speak – speaking too fast will send the message that you are worried that they won't listen to you and hence are trying to speed through the points you are making. On the other hand, speaking too slowly will give them more time to come up with counter-arguments. So, the key is to find the right "in-between"!

Alongside this, mind your body language. While most of us know that body language is very important in communicating our emotions, we tend to ignore it because we don't realize what we are doing. But by using the right body language in the right situations, you can send the signals you want to send to your audience and earn respect and credibility from them.

One of the most effective ways to communicate confidence is by exhibiting confidence in your hands. People are often able to sense a confident person through their hands, and they tend to respond

positively. Whether you're addressing a business associate or a date, you can make an impact – avoid mindless fidgeting, or place one hand in your pockets while you stand to appear more confident.

A confident stance is an important part of how you appear to others. Standing with your feet planted firmly on the ground while facing the person you are speaking to is one way to demonstrate confidence. Standing with your shoulders back is another way to convey confidence and self-assurance. This posture can be practiced in front of a mirror – becoming more aware of what you look like when speaking to people will help you internalize the practice and will become a habit after a while.

Finally, good eye contact with your audience is an essential element in demonstrating trust. Maintaining eye contact with your audience builds rapport, which makes them feel important and respected. Moreover, it helps create a feedback loop with your audience – they feel listened to, heard, and part of the conversation so they want to entertain it further, giving you more time to come up with better arguments or counter-arguments.

With this in mind, this concludes the key aspects of establishing credibility as part of convincing others. Let's now head over to the second aspect of the art of convincing, which is to ensure that you are *reacting* appropriately and are listening as opposed to interrupting or forcing your ideas onto the other – something that is rarely a productive way of communicating.

# Chapter Two: Emotional Intelligence to Encourage Positive and Fruitful Discussions

While establishing credibility with your audience is a core aspect of convincing someone to do something you would like them to do or to adopt a different view of a certain situation, a significant portion of this convincing takes place when you *listen* to their reaction and perspective. In other words, if you only listen to what they have to say to respond and counter-attack, you are not inviting a fruitful conversation. Instead, you are bringing animosity into the conversation, making it difficult for the other person (or people) to feel like their contributions are welcome and valued, and tougher for yourself to convince them of your standpoint. So, how can you avoid this? By being an active listener and reacting with emotional intelligence.

## Step One: Be an Active Listener

Active listening is an important communication skill that you can use to make the most of your interactions. Not only will it make people feel comfortable sharing information with you, but it will also help you collaborate better, get your point across more successfully, and engage in conversations that can teach you a lot.

In business, active listening is an essential skill for successful communication. It is a skill that enables you to understand the thoughts and feelings of others in a particular setting. Active listening helps you deal with people and avoid conflict. However, many leaders struggle with this skill. Instead of actively listening to others, they zone out, dismissing their feelings or telling them they shouldn't feel certain emotions. This is what you need to avoid. By dismissing the other's opinion, or by making them feel like they are wrong in a negative way

(as opposed to guiding them towards your perspective gently), you are pushing them away instead of getting them to open themselves up to your views.

Active listening can be done both physically and mentally. First, it is done physically by adjusting your posture and making eye contact with your listener as they share their views and opinions with you. This helps the listener realize that you are interested in what they have to say and that you are not solely focused on hitting them back with counter-arguments. It also helps to pay attention without looking at the clock or fidgeting – the short glances do not go unnoticed and can kill your ability to convince as you may look bored, uninterested, and may hence lose your audience's interest in discussing with you. In active listening, you show that you're paying attention by maintaining eye contact, nodding, and showing that you're interested in the speaker. This will show that you're not just listening to the conversation, but also remembering the things they are telling you – you are engaging with their ideas. Effective listening builds trust in a relationship. People want to feel that their opinions and ideas are being heard. This is important, especially when speaking to clients – if they do not feel like their problems are heard, they will not be interested in the solution you have to provide.

One of the biggest barriers to good listening is premature judgment. Even though most of us do not intentionally make snap judgments, our own preconceived notions about the world often lead us to judge others. Whenever we hear something new, we automatically compare it to our preconceived notions. We can avoid this habit by listening with an open mind. So, when you are sharing your opinion or asking someone else for their opinion on a topic, remind yourself to avoid judgment.

While listening without judging is difficult, it is an essential skill that will improve your communication skills. It will help you listen to others with a more open mind and encourage them to open up to your own ideas too – the more open you are towards them, the more likely they will be to show openness to you as well. The results will be better communication and better outcomes.

Finally, once you have listened, shown interest, and held back from showing judgement, respond appropriately. This means engaging with what the person has said, double-checking that you have understood them correctly, and making sure that you are not misunderstanding them. Likewise, it means responding with emotional intelligence – in other words, by being in control of your emotions and reactions.

## Emotional Intelligence: Controlling Your Emotions

Emotional intelligence (EQ) is the ability to handle and manage emotions in a variety of situations. Emotional intelligence is an important component of effective communication and decision-making in many contexts. For example, it helps people understand when a reaction may be inappropriate, whether they should react a certain way or hold themselves back from doing so, and so on.

Emotional intelligence is a skill that involves managing your emotions and behaviors in a healthy manner. It helps you make well-informed decisions and not give into emotional impulses. It also helps you manage stress. Emotionally intelligent people are motivated to succeed, but they are especially able to use this motivation the right way. For example, in sales, this would mean that you could use this motivation to tame down your reactions and a way of speaking to a client to fit their own tone and reactions – this is what emotional intelligence is.

Ultimately, by gauging their reactions and adapting to this, you are more likely to have successful conversations as you will not leave people uncomfortable or feeling uneasy.

On the other hand, a person with low emotional intelligence finds it difficult to understand others. They tend to make excuses rather than take responsibility for their own actions. They also point their finger at the other person and claim that they are wronged all the time – nothing is ever their fault. They may also blame the person who asked them to do something. Emotional intelligence is hence the ability to understand your own feelings and the emotions of others. It requires an ability to recognize the subtle differences between various emotions and to describe how those feelings change over time. It also requires the ability to understand how others experience certain emotions and how to control them to achieve the best outcome. In an argument, or whenever you are trying to convince someone of doing something or thinking a certain way, you cannot let your emotions get the best of you. If you speak louder or scream because you get annoyed, the other will simply pull away. Likewise, if you react by shutting down, you are losing the "convincing game".

Practicing emotional intelligence during arguments is an important skill for effective convincing. Regardless of the subject of your argument, you should listen carefully and avoid making any rash decisions or judgemental comments. Moreover, when you argue with someone else, you should keep in mind that you're not the only one in the room - the other can also have their own feelings and needs, so make sure that you listen to them to ensure that they want to continue the conversation as opposed to leaving it since they feel unvalued or dismissed.

Emotional intelligence is one of the essential elements of leadership. It helps create a framework for modeling behavior – if you lead the

conversation with emotional intelligence, the other will be much more likely to do so too.

## Understand the Person You Are Speaking to

If you want to be convincing, you need to know *who* you are convincing. Indeed, convincing someone is not about having the best argument, although that plays a significant role in your success or failure. Instead, being a convincing person is about understanding the person you are speaking to in terms of what they believe in, what they think is right, how they tend to respond, what kind of arguer they are, and so on. The person you are speaking to and are trying to convince will have very specific traits that you can pick up on and use to your advantage. Perhaps they value family a lot – if so, use this as an example when trying to convince them. Otherwise, maybe they feel very strongly about one specific issue. Again, you can use this to appeal to their emotions and help them relate to your perspective.

What makes them tick? What makes them feel good? What are they passionate about? Emotional intelligence also involves being smart about the way you speak to people based on what they value most, what they care about, and how they react when such things are brought up in the conversation. Be smart with your approach. Think about how you can use this knowledge and the facts you have on them to your benefit. This is what convincing someone is all about! It's about understanding where they need to be convinced, what the easiest approach is, and how to use that approach with a personalized technique to make it as efficient as possible.

## Chapter Three: Use Logic and Empirical Evidence

Finally, we need to also acknowledge the fact that logic and proof go a very far way when it comes to convincing people. That being said, you may find it harder than you may think to convince someone, especially if they are convinced that they are right and use arguments that make little sense (think of Trump supporters using false information as back up – sometimes, walking away is the only good way of “winning” a conversation). Yes, emotional intelligence is important to fuel a healthy conversation. Yes, credibility is necessary if you want the conversation to be fruitful as without it, you will struggle to get people to talk to you. However, nothing beats good old logic and evidence. If you make it easier for your audience to believe you by using tangible proof, evidence that they can’t refuse, and examples that they understand, you are setting yourself up for a successful discussion.

### Using Logic

One of the easiest ways to get someone to believe what you are telling them is to use logic. As human beings, we want to understand how things work. That means that when things are presented to us in a logical manner, we accept it – it’s much more difficult to deny that something is true or false if we are faced with proof. So, take a strong stand and use logic to back up your claims. Do this by introducing a logical argument – convince your audience that the way you see things is best because of the logical reason (you should do this assignment because you are better equipped to do it, or you should believe me because I have seen first-hand the effects of X thing). Logic “makes sense” and hence, it is a lot more difficult to argue against it. It is also easier for someone to agree with logic if they struggle to get past their ego – effectively, they are not agreeing with you, but with the *logic*,

therefore, their ego does not get hurt and you still get the satisfaction of having convinced them.

## Use Empirical Evidence

Logic must be accompanied by evidence. This means that while logic does the first part of the job by getting your audience to understand the ties and links between certain things, you must still show them why this is true by connecting examples to your statements. Empirical evidence requires you to know your stuff! That's why continuous learning is crucial.

When you're debating, you want to make sure you're well-informed. You can't make the best arguments if you don't understand the topic. You also want to be able to deliver clear, coherent arguments. This requires thorough research and good research skills – know how to differentiate good arguments and statistics from the ones that are irrelevant or incorrect.

Many debates – or discussions aiming to convince – are lost because one side is inexperienced or simply lacks knowledge on a particular subject. You can also lose if you don't understand obscure facts or arguments, or because the other side has superior knowledge on the issue. So, make sure that you are constantly learning more about the topic you are trying to convince others about. Ask yourself how you can come up with better arguments, how you can prove that you know what you are talking about, and how you think your audience would like to be addressed. This will all depend on what you are trying to convince the person of, and of the person as well. For example, if you want to convince them to buy a product, you will need to know everything that there is to know about this product. You will also need to know who

the audience is, what their pain points are, and how the product works to solve this problem.

On the other hand, if you are often discussing issues pertaining to politics or social justice, your approach will differ. You may prefer using examples that are emotionally connected to your audience. For example, you may want to speak to them in a way that they can relate to the issues you are discussing, instead of using impersonal examples that are unlikely to bring the outcome you are interested in.

Ultimately, you will want to have examples that are relatable *and* evidence for the claims you are making. If you can, take the time to read into a few statistics on your topic. This will help your claim sound a lot more convincing and will give you more credibility. Likewise, get others on it as well – get testimonials, people who agree with you, or use crowds to support you (*Already X number of people are doing this – that must mean something, right?*). There are many ways to convince someone, but using proof and evidence makes it much more difficult to discredit what you are trying to convince them of.

# Conclusion

And just like that, you are all set to work on convincing the next person you have an important discussion or sales pitch with. Convincing someone, as mentioned earlier, is more than an art. It is the careful mix of listening and making the person feel valued and listened to, and sharing our own opinion while reinforcing the idea that we believe that we are right, and not the other way around. Hopefully, this book helped you understand this in more depth.

Now that you are fully equipped with the knowledge, skills, and know-how needed to convince others, you are all set to take on the challenging conversations coming up ahead of you. Take control, remain grounded, stay in touch with your emotions, gauge your reactions and that of your audience's, keep learning, bring evidence to support your claims, and go right ahead – become the most convincing person you know.

You can do it!