

THE
STREET
PERSUASION

..... PLAYBOOK

101 WAYS TO GAIN COMPLIANCE
FROM OTHERS *IN REAL LIFE*

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THE STREET PERSUASION PLAYBOOK

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Introduction

Consider this book a time saver.

I started studying the science and the art of persuasion 20 years ago. What I quickly learned was that all of the stuff I was studying only focused on the science part. Persuasion is based on Psychology. Once you understand the way people think and what causes them to make decisions you can implement certain tactics and strategies to make them do what you want. That's actually the easy part.

The hard part - that no one else teaches - is the art of persuasion. That's the part that is difficult to put on paper because it requires a special understanding of certain factors that can drastically impact the results you get. It also requires some good old common sense - which based on my experience really isn't that common at all.

That's where Street Persuasion comes into play.

Street Persuasion utilizes all the traditionally accepted persuasion techniques but with one big caveat: We only use what works in real life situations.

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I go over this more in depth in my full training; The Art of Street Persuasion.

For now, use this guide to get quick access to some street persuasion techniques you can start using right away.

The power of personal persuasion is unlimited – this is probably the biggest truth that gave impetus to the writing of this book. When I first started writing this book, I wondered if it was possible to combine the best of all the fields of persuasion and place them in a singular volume for readers to read and apply to their daily lives.

With so many books on persuasion and too few usable titles, this book was really forthcoming because people needed a powerful volume that would teach them everything they would need to persuade people through body language, verbal language, psychology, etc.

One thing I want you to take note of, **there are an additional 30 techniques on my Youtube channel that are not in the book.**

I specifically kept them out of the book and published them there instead because they're much more basic and rudimentary.

Anyway, the good news is that makes the real total 131 ways to gain compliance from others :)

[You can see them here:](#)

This book is divided into five different sections: body language, verbal language, overcoming objections, NLP tactics and psychology. Each distinct field has something special to offer to the master persuader.

What you have here is a massive toolbox of persuasion tactics that will help you handle any situation that requires compliance. Why did I choose five different domains instead of just one? We all know for a fact that sometimes, one system of strategies may not work.

For example, if you are talking to someone on your phone or mobile phone, you can't use body language because obviously, the other person won't be able to see you.

In other situations, non-verbal language would have more weight than verbal language because people would pay more attention to your body language than the verbal content of your message.

When dealing with complex issues within a group, you may want to try persuasion strategies from psychology (specifically, social psychology). NLP or neuro linguistic programming is a special field that deals with programming the mind to accomplish personal excellence.

Techniques from NLP can also be used to influence others; you can use language patterns and sets to get the elusive “yes!” from even the most resistant audience. The possibilities are endless when you have *The Persuasion Playbook: 101 Ways to Gain Compliance From Others*. Welcome to your new journey in mastering universal persuasion and influence!

BODY LANGUAGE TACTICS

1 Learn to Read the Signs

Body language works so well because you are accessing the deepest emotions and thoughts of others by reading their physical expressions. People have an inborn tendency to express themselves through gestures and facial expressions – we can’t modify this tendency any more than we can modify the fact that we have opposable thumbs.

But it takes more than just being observant to be able to effectively read body language. To be able to understand what the other person is really trying to say to you, you must be able to read gestures and expressions in clusters.

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For example, if a person suddenly frowned, does it mean that he dislikes you? That singular expression, taken out of context and its gesture cluster, is meaningless because you won't be able to associate it with other gestures.

You have to find associated expressions and gestures to make a valid interpretation of what's in front of you at the moment. If you read isolated expressions and base your decisions and words on those isolated expressions, you may not be able to influence the other person because you keep missing what he's really trying to convey.

A body language cluster is similar to a verbal sentence. And like a verbal sentence, a nonverbal sentence needs at least three elements to work. So before making a conclusion, you need to link at least three distinct body language signals coming from the other person.

You also need to determine if the signals you are picking up are actually related. For example, if the other person crossed his arms, frowned and suddenly had a bad coughing fit, do you think the last part was related to the first two parts of the nonverbal message?

You can hone your ability to read other people's body language by watching movies and *turning off the sound*. Your sensitivity to body language will become heightened as your brain works double time to interpret the body

language of the actors and actresses in the movie. You can also observe people when you are in the mall or in the park.

2 Look for Consistency Between Nonverbal Language & Verbal Language

How will you know if the other person has already been persuaded or influenced? Check for *congruence* between what he's saying and what he's expressing (unknowingly) through his body language.

Most people don't realize that the bulk of their message is contained in nonverbal language, so they keep their guard down when it comes to expressing themselves physically.

People are very guarded about what they say but they don't know how to conceal what their facial expressions and physical gestures convey. This is one of the biggest advantages of master persuaders who are adept in both verbal communication and nonverbal communication.

You would be able to monitor both channels of communication and check if the other person is confidently expressing the same thing through *both channels*.

If the person in front of you is saying "I believe you" but his body language is saying "I don't believe a word you're

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saying” then you may have to uncover the *hidden objections* and counter these objections to be able to influence the other person.

You can also use this technique to see if you have been able to establish *rapport* with your audience. Verbal responses are easy to ‘fake’ especially when the audience is trying its best to be polite. But what if you really want to know if the audience is responding to your message?

Again, all you have to do is to look at your audience’s body language. If your audience is showing signs of being distracted or distant, you may not be making a full impact on your audience at all.

In such cases, you have to *stop* and re-evaluate what you should do next because what you are doing at the moment is not having a very beneficial effect on your social interaction. A master influencer must move *fast* when he detects incongruence between what is being said and what is being *expressed* through the face and the body.

If you move quickly enough, you may be able to change the course of the social interaction and create a lasting positive impression on the other party.

3 Read Nonverbal Messages In Context

The Merriam-Webster Dictionary has two definitions for the word *context*:

1. The parts of a discourse that surrounds a word or passage and can throw light on its meaning.
2. The interrelated conditions in which something exists or occurs.

Interestingly enough, the word itself was derived from two Latin words: “com” and “texere” which literally meant ‘to weave’. This reveals to us that language in itself is meaningless without context.

You can’t make sense of words (verbal or otherwise) if you don’t see the context in which the words were spoken. Nonverbal messages must also be read and understood within their proper contexts. For example, if the other party suddenly shivered in front of you, does it mean that what you were saying actually spooked the other party?

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If you read the gesture/expression in isolation, you may come up with that conclusion (i.e. you are a scary speaker, indeed). But if you look at other potential causes of the behavior, you will be able to come up with a more informed conclusion as to what the other person is really trying to say.

Not all body language signals are significant (the same way that not all our words are groundbreaking and important). You also have to be able to sift through the mess of expressions coming from the other party and trace the ones that are relevant to the matter at hand.

As a master persuader it is also important to analyze gestures based on the possibility that they may be *habitual expressions* of the other person. If a gesture is habitual, it may be meaningless because the other person does it just because he finds the gesture/expression nice or desirable.

Some people flick their hands back and forth while talking (regardless of what they are feeling about the idea on the table) while some smile broadly even if they disagree wholeheartedly with what the other person is saying.

You have to be extra careful when reading nonverbal messages in this type of situation because you might not be able to detect and resolve objections to your argument if you don't even understand *the actual message* that the other person is trying to convey.

4 Small Gestures and Expressions Are Equally Important

Some people make the mistake of ignoring small gestures because they think that in the grand scheme of things, the small things are irrelevant. Well, I'm here to tell you right now that nothing could be further from the truth.

Oftentimes, the *most essential gestures* are performed at a very small scale and at high speed. Some adults can be guarded/defensive about what they say and what they convey with their physical gestures and expressions unlike *kids* who are still developing the gestures that would later be part of their repertoire of signals in adulthood.

Here's a good example: have you ever seen a child tell a small lie? Like who ate the last cookie in the jar? Notice that most kids (usually those who are younger than 5) will try to cover their mouths as they say "no, I didn't eat the cookie".

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The mouth-covering gesture is a sign that the other party is telling a lie. In adulthood, the mouth-covering gesture is scaled down and is done at high speed.

A teenager or adult who is telling a lie may suddenly touch the rim of the mouth for a second before speaking. The small, insignificant movement is actually the same full blown mouth-covering gesture used by small children. It has only been scaled down so it won't be so obvious.

The mouth covering gesture can also be performed in such a way that it's not apparent that the other person is trying to cover his mouth. For example, a person may touch the tip of his nose with his index fingers (hands are clasped) so it would appear that he's just trying to scratch an itchy nose.

Blinking is also another micro-signal that you should watch out for. Unnatural blinking during a conversation usually means that the other person is hiding something from you.

Persuasion would be difficult if the other person has not laid down all of his cards on the table. In such cases you would need to draw out the other person even more to get to the bottom of the situation.

5 Separate Fake Nonverbal Signals From Genuine Signals

I've been asked this question many times in the past: *is it possible to actually fake body language?* The simple answer is *yes* it's possible to fake body language *but* it would take a very long time before a person can control *all* of the macro and micro signals given off by the body during social interactions.

You see, we can only control a very small percentage of all the body signals that we give out when we speak to someone. You can smile, but if you absolutely dislike what is in front of you then your body will immediately work to reflect this truth.

People who make it a habit to deceive people usually fake most signals successfully – but not all. There are still many nonverbal signals *that we have no control over* and as a master persuader, it's your job to catch these signals.

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It's hard to fake body when the receiver of the signals is a *woman* because women are generally more perceptive than males. Males on the other hand, can *learn to be more perceptive* so they don't become easy prey to con men and other deceptive individuals.

How can you be more perceptive? You have to be able to separate the real signals from the fake signals. For example, if the other person is nodding and smiling at what you are saying and is expressing 'I like what I'm hearing', you may want to check the cheeks and eye region.

A genuine smile is relaxed and makes the corners of the eyes crinkle a little. The cheeks would also be relaxed to accommodate the movement of the mouth muscles. This is a genuine smile and it conveys pleasure, agreement or happiness. A fake smile is limited to the mouth region only.

The eyes and cheeks are often stiff and non-expressive. It is possible to fake body language but you would have to be a very deceptive person to be able to fake it for long periods of time. The body doesn't like hiding what is really in the mind, so deceptive people need lots of energy to cover up their body language.

6 Express Openness At All Times

Openness is an important facet of human communication. When you appear open, you are expressing the following to your audience:

1. You are not a threat to them.
2. You are not there to take away their resources.
3. You are not there to harm them in any way.
4. You are telling the truth.
5. You are there to hear them out as much as share your ideas with them
6. You are there to possibly raise their social status.

You can express openness easily by keeping the palms of your hand visible whenever you speak to people.

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Historically, this gesture is used to show that no deadly weapon (like a knife) is being concealed in a person's hands.

You can express openness by showing the palm of one hand or by showing both palms. Either way, you are communicating that you are telling the truth and you have nothing to hide.

Showing the palm of the hand gives the other party a reason to think that you are indeed genuine in your intentions and you are not trying to hide anything when you are relaying your thoughts and ideas. This is very important when you are offering something that carries some degree of risk (i.e. financial risk).

If the other party feels that he knows everything there is to know about the offer, he would feel less inclined to say no because he will trust you more easily.

But if you keep your hands closed through the conversation, this small signal may backfire on you because the other party might think that you are trying to hide something.

There is nothing more harmful to a master persuader than a backfiring strategy – because if this happens to you, you will have to do damage control *before* trying to persuade the other person again. It would best to avoid harmful

situations so you won't have to perform damage control *at all*.

7 Constant Practice Creates a Perfect Master Persuader

In the previous section I discussed with you the importance of expressing openness whenever you are trying to influence someone because this will break down resistance quickly and will also help you establish harmony/rapport with the other party faster, too. The open-palm gesture expresses not only openness but also *sincerity*.

When a person is sincere, he will never consciously choose to deceive anyone. The best thing about using this gesture is that over time, the habit of using this gesture rubs off on yourself and you won't feel the need to hide things from people.

You will *become* a more genuine speaker/persuader and people would be able to detect this immediately when you are in their presence. Using gestures of openness offer an amazing opportunity to improve your *public persona* or the image of yourself that you project to people whenever you are in social situations.

If you stick to positive body language, you will become the embodiment of influence and trust. However, if you choose to use defensive or critical body language you will also embody the negativity that these gestures and expressions represent.

The law of cause and effect comes into play here - if your body leads the mind through positive body language, the mind follows suit. Body language is clear proof of the mind-body connection. The principle of the mind-body connection stipulates that the mind has a direct effect on the body and vice versa.

So when the body tries to lead the mind (through body language) the mind follows suit. When you use happy, positive gestures, you will *feel* happy and positive.

But when you start using gestures like arm-barriers (i.e. crossing your arms) you will begin to think critically of the other party and you will start feeling defensive, too. All of this is happening because you chose to use an arm-barrier gesture.

Here's another advantage when you use positive gestures: when you convey genuineness and openness, the other party will feel obliged to reciprocate the positive values that you embody during the social interaction. So if the other party is planning to lie to you, he will feel pressured

not to because the principle of reciprocity doesn't approve of such behavior.

8 Different Palm Gestures Can Make or Break a Deal

Hand gestures are the most powerful means of communicating emotions and mind states to other people. And because of the power that these gestures yield, it's also very easy to make mistakes when using them. There are three hand-palm gestures that are commonly used in almost every social interaction:

1. The palm up gesture
2. The palm down gesture
3. The finger-pointing gesture (palm closed)

Among these three gestures, the most effective one (in terms of persuading people) is the palm up gesture. Why? Because the palm up gesture signifies truthfulness, genuineness and submissiveness, too.

Now, don't get me wrong – submissiveness in itself is not enough to be influential. But if you can convey this

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particular trait while you are bringing in the heavy artillery (the verbal content of the influential message) you will have a much higher success rate.

Showing the palm during a conversation also shows that you are no threat and what you are bringing to the table is *beneficial* to the other party as well as yourself. Let's talk about the other gestures.

The palm down gesture is not as helpful as the palm up gesture because it is not an equalizing gesture. When a person signals with his palms down, he is expressing that he is superior to his audience and the audience may or may not react favorably to such expressions.

When you ask someone to do something for you with your palm/s down, you are giving the impression that you are ordering the other person around. Try it yourself.

Have a friend listen to you and ask them something with the palm up and with the palm down. Ask your friend if the hand gesture made any difference. Nine times out of ten, people will say that they felt that their status was somehow lowered because of the gesture used. The third gesture is the pointed-finger gesture.

This gesture should be avoided at all cost because it is demeaning and immediately lowers the status of the other

party. No one likes to have their status lowered and so people can become even more defensive when you habitually use this gesture.

9 Influence and Handshakes: What You Should Know

Simple handshakes can actually express power and control in social situations. As an influencer, you should always strive to present yourself as an equalizing force to others because you will get their trust more easily this way.

You can easily show this through the *handshake*. First thing's first: you have to determine whether or not you should reach first to shake the other person's hand.

If you are in a familiar environment (i.e. at home, in your office, etc.) it is imperative that you reach out first to shake the other person's hand because you are the one *welcoming* the other person into your own personal domain.

However, if you are in a party and you are introduced to bosses and other top brass individuals, you may want to wait for the other person to shake your hand.

If you reach out first, others might mistake the gesture as a challenge to authority or worse, "being too big for one's

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boots”. You have to be sensitive of hierarchies (implied or not) when you are in unfamiliar situations to avoid offending others.

If you are the one with rank and you meet others, *you* should reach out immediately because this will equalize the playing field. The people receiving the handshake will feel that you have raised their social status and they will like and trust you for doing that.

What does an equalizing handshake look like? To perform an equalizing handshake, make sure that the palm of your hands is vertical and parallel to the other person’s palm. Shake it firmly but don’t crush the other person’s hand.

Try matching the handshake strength *of the other person* because you are the one who is trying to exert influence. If you have a strong grip, tone down the strength of the grip if the other person has a somewhat weak handshake.

Using excessive force during a handshake may convey that you are a dominant individual and people may actually think that they should watch their backs because you would try to control them. If your handshake is limp and weak, you will come across as a weak and submissive individual and others might take advantage of you because of this.

10 Put Power Players in their Place With a Counter-Handshake

In the previous section I discussed the importance of using an equalizing handshake when meeting people for the first time. But what should you do if you meet someone who tries to dominate you from the outset?

Should you allow this person to get away with his bad habit of trying to dominate people or should you counter his gesture with an effective counter-handshake?

As a master persuader, I would recommend that you *don't* let the other party drive you down to submissiveness. Use a counter-handshake if you have to. A counter-handshake is simply a strategic handshake that defuses or disarms the handshake of a power player.

Your first line of defense against dominant handshakes is the equalizing handshake that we discussed earlier. Keep your hand parallel or *on top* of the other person's hand if he is trying to put your hand under. A firmer grip may be

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necessary to avoid being symbolically dominated by another person.

You can easily spot power players by observing how they offer their hands during a handshake. Power players often offer an almost completely face down hand when shaking other people's hands. People may not realize that they are being forced to submit to the other person (symbolically) as they shake hands.

If someone offers you a face down hand during a handshake, don't put your hand *under* the other person's hand. Instead, reach out as if you are doing a regular handshake and shake the hand even if your palms will not touch/meet.

This might result in a somewhat lopsided handshake, but lopsided is better than being dominated by a power player. Also, remember to step forward with the opposite leg as you shake the power player's hand.

Another way to counter a power player's handshake is to step forward with your right foot as you correct the power player's hand (since it's facing down).

Do this quickly as you greet the other person during the handshake. Chances are the power player will be too shocked to make another counter-move – and you will win that round automatically.

11 Conquer the Moment with a Smile

In the world of influence, *appearing* to be submissive gives the persuader the upper hand because the audience will have no reason to feel defensive during the social interaction.

You won't be able to establish rapport with the other party if you appear to be too dominant or controlling. One of the easiest ways to appear non-hostile to people is by *smiling*. Smiling is more than just a submissive facial expression.

It tells people that you are not there to harm them and you want to be accepted by those around you. Once a person expresses the desire to be accepted, people around him would be more willing to lower their defenses.

How effective is smiling when disarming people? One study showed that smiling *while apologizing* to another person is actually more effective than *not smiling*. You have nothing to lose – so it would be best to smile *more frequently* during social interactions so that you will have little trouble disarming other people's mental defenses.

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And smiling is contagious – people are actually hardwired to mirror expressions like smiling. So even if you are in a room full of serious and edgy bosses, your smile would level the playing field little by little, until you have the upper hand.

Smiling is also viewed as a token or gift by others and by virtue of the principle of reciprocity, people *must* return smiles – even those given by strangers. Smiling even if you feel pressured or stressed out is a must – so just do it. Don't think about how you feel or what you must do be doing throughout the day.

At that vital moment when you have to influence someone, I invite you to *smile* as happily as you can because this will make your life much easier, I promise. Smiling is universally recognized and it appears that the human brain was designed in such a way that it will be able to decode or decipher a smile even if it was lopsided or even upside down.

12 Avoid Arm Barriers At All Cost

A few sections back we discussed the importance of being open to one's audience so you can establish rapport more easily. There is one particular group of gestures that can easily ruin the image of openness: the arm-barrier gestures.

Arm-barrier gestures are even *more common* than palm gestures because people don't think twice about using them in *every* social situation. As the name implies, arm-barrier gestures are performed with the arms and these gestures simulate putting up a wall or blockade around a person.

Crossing the arms near the chest is the most common arm-barrier gesture. This gesture 'protects' the heart and lungs from any sudden attacks.

This is one of the main reasons why arm-barrier gestures are horrible when you are trying to influence others – you are showing people that you are threatened and you feel the need to protect yourself.

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Using an arm-barrier gesture also communicates to others that you are *not sure* about what you are saying/offering. How will your audience be confident with what you have to say if *you* appear unconfident? You won't be able to do it.

If you appear unconfident, your audience might end up being suspicious or critical about what you're saying and that is never a good thing. You want your audience to be as open and uncritical of your thoughts and ideas because eventually, you also want them to do something for you (which is really the whole point of trying to influence someone).

If the other party starts using the arm-barrier gesture, it means you are probably losing ground. Remember: the mind follows the body and vice versa. If a person adopts negative body language can encourage negative thinking.

You can break the negative cycle by offering the other party something to read or hold (at least). The arm barrier must be dismantled so you can continue with your other persuasion/influence strategies. The longer a person's arm barrier stays in the place, the more heightened the resistance to your ideas become.

13 Physical Touch Can Do Miracles

Touch is the *last* sense to go even in the face of advanced age – and it is probably the most *powerful* of all the senses. Through touch, a mother can convey love and care to her newborn child. And through touch, a master persuader can convey respect, integrity and sincerity to others.

A study conducted by researchers from the University of Minnesota showed that a *beneficial response* can be elicited from another person if the other person was lightly touched on the *elbow* for about 3 seconds. In the study, the researcher left a coin in a telephone booth and hid.

The researchers wanted to see if people would actually return the coin to the original owner. In the first part of the study, they didn't touch anyone's elbow. The result? Only twenty-three percent of the total respondents in the first part of the study returned the coin.

But in the second part of the study (where they integrated the elbow-touching), the return rate for the coin was a staggering sixty-eight percent. So the next time that you are

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in an appropriate situation, try touching the other person's elbow for a few seconds when you are trying to elicit agreement.

You might be surprised how disarming touch can be even in the most pressured situations. Why does touching the elbow work? Well, the elbow is considered as 'public space' because it's far from the chest and abdomen, so people can touch the elbow and not elicit a negative response. Second, touch creates instant impact on other people.

And finally, touch works because it creates a short yet memorable connection between two or more people. This is one of the reasons why politicians like to 'press the flesh' during campaigns. When a politician reaches out to touch people's elbows and shake hands, they are creating an instant bond with throngs of strangers who might vote for them.

14 Beware of Harmful Hand Gestures

Many hand gestures can be helpful in persuading others because they help break down mistrust or doubt. But there are some hand gestures that can really destroy a positive message because they will *always* signify negativity.

Let's talk about these hand gestures so you can *avoid* these gestures as much as possible during social interactions. The first gesture to avoid is the clenched-fists gesture.

I know that you have probably seen this gesture somewhere (and the person performing the gesture may even be smiling) because it's a very common expression. Some people say that they are simply being comfortable when they clench their hands on top of a table.

Well, according to experts this particular gesture actually signifies *uncertainty and anxiety*. And to add insult to injury, this gesture actually encourages poor blood flow to the fingers so it's common to see cold, clammy knuckles when this gesture is *held* for long periods of time.

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If *you* see your subject performing this gesture, you can break the gesture by offering the other person something to hold like a business card, a pen, etc.

The second harmful gesture is the *steeple* gesture. The steeple gesture occurs when a person places his hands in front and places the tips of his fingers against each other (like he's holding a thin mirror in the middle).

This is a harmful gesture because it communicates that you are superior *and* smug at the same time. You don't want that kind of impression from people because it triggers defensive behavior in people.

The steeple gesture also gives people the impression that the doer of the gesture is naturally arrogant – another big no-no when you are trying to influence or persuade others. The third gesture that you should avoid is placing your hands behind your back.

This gesture fully exposes the chest and the abdomen and expresses superiority in every angle. *However*, if you are in a situation where power players abound, you can use the hands-behind-the-back gesture to avoid looking submissive. Apart from this rare occurrence, don't use it especially when you want someone to agree with your ideas.

15 Learn How People Expose Their Own Doubt & Deceit

Persuading and persuading others is hard enough – but what if you are faced with a person or a group of people who make it habit of deceiving others? As a master persuader, you should be adept not only in persuading others but also in detecting lies and deceit.

Deceptive individuals often give away their positions by giving off clear signals unknowingly. The first sign that someone is trying to deceive you is the *eye rub gesture*. A person would suddenly close his eyes and rub one (or both eyes) for no reason as he speaks. This gesture is more common in men than in women.

The eye-rubbing gesture may also communicate that the other party doubts what you have just said. The second sign is when the person touches or pulls on his ear during the conversation. The second gesture is called the ear-grab.

This gesture may signify that the person doesn't want to hear what you're saying or he may want to speak *right now*. Variations of the ear-grab include: touching the inside of

the ear with the index finger and folding the top of the ear to cover the lower half of the ear. The third gesture is *neck scratching*.

When someone tells you that he agrees with you one hundred percent but begins scratching his neck, the other party is probably just trying to end the conversation. Another common sign is suddenly touching the nose during a conversation.

Touching is different from scratching. A person who has a really itchy nose will *scratch* not touch. Studies reveal that when a person is trying to get away with deceit, blood pressure rises and this makes the nose a little itchy. It's the body's way of expressing deceit – and it's your job to recognize the sign.

Yet another sign of potential deceit is pulling on the collar. Why do people pull on their collar? Well, deceit produces changes in blood pressure and also changes the general *feeling* around the neck and face. People use the collar-pulling gesture in an attempt to counter the strange tingling sensation felt around neck region.

16 Your Arms Can Convey Vulnerability

The human body can express a variety of emotions and mental states – including complete vulnerability. Even if you *don't* feel vulnerable, people can still see you as a target as you attempt to influence and persuade them *if* you look like a sitting duck.

The absolute worst thing that you can do during a presentation or a conversation is to place both your arms at your sides. This unconscious gesture is a real deal-breaker because it renders you in a frozen and vulnerable state.

When your arms drop to your sides when you are trying to communicate a message to people, your mind will automatically detect the incongruence between what you are trying to do (actively persuade other people) and what your body is doing (the body has become a potential target).

The primitive mind (the part of the human mind that governs instincts) also sends out a signal to “play dead” because there is a potential threat nearby.

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The worst thing about this posture is that it slowly begins to affect the speaker's speech rate, vocal projection, etc. Since the body is emulating an animal that is pretending to "play dead", the brain sends out additional signals that further reduce the impact of the speaker.

This posture is also problematic because when you put your arms on your sides, it's either you want to move (fight/flight) or sleep (playing dead).

You will end up looking overly defensive or asleep. If you feel threatened with your audience, you will begin to shift your feet back and forth – this movement will make it hard for your audience to focus on your message because it would appear that you are anxious about something.

Remember: during live interactions, people pay attention to your body language *first* before listening to the verbal content of the message. Your audience will also pay attention to the congruence between your nonverbal message and verbal message. If there is incongruence between the two, your audience will think that you are hiding something from them.

17 Gain the Trust of Your Audience Instantly

The best thing about body language is you don't have to be a rocket scientist to understand the principles and apply them to any situation that requires persuasion and influence. For example, did you know that you could gain people's trust instantly by *gesturing* from a particular plane of the body?

You see, the body is divided into different planes – each plane communicates differently to people. If you want to appear genuine and truthful to people when you are laying down the facts of your argument, it would be best to gesture from the *level of the navel*.

Imagine that you have a horizontal plane emanating from your navel. Your hands and arms should only move along this horizontal plane whenever you are gesturing to your audience. Whenever you gesture from this horizontal plane, you will feel calmer and more in control of the situation.

You will also be able to project your voice more clearly when you use this communication plane. In eastern lore,

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the navel has been traditionally recognized as the seat of *human power*. According to ancient lore, inner power is stored within this region. It is also considered a person's *center of gravity*.

So whenever you use this center and the horizontal plane that surrounds it, you embody balance and power at the same time. The more you access this plane, the more balanced and at peace you will feel.

This is especially important when you feel anxious or afraid of your audience. Instead of wallowing in your anxiety, simply access this plane and let nature take care of the rest. Your anxiety and self-doubt will melt away as your body and mind aligns with your physical center.

How important is this plane in communication? We all know that the body responds instantly to stress. We can't stop the body from sending out chemical signals that begin the stress response. What we can do is to reduce this stress response so the anxiety and stress won't take over. You can accomplish this by accessing the exact same plane that allows you to express truthfulness to people.

18 Power the Communication Machine

Have you ever wondered how you can speak more effectively and *clearly* when you need to persuade someone? Well, the solution to this particular conundrum is *not* speech classes but *better breathing*. Yes, you read that right – better breathing.

You see, the human brain can only function at full capacity if it's getting enough oxygen. And you can only get sufficient oxygen if you are breathing well. Most of us, out of habit, perform shallow chest breathing. Chest breathing occurs when you overuse your chest muscles when you breathe.

This is common in folks who have to work in desks in all day. Since the diaphragm is squeezed in, people find it 'easier' to breathe using mostly their chest muscles. This results in shallow, stale breaths. It won't kill you, but it won't help you think clearly either.

So to remedy this problem, I invite you to *speak during the in-breath*. What is the in-breath? The in-breath is simply the moment when you *inhale* air. I want you to practice

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speaking right after you have taken in a gulp of air. Doing so will steadily increase the amount of oxygen being fed to your brain at the moment that you need it the most – during social interaction.

Does it work? Well, we can find that out right now. Here's a simple exercise to see if the in-breath does make you think more clearly and more creatively.

I want you to imagine an apple right now but I want you to imagine the apple *as you exhale*. Keep exhaling as you imagine it and I want you to remember what the apple looked like as you were imagining it.

Alright, keep that image intact in your memory because there is a step number two. In step two, I want you to imagine another apple but this time do so as you are inhaling.

Remember what the second apple looked like. When you are done imagining the second apple, I want you to compare both apples. Which apple looks more scrumptious and fresh?

And which apple looked a little withered? Nine times out of ten, the answer would be apple number two. So the same thing happens when we try to think and express ourselves during exhalation or the out-breath.

Our ideas and words become stale and unattractive. Inversely, when we try to express ourselves during the in-breath, all our ideas become crisp and fresh – just like the second apple.

19 Raise the Energy in Interactions Easily

Often we find ourselves in the position where we have to really raise the energy and excitement during a social interaction. Excitement can get people to say “yes” even before they have fully understood what is being laid down on the table.

Emotions are a magnificent influence tool because people tend to follow what they feel emotionally than what their logic is telling them. In the world of body language, excitement and energy is expressed through *passion*. How can you express your own passion during a social interaction?

Again, we look at the different divisions of the human body. In a previous section, you have become acquainted with the plane of balance and power, which is located near the navel. The plane that you *need* if you want to express pure passion is located near the center of the chest, right next to the heart.

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Gestures of passion should come from the chest instead of the navel. When you gesture from the navel, you become more serene and balanced. However, it's hard to get excited about something if you are gesturing from this horizontal plane. You need to gesture from your chest so that you will get an instant energy boost *physically* and *mentally*.

Whenever you signal from the chest, the body automatically responds and you will feel a sudden surge of vigor and energy. This sudden surge will also be felt by your audience. This technique is so powerful that you can have your audience at the edge of their seats within a few minutes of using this plane.

You will be able to gesture well within this region of the body because you will face safe and confident gesturing here, even if it is near the heart and the lungs. You will feel confident because although the gesturing plane is near the heart, it is protected by a tough encasement of bones.

You will feel invulnerable whenever you gesture from this plane. However, be very careful when you are using this particular plane because people can easily associate your passion with aggression. You can try combining two planes within a social interaction to produce a more balanced energy level during the entire dialog.

20 Tactical Facial Expressions Get the Job Done

Facial expressions have the same weight and impact as hand gestures, arm movements and handshakes. In fact, whenever a person speaks the receiver of the message (during a live interaction) looks at the face for clues as to whether the speaker is telling the truth or lying.

The human brain is capable of processing visual cues more efficiently (and more quickly) than verbal cues. This is the reason why the brain is looking for ‘half of the message’ through body language. Without body language, the brain has to work overtime to decipher what is really being communicated.

Now, the first thing that you have to remember about the face is to *never cover your mouth and jaw line* whenever you are speaking. Believe it or not, your audience wants and *needs* to see this area when you are talking because the

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brain is decoding lip movement alongside the verbal message.

If you don't believe me, try this little exercise: try talking to a friend or colleague and cover your mouth completely with a hand or handkerchief as you talk. Make sure that your voice is loud enough during the conversation. Observe how the other party reacts to your mouth cover.

After a few minutes remove the mouth cover and observe the other party's reaction. Nine times out of ten, the other party would look and *feel* relieved that you have removed the mouth cover.

If you want to bring your hand near your mouth, do so without covering the region. You can try to bring the audience's attention to your mouth so that they would focus on specific parts of your speech.

Here are some more tips to boost the results of all your efforts:

1. Whenever you want to give your audience a gentle smile, do so as you breathe in. This will open up the entirety of the face and it will lend a gentler and warmer aura to your smile, too.

2. When a member of your audience talks to you, raise your eyebrows slightly to signal that you recognize that person's input and you are ready to listen.
3. When someone is speaking, lean slightly toward his/her direction to signal that you are listening intently to what he/she has to say.

VERBAL LANGUAGE TACTICS

21 Need Fast Results? Try a Dose of Inconvenience

We have grown accustomed to the idea that if we want to persuade someone quickly, we have to make everything absolutely *perfect* for the other party.

Well, that *might* work in many situations but what if the other party seems to be immune to that old tactic? What if the other party remains resistant to your persuasive message?

Colleen Szot, a well-known TV ad writer, provided the world of influence an answer: *inject a dose of*

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inconvenience to the formula to see fast results. Some of you might be thinking: that idea sounds absolutely nuts!

But believe it or not, her tactic actually made her one of the most well-known TV ad copywriters in the industry because when she added that element to one of her infomercials, sales generated by her script skyrocketed overnight.

Her sales record from that one TV ad alone broke all existing records. What did she do? Well, she simply added the line “If operators are busy, please call again”.

That single line drove *potential buyers* nuts. So many people called immediately to place their orders for the product *nationwide*. Why did inconvenience work so well? The answer lies in how people imagine situations.

Szot knew that the old line “call now, operators are standing by” cued people to imagine long lines of operators who rarely got calls from actual buyers. This imagery generated the idea that *no one* wanted to buy the product because there was no clear demand.

But with the addition of the line “if operators are busy, please call again”, people immediately imagined high demand for the product. The root of the impulse to call was of course herd mentality. People generally pay more attention to things if *other people* are paying attention.

n the case of Szot's TV infomercial, she didn't even have to *literally show* that people were lining up to buy the product. A single line was enough to boost sales in record time. Now here's my challenge to *you*: how do you think the element of inconvenience can help *you* persuade others?

22 Prioritize Rapport Over Everything Else

When you reach out to other people for the first time with the intent to persuade them, what is the first thing on your mind? Most people think that they have to bring out the heavy artillery to impress the other party.

Little do people know that before *other people* can pay attention to a product, service or idea, they have to know first if the person offering *cares enough* about them. By 'care' I don't mean the persuader has to offer money or anything like that.

Your audience has to feel your empathy for their needs and you have to show your audience that you are familiar with who they are and what they are about. Showing some degree of familiarity can help you establish harmony or rapport.

There is a lot of information written about rapport (as evidenced by the stuff that you see online) but all you really need to remember about rapport is that it enhances the communicate process because it removes all foreseeable obstacles between the parties who are in dialog.

Rapport allows people to converse freely like old friends – and if you can reach this level of rapport with *any* audience, your ability to influence others will increase tenfold. So how can you open up the possibility of establishing rapport with another person?

My advice: don't talk business immediately. Talk about something else – try to find common ground and stick to that common ground before talking business. You have to reassure the other party that you are no threat and *you are on the same page* as him.

This applies most especially to situations where you are meeting the other party for the *very first time* and the other party knows next to nothing about you.

Since it is your first meeting, you have to show *sincerity* and *interest* so the other party will have an excellent first impression of you. *Never-ending interest* is important when

you are trying to draw out important information from another party.

23 Draw Out Your Audience Through A Gradual Process

When you're trying to build rapport/harmony with another person, it's best to talk about stuff that you both have in common. Personal experiences are golden but you are not limited to talking about experiences when you are out to persuade someone who isn't really familiar with you.

But here's the downside if you try to dig too deep during the first meeting: the other person might feel you are intruding into their personal space and he just might back away from you. You *do not want* the other person to back away from you so it would be best to steer clear of personal matters during the first meeting.

What I'm suggesting here is that you use a gradual process to get more information from the other party. Don't press the other party for information about family and personal

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stuff (yet). Instead, start with non-personal stuff like what their business is like or what their work is all about.

As the other party becomes more familiar and comfortable with you, slowly shift your questions so you would slowly discover the other party's values and needs. Always use a knowledge level that works *for the other party*.

Don't put yourself in the center of the dialog – the other party should be the center of the dialog. As you gradually draw out the other party, make sure that you show *sincere interest and deep involvement* during the conversation.

Listen extremely well before speaking because we all know that people love to talk about themselves. If the other person starts talking about his personal life, you can be sure that have established rapport. Congratulations – all your excellent efforts as a master persuader have paid off and you are that much closer to getting the results that you want.

It is also important to show the other party that you are *similar* to them because people like dealing with people who are *like them* in some ways. Trust is established much more easily this way.

24 Learn to Fully Synchronize With the Subject

It's much easier to persuade someone to agree with your ideas if you *synchronize* with them. Synchronization or “matching” is the process of consciously mirroring the other person so that rapport can be established much more quickly.

This technique can work wonders but you have to remember that the other person *should never know* that you are trying to match or mirror him. If you get caught, the other person might distrust you on the grounds that you are acting suspiciously familiar and friendly – too friendly for comfort, that is.

People are very defensive when they think they are being manipulated - they would automatically back away from whatever is being offered to them. Trust may be lost partly, or completely. In short, your efforts might be wasted if the other party thinks you are a manipulative person.

That's why matching/mirroring should always be done covertly or secretly. In the previous sections I've already shared with you some tips on how to showcase your similarity with the other person. In addition to those techniques, did you know that you can also use your *tone of voice* to match another person?

Here's how it works: imagine that the other person sounds a little sad or even a little angry about something. You can match his or her voice *a little* to establish commonality before *pacing* the other person. How does this work?

Simple: you will match the other person *before* trying to set the tone for the rest of the conversation. If the other person is mad about something, share a similar experience before gently shifting the topic (and changing your tone of voice as well).

You have to match/mirror before shifting the other person's state of mind because you have to be *on common ground first* before you can change the trajectory of the other party's mindset. If you try to divert his attention immediately, he won't because his mind is still elsewhere – there is no connection between you and him (yet).

You can also try matching the other person's breathing pattern as well as his *speech rate*. If he's talking slowly, talk slowly as well and *then* increase your speech rate to

see if he will sync with you. If he does sync with you, that means rapport has already been established.

25 Generosity Can Pay Off Extremely Well

Human beings will always put *themselves* first above all else. We owe this tendency to our ancestors who really knew a thing or two about *surviving* the harshest time periods of human history. This tendency has not disappeared even if human civilization has almost reached its cultural, economic and technological peak.

At heart, we are still survivalist beings and there is little that we can do to change that because it's part of the instinctual package that has been handed down to us by our ancestors. It's important to keep this in mind when you are attempting to persuade or influence someone.

Your efforts would be wasted if you put your *own interests* at the very center of things. It should be the other way around – the other party's interests should be priority. Your interests are only secondary (as far as the other party is concerned).

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As master persuaders we have to walk a tightrope each time we negotiate with other people. We have to balance not only our interests but also the interests, values and needs of the other party. To add to this complicated responsibility, we should also be able to *show* the other party that we are watching out for their interests, too.

The easiest way to do this is by *showing generosity* throughout the social interaction. You should show generosity *toward the other party* because we want to set into motion the principle of reciprocity.

The principle of reciprocity states that people generally feel obligated to give back something to someone who has went out of his way to do something beneficial for the other person.

Even if your generosity doesn't pay off *immediately* the other person will owe you a favor or two in the future and you can be sure that the other party will be willing to give back something to you.

To avoid any disappointments and to make the gesture even more genuine, offer something of value *while expecting nothing in return*. Let the principle of reciprocity do its magic. All you have to remember is to *be generous with people at all times* – that's it!

26 Don't Be Afraid To Admit the Weaknesses of Your Offer

This might sound a little strange, but you will actually boost your chance of convincing someone to accept your offer when you admit your weaknesses.

Of course, I'm not referring to your personal weaknesses. I'm talking about the weaknesses of what you are offering the other party.

For example, let's say you have a business offer. Most people would do everything to make their offer look bulletproof. But little do people know that they would come across as even more credible when they admit small weaknesses of their offer to the other party.

I'm not saying that you should tear down your own offer, but if you say something like "this product isn't as good as Product X which is worth \$3,000 more in the market".

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This technique works because it shows your sincerity and it boosts the subject's belief that you are looking out for his best interests.

Admitting the weakness of your own offer also communicates you *confidence* in your idea/offer. After admitting a weakness, the other party would also be open to admitting weaknesses.

Knowledge of these weaknesses can be very helpful in the long term because you will be able to respond to these weaknesses (which are most likely needs) and in doing so you will be able to strengthen your relationship with the other party.

True influence focuses on strengthening *long term* relationships with people. It's not enough to persuade someone; you have to be able to persuade that person repeatedly, with little effort, after the first few encounters. Your influence should work even if you are not there with the other person.

27 Talk About Your Common Enemies

Some of you might find this a little disturbing, but this strategy really does work like a charm. If you want to establish a solid connection between you and the other party, nothing can do that *faster* than the knowledge that both of you have a common enemy.

If you have just met the other person that day it might be difficult to determine who or what is your common enemy. If you are having trouble finding the common enemy, try widening your perspective.

Of course, your common enemy has to be associated with what you are supposed to talk about that day. If you're talking business, talk about an enemy in the industry or district.

Why is this technique so effective? Having a common enemy automatically makes *allies* out of complete strangers. As long as you share common values with the other person, it won't matter if you are a complete stranger. What *would* matter is that you have a common enemy.

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Nothing unites people more than the idea that you are battling the same enemy. The other party will view you as an instant ally and trust can be established early.

Common enemies don't necessarily have to be people. There are two categories that you can refer to when you are attempting to identify common enemies: *internal enemies* and *external enemies*. Internal enemies are problems and issues that can be found within the workplace or business.

Stuff like poor sales and lousy advertising efforts are common enemies. *External enemies* are things that have no direct connection to the other party but can still affect their business or work. Examples of external enemies are rising gas prices, increases in taxes, etc.

28 Relate a Story About An Individual Who Is Similar to the Subject

This technique can be extremely useful for folks who have to offer products and services to clients on a regular basis. Sometimes, we need to tap into people's imaginations in order to persuade them. This won't be easy if all you have to offer is a list of feature-benefits.

People can be extremely hard to please; however, this doesn't mean that you have to lose every time you meet a fickle client. What you need to do is to relate stories of past clients or customers who have agreed to use your idea/system/service or product.

It's that simple. Of course, you would need to do some research and legwork in order to find out if your other clients *have* benefited from using what you are offering to your client now. The more stories you have to relate, the better off you will be.

Such stories are ideal examples of direct social proof. When the other party hears such social proof, he would want to gain the same benefit as the others. You would be

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able to spark not only interest but pure desire on the part of the influencee.

Relating social proof to the subject also improves the chances of establishing rapport. Why is this technique so effective? People have a natural tendency to imagine themselves in place of other people. It's how we imagine and understand physical reality.

Since you will be relating success stories, the subject will also imagine himself as being on the winning side. You should also inject some elements into your story that will rivet the subject's emotions. Nothing is more powerful than emotions – and if you can utilize the other person's emotions, you will be able to persuade him more quickly.

29 Big Surprises Give Big Results

Do you know why products sold through television infomercial sell so well? The secret of these products' success on TV is not so much the props used during the TV infomercials but the way the copywriters fashioned the claims presented on the infomercial.

Copywriters are experts in making grand claims. In many cases grand claims are just what the influence doctor ordered. A grand claim can be anything that adds an element of *positive surprise* to the equation. You can tell the subject something that only a few people know about your idea/product/service.

The rarity and value of the information you are relaying should be apparent, though.

If you say “some people have found my idea useful”, you won't be getting a lot of positive response from your audience. You need something like this to get a good response: *99% of all office workers increased their productivity by as much as 40% in the first week of using my idea.*

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A grand claim makes use of statistics and unbelievable results. It's alright to make a really big claim – as long as you can substantiate that grand claim with proof. If you have basis for a claim, you can use it to pitch your idea or offer. It is also important to *surprise* the subject with a little known fact that directly supports your offer.

For example, if you are selling a piece of software that improves delivery time of goods, you can tell the subject that he can double his profits in a month by increasing the number of orders that he can handle daily.

You can also tell him that his *competition* are all using some form of delivery streamlining system and he's missing out on the extra profit. You need to deliver this new information to the subject because this will be the direct basis of his decision to accept what you are offering in the first place.

#30 Make Overdelivering a Habit

Too many people make the mistake of making average promises and delivering average results. There's nothing wrong with this practice (considering that 90% of all businesses prefer this mediocre strategy) – but if you want solid, long-term relationships with clients you have to practice *over-delivering*.

Over-delivering doesn't mean you have to give away more goods than what they paid for. Over-delivering can be done *before* a deal is struck. It can be as simple as offering professional advice to the other person. It can also be as grand as a one year discount for bulk orders from your business.

Over-delivering can of course be done *after* a deal or contract is struck. For example, if you run a velvet cupcake business it might be a good idea to add two or three additional cupcakes for every box if lots of orders are coming in from a single client.

Overdelivering is an amazing way to keep long-term clients who won't have any reason to look elsewhere for similar

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products or services. You will become notable for over-delivering and your clients or customers will become indebted to you (through the principle of reciprocity) and you can expect a loyal customer base to form around your business.

Can the principle of overdelivering be used in personal social interactions? Yes – and it works beautifully in personal interactions, too. Let's say you want your brother to start exercising. Your promise him that you will accompany him on his first workout in the gym.

Instead of just accompanying him, you can *join* him during the workout. That's clearly overdelivering and it will definitely help you persuade the subject even more. Overdelivering works so well that it should always be in your repertoire of influence tactics. Don't forget to use it each time you want to establish long-term relationships.

31 Follow Up Grand Claims with Understatements

The Merriam-Webster Dictionary has two associated definitions for the word *understatement*:

1. *To represent as less than is the case*
2. *To state or present with restraint for effect*

Understating potential benefits is effective during social interactions because it allows people to accept and analyze new information more easily (especially if it's the first time that you've talked to the other person). Understatements are doubly effective if you use it as a complement to *grand statements*.

I discussed grand statements or grand claims in the previous section. A grand claim can be used to elicit positive surprise from the subject. Effective grand claims always have the element of complete surprise so even before trying to use a grand claim, make sure you craft the

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claim well and don't forget to substantiate the claim with *social proof*.

How can you create a good understatement? Let's say you are trying to sell a line of machines that create excellent soft ice cream in minutes. Your grand claim can be along the lines of "our ice cream machines helped over thirty businesses in the city produce more ice cream in 7 days; each machine can produce 400 servings of ice cream in twelve hours".

The matching understatement can be "if you are able to produce 100 more servings of ice cream a day at \$1.25, that's \$125 more profit easily". Of course, these are just examples of what grand claims and understatements should look like.

Take note of the elements of a good understatement. If the ice cream maker you are pitching can produce 400 servings, you have to tone the number down to spark *expectancy* in the other person. Your offer becomes more tempting because even with a *modest estimation* the other person would still get clear profit/benefits from using what is being offered.

The grand claim-understatement combination will only work if you do not exaggerate. Exaggeration is *unappreciated* in almost any social situation so just avoid it

as much as possible. Stick to facts and stick to claims that you can easily back up with social proof.

32 Precision Matters Each and Every Time

Only a handful of master persuaders are aware of the power of precision in everyday social interactions. This applies most especially in situations where you have to deal with critical individuals who are hanging on to every little detail that you are sharing with him.

Unless you have established sound rapport with the subject *and* he trusts you completely, you won't be able to persuade a critical subject to agree with you because he's most likely waiting for you to show your competence, credibility and rigor.

The fastest way to show your credibility to someone is by showcasing your ability to be precise. Here's how it works: when you promise someone that they will gain Benefit A, tell them that they can gain Benefit B and Benefit C by performing Action A, B and so forth.

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You can easily add value to your input by being precise with your information and advice. Of course, the goal is still to convince the other person to agree with you and do what you want.

So the next time a client asks you about how your idea/product/service can help, don't round off numbers and don't make rough estimates. Do your homework and keep those figures and statistics on a small notebook or on a reminders app on your phone.

When someone asks you about these facts, bring out your reference and relay *precise information*. The other party will appreciate the fact that you've done research and by relaying precise information you are showcasing your competence and credibility, too.

Being precise also puts you at an advantage each and every time you interact with other people. For example, if you typically call clients to get orders you may want to list down the exact time and the details of your conversation so that the next time you talk, you can reference your notes to make sure that your client won't mix up information from other calls. It's as easy as that. You will have a bigger impact on others if you are able to cite specific facts from conversations in the past.

33 Deliver Ease and Convenience While Increasing Your Profit

This is another strategy for folks who are in the business of selling products and services. As a marketer, you know that the customer is the very center of your business.

Without them, your business will go nowhere fast. So how can you (as the business owner) get more business from folks who have never dealt with you before? If you want to attract *new* loyal customers to the fold, you have to welcome these people with three things: *ease*, *speed* and *quality*.

These three elements should always come together when you are talking to a potential customer. You have to relay to the customer that you can offer a high quality product *fast* and the process of acquiring and paying for the product would be extra easy.

This strategy works because in our day and age people no longer have lots of time to *wait*. People no longer want to

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spend any of their free hours on things that can be expedited by specific service and product providers.

In line with this modern mindset, you have to show that you are running the *perfect business* that has the customer's interests at heart all the time. Use this tactic to make people even more comfortable with what your business has to offer.

You can also make more profit by finding out what *more* you can offer or upsell just before the customer leaves. Fast food joints are known for offering sundaes, soda and French fries during checkout.

What's your business' "French fries"? What can you upsell to attract more profit over time? Identify these products and services and you are sure to make more money while dealing with new customers. Does it sound easy? It *is* easy and I can assure you that if it is done properly, it will work.

34 Gain Compliance Through Active Listening

What makes a master persuader a truly great conversationalist? Is it his hair, his voice or the way that he gestures while he talks? While these things can definitely make an impact on a subject, no other effort comes close to the impact of *active listening*.

Active listening is simply listening *with an effort to block out everything else*. Most people listen to others while their minds wander elsewhere. That's not active listening.

When you actively listen to someone, you must put the other person's words at the very center of your consciousness and you must show *genuine interest* in everything he has to say. You might be surprised how effective this technique can be in *all social situations*.

You will be able to project an image of a professional and credible conversationalist by listening intently before adding any input. Again, people love *hearing themselves*

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speak and as persuaders we must utilize this tendency to our advantage.

There more you practice active listening, that more in-sync you will become with the subject *and* you won't have to ask so many questions anymore because once the subject is in the mood to talk about himself and what matters to him, you will gain valuable insight without having to ask questions.

Start practicing active listening *today* even with just your family members. The more you listen, the more you will learn and the more you learn, the more strategic your responses would become.

It's fine if you want to plan what to say to your subject but always remember that you must be prepared to modify the verbal content of your message based on the input of the influencee. You can't stick to just one route even if the input is telling you to change your tactics. You can't say the right things to your audience if you don't *listen* to them first.

35 Don't Forget to Ask for Compliance

Covert influence is great but sometimes, it fails to produce the desired goals because the subject isn't sensitive enough to respond to the subtle techniques. In such cases, you have to seal the deal by *directly asking for compliance*.

Of course, you won't be saying things like "have I convinced you?" – such lines will make the other party a little nervous and defensive because it would appear that you are trapping them to say yes. You have to frame the question in such a way that the subject will feel that he is freely giving his consent to go ahead with whatever you are offering.

Lines like "I think this is the absolute best thing for your business right now. Should we get started?" would work beautifully because you are providing a positive fact as you are leading the subject to the final step of the influence process: agreement and action.

However, I must remind you that this technique would only work if you have built up your subject or audience

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sufficiently from ground up. You can't ask for compliance if there is no rapport between you and the audience. You can't ask the subject to buy something from you if he doesn't feel that it's the right product or service.

And a customer can't say yes if the persuader has not shown competence and credibility. You must be able to accomplish the different steps *before* asking for compliance.

This technique is the *logical end point* of all your efforts and if all goes well, compliance will be forthcoming. In some cases, an excited subject might volunteer to comply with what you are asking immediately.

Other times, the subject is clearly waiting for the question – but never gets it. If you don't ask for compliance, who will do it for you? No one – that's why you should always take a chance and ask ahead if you have the influence groundwork in place already. You have nothing to lose if you ask.

36 Scarcity Is the Name of the Game

No one likes the idea of scarcity. The word itself conjures horrible images of drought and hunger. Human beings are naturally averse to scarcity because it is closely associated with hardship and even death.

And this is the main reason why we're taking advantage of this natural tendency to avoid scarcity – to persuade or influence others more easily. If your subject is showing signs of *indecisiveness* you may want to add the element of scarcity to speed things up.

Scarcity works because when we *want* something but there a lot of supply, there is no real reason to decide on the spot. We can wait a day, a month or two years and the item that we want would still be there. A person's desire level is low when the supply level is high.

Inversely, a person's desire level *increases exponentially* when scarcity is introduced. When an object of desire is about to slip away, the target/subject will immediately *want to acquire* the object because it's about to disappear.

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How can you add the scarcity to the picture? Easy – you just have to explain *why* there is scarcity involved. For example, let's say you were trying to sell a bundled product to another person.

The 'hook' would be the special low price and the *number of products in the same line* that are produced specifically for the promotion. You have to emphasize that only a limited number of special packages are being rolled out from the factories and it will take a long time before the promotion is run again.

To increase the impact of the scarcity technique you also have to show the subject that he is going to miss out on a lot if he doesn't grab the opportunity you are offering him right now.

37 Make Your Offer More Familiar to the Influencee

You may have encountered this problem countless times in the past: you have something *new* to offer but no one wants a bite because it's unfamiliar and people aren't just that ready for change. So you end up failing just because people don't like the unfamiliar and the new.

Well, here's a solution to that common problem: *link the familiar with the unfamiliar*. It sounds simple enough but this is actually the billion-dollar secret of companies like Hanes. They hire people like Michael Jordan to promote stuff for them and because MJ is a household name, people flock to the Hanes brand of shirts and underwear. It's that simple.

Does MJ really know more about undershirts and such than you or me? Of course not. But companies still hire him because he's very well-known and his face alone can literally make sales boom. Now let's try to apply this to daily interactions and business deals.

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Let's say you came up with a wildly crazy idea that will make your office project a success. The problem with your idea is that no one has heard of it before and it sounds too novel to be taken seriously. Without this technique, it is likely that you will be the target of much criticism.

You can avoid that by associating *your idea* with an existing idea. It's a simple exercise in comparison. You have to convince your audience that your idea is simply a massive improvement an existing concept. In the end, your audience will imagine themselves reaping the benefits of the new idea while discarding the old.

Change is generally avoided but people know better than to avoid something that will provide a clear benefit. Just make sure that you can substantiate your claims that your idea/product/service is *just like* another existing idea/product/service – otherwise, people won't believe a word that you are saying and they would be doubly doubtful of what you are offering.

38 Invoke the Power of the Group

We all have the desire to belong to a group. Unless a person is antisocial through and through it would be possible to persuade him to do something for you if he thinks it's the norm and a lot of people are also doing it.

Humans *want* to belong to groups because instinctually, we associate groups with safety and survival. Humans were able to survive floods and the Ice Age because they knew how to stick together.

This is the reason why you should never forget to add this technique to your repertoire of influence tactics. People have a natural desire to conform to an existing group that appears desirable.

Therefore, if you tell the subject that he will be part of a group of people who are enjoying the benefits of what you have to offer, he will naturally want to become part of that group. Both his logic and emotions will be affected by your offer because both channels of thinking are preoccupied with survival.

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People will pick the path that will improve their chances of survival (although people rarely realize that the end-point of all human endeavors is survival and self-preservation). Here are some sample lines that make use of the power of the group:

“Hey, most of us from administration won’t think twice about working on this project. But we believe that you have the most potential from your group and you deserve to work on this as much as the folks in administration. Congratulations on your moving up in this company!”

“The moment you have this product, you will enjoy the benefits of a select group of people who want to beat the national mortality rate and live past 90!”

“When people order the flower shirt they also usually buy the matching flower hat and flower pants, too”

39 Hasten Decision-Making with Contrasting Statements

One of the biggest problems that master persuaders encounter when they are trying to get someone to say “yes!” is the slow decision making. People always seem to be stuck on saying yes because they think too much or they think of the offer in so many different ways that they become paralyzed with indecision.

This can kill the momentum in many situations – so it would be best to remedy this situation before it wrecks the persuasive groundwork that you have already laid down. How can you do this?

The easiest way to hasten decision-making is by creating a clear contrast that will make your offer appear in a positive light. The contrast can be as simple and straightforward as “what would happen if you got this/what would happen if you didn’t get this”.

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This is just one way of creating contrast between things and yet, this particular style can produce great results. Aim for simplicity because information-logged people will become even more confused if you come up with a complex contrast. Also, it would be best to *limit* the items involved in the contrasting so people won't drown in information.

This technique can work in private interactions and in business situations. Contrasting objects can really speed up the decision-making process because people would be able to create conclusions faster and they would be *confident* with their conclusions because they will feel that they have finally understood everything there is to know about the issue at hand (even if they don't).

This technique appeals to both logical people and creative people; logical people will rationalize that they are making the right choice while the more imaginative individuals will imagine themselves choosing the better option which would of course be your offer/product/idea.

40 Modify the Time Coordinates of Your Audience

When people have to make a decision that involves spending or losing some resources (i.e. money, time, etc.) they usually procrastinate in making the decision and they also *devalue* what is being offered in their minds.

Personal resources are always limited and if one could avoid reducing one's resources, then that would be the more ideal option. How can a master persuader work around this tendency to say no to a good offer? If the person in front of you is stuck on *the present* you have to change his time coordinates.

You have to change the way he views the end-result of the decision that *you* want him to make. For example, if you are offering an investment that would pay off in a year or two, you need to help him visualize what his financial state would be like in a year (or two).

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He has to be able to see that all of his investments in what you have to offer will not go to waste and ultimately, he will be the one getting the best cut of the profit or benefit.

If the other person is unable to see this, he will walk away and never call you again and you would have to work double time to create the influential groundwork once again.

If you have to shift the timeframe or time coordinates involved twice or thrice, do it. Continue shifting the time coordinates until your subjects realizes that he has everything to gain in the end and the resources that will be invested *at the present* will be all worth it.

Of course, before you can do this you have to make sure that you will leave a good first impression on the subject and you are *unique* from all the other folks who might be offering something similar.

OBJECTION KILLING TACTICS

41 Affirm as Many Beliefs and Values As Possible

Dealing with objections is very common in the world of influence. Objection is the twin brother of agreement – there really is no way to have one without the other. This doesn't mean you should resign yourself to losses and defeats; you just have to know how to entice agreement (instead of objection).

The easiest way to handle objections is by *avoiding* them in the first place. You see, people hold their core beliefs and principles sacred. They have to protect these beliefs because these ideas represent stability in a person's life. Attempting to change them on the spot will cause the other person to become overly defensive.

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To avoid the situation where you have to engage in verbal fencing with a defensive influencee, I suggest that you find as many values and beliefs to *reaffirm* before making your offer.

Because as you agree with another person's beliefs, his defenses go down until he no longer feels threatened by your presence or your ideas. A person would slam the door on a stranger who's offering the fountain of youth – but a person would never say no to a best friend who has cooked up a crazy idea.

I want you to strive to become your subject's 'best friend' during the conversation. I want you to make the subject as comfortable and trusting as possible so you can *avoid* objections. Of course, there would still be objections but as a person becomes more and more trusting, he would find fewer and fewer reasons to object to what is being laid out on the table.

Avoid debates that directly counter the subject's long-standing beliefs – even if you win, your subject will never forgive you for debunking his belief. It's better to harmonize with subject as much as possible – arguments only create friction and distance between you and the subject.

42 Outcomes Matter All The Time

When a master persuader comes across a truly reluctant subject, he must not feel even an iota of despair because even the most reticent subject can be gradually drawn out from their defensive stance and fully persuaded.

If your influence groundwork is falling apart, you need a more robust system of persuasion. In this section I'm going to share with eight simple steps that will counter most objections by focusing on the outcome of the transaction between you and the other party.

1. Identify the problem that your offer can solve. You have to be very specific here because wary subjects tend to ignore generalizations even more. Be specific about the issue or problem that you can help solve.
2. After identifying the problem I want you to *show* the subject what would happen if this problem continues and he does not do anything to resolve it. Showcase

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- the negative outcomes (i.e. extra costs over time) that will result from inaction.
3. Ask the subject what type of resolution or outcome he wants to see after being confronted with the issue or problem.
 4. Ask the subject what would happen if he chooses to solve the problem.
 5. Ask the subject again if this new route (the resolution) is really what he wants at the moment.
 6. Think of the long-term effects of the solution that you are offering the subject. Will it really help the other person or will it benefit only you in the end? Re-evaluate. If you think your solution won't help in the long-term you have to make this clear to the other subject so he won't have any undue expectations.
 7. If the subject gives an answer that doesn't completely align with what you want to hear, don't be too quick to judge. Hear him out and try convincing him again.
 8. Never insinuate or state that the other person's beliefs are wrong. You will only open a can of worms each time that you do that. *Harmonize* instead of creating more friction.

43 Take Advantage of Peak Experiences and End-Experiences

Humans have a funny way of processing and remembering events. If a person enjoyed something, even if it were just ten minutes of relaxation, he would remember that for as long as he lived.

But if he were enjoying something and that enjoyment was interrupted for even a short period of time, he would remember the *end-experience* (which is negative) and forget all about the previous pleasure or enjoyment that he had experienced prior to the negative end-experience.

This is by no means an obstacle to influence but rather, it is a *window of opportunity*. If someone says no to your offer, backtrack just a little bit so you can ask questions that would later erode the resistance of the subject.

If your offer was rejected at first, I want you to ask the subject about his *last experience* with your competitor. A competitor is any person (or business, if you are a business

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person) that was previously associated with the subject. Slowly draw out their negative experience and what happened after they had that negative experience.

At this point in time, your subject will slowly remember the *negatives* more than the positives because that is simply how the human mind operates. After drawing out the negative experiences from your competitor, slowly lead the subject to what you have to offer and what you can do so that he will never have such negative experiences every again (if he chooses to stick with your offer).

Just make sure that you can back up your claims with action; otherwise, the subject will most likely leave you again after having a bad experience. You can use this tactic to transform a “no” mindset into a “yes” mindset. It might take some time to take effect, but it will eventually work. And it can be used in any situation, too!

44 Explore Both Sides of the Coin to Avoid Objections

Most persuaders (even the most seasoned ones) feel a tiny speck of fear whenever they here words like “I don’t think this is right for me”. Hearing a “no” may feel like the end of the world to a practicing master persuader, but in reality, disagreement is really a meaningless concept.

We now know enough to confidently say that when a person says “no” what he is really saying is “no until you show me that you can bring me to point B safely”. People want proof and reassurance that they are not going to be harmed when they deal with you.

This applies to *any* situation not just in business. “No” is only “no way!” until you can offer proof that you are not a threat and you won’t be causing harm in any way.

So when someone says “no” to you, the best thing to do is to really explore all of the possibilities to gain the trust of the subject. By exploring all of the possibilities and offering the best option (which is of course your offer) the

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subject's defenses will naturally be lowered because you are showing that you have his best interests in mind.

It is also important to remember that people tend to hang on to end-experiences and peak-experiences. People like to generalize, too. You have to emphasize that by ignoring your offer, some negative outcomes might result. And your position as an expert will be bolstered by your exploration of all the possible angles and consequences of the problem.

At that exact moment, your subject will encode and remember only the end-experiences that you are stating. Whole trains of thought will be summed up in those end-experiences. It won't matter if the subject didn't get all the details of your discussion correctly. What he *must remember* are the potential *negative* end-experiences that might come due to his inaction.

45 Debunk Negative Beliefs the Right Way

When a persuader is operating on full power, he usually views the subject as a direct target. The persuader will do everything in his power to disprove the other person's beliefs about what is being offered at the moment. The result of such all-out attacks is usually *utter failure*.

Because no matter how hard you insinuate that a person is wrong for holding certain beliefs, that person will simply ignore you – or worse, fight you until the very end. And we know what *that means* for persuaders. Persuaders are at a disadvantage because if the subject walks away, the persuader walks away with nothing but tension and disappointment.

So here's my advice to you when you are faced with the task of persuading someone who is unmoving in his beliefs. Don't tell the other person that he's wrong. Don't tell him that he has been holding ineffective or false beliefs all his life.

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Don't say that you are in the right and he's utterly wrong. Instead, harmonize with the other person and ask him to *imagine himself* performing something for you by accepting another belief. The subject must realize *himself* what he can gain by accepting your offer.

And if his beliefs are getting in the way, you must loosen those deeply embedded beliefs by providing beliefs of your own. Beliefs eventually lead to target behavior. Your goal is to change someone's belief so that his behavior will also change.

You can't change a person's behavior *for the long term* if his beliefs remain the same. Your subject must experience *for himself* what would happen if he changed his beliefs.

You become more than a persuader – you will actually be instructing and guiding the person as he transforms his deeply rooted beliefs. That is completely different from just saying that the other person is wrong. Doing that will clearly get you nowhere – fast.

46 Prevent Option Attachment As Quickly As Possible

There are three things that you would always want to avoid when you are pitching an idea, product or service: buyer remorse, anticipated regret and the worst of the three, option attachment.

Buyer remorse takes place when the person regrets having purchased something from you. Anticipated regret is the decision to *not buy anything* because the buyer feels that he will only regret it later on. Option attachment is the deadliest of the three because it can leave a potential buyer paralyzed with indecision for a very long time.

What is option attachment anyway? Option attachment happens when a person is faced with two options that he finds very attractive. To the decision-maker, choosing one would mean losing the other good option and so choosing would actually equate with instant loss.

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The option-attached individual would also feel that if he chooses one, the other option would probably look tantalizingly attractive a few days later. Faced with this loopy conundrum, the option-attached subject will think about the two options to no end – but he will not make a decision anytime soon. To the persuader, option-attached individuals represent uncertainty and a potential dead end.

You can remedy this problem in two steps. First, you have to make sure that during the dialog, the subject will not grow fond or attached to any other option that you present (in the effort to explore both sides of the coin). To be safe, showcase an *inferior option* so that it would not be logical to be found of such an option at all.

The decision-making stage should also be as quick as possible. Lead the subject to say yes; don't *wait* for him to say yes because if you allow him to do that he might grow even more attached to options that you presented him.

The second step has something to do with the options involved in your discussion. Don't start with the better option (which is your offer). Start with the poorer option and then transition as fast as you can to the better option. Don't let the subject develop a connection with the option that will ultimately be discarded.

47 Use Behavioral Scripts to Change a Person's Belief

Objections arise because the subject is unsure where to go – the ‘default’ response to uncertainty is disagreement. Disagreement is equated with stability and avoidance of change.

Change can either be good or bad – but humans instinctually associate change with negative consequences so that’s another obstacle that you should prepare for.

If you do encounter a staunch objection, you can try *behavioral scripts* to modify the cause of the negative behavior, which is just the belief of the person regarding a particular issue or object. Here’s an example of a behavioral script:

“You open your email in the morning to find that you have made three hundred sales in just one day. You also receive a report that your store has been restocked and your

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website is in fine working condition. You don't have to worry about a thing anymore as you prepare for a fine day with the family. We take care of everything, night and day for you."

When you give a person a script to work with, you are actually giving the other person instructions as to how he can modify his own behavior. He might not understand the nature of the script, but that's how it works. The best thing about behavior scripts is that people tend to repeat the script even after the meeting.

This is persuasion in action. Your words and your intentions stay with the subject even if you are not there with them anymore. However, in order for a behavioral script to be truly effective you *must* instruct the subject to imagine *himself* in the ideal situation.

It won't work if he imagines some John Doe getting all the benefits of your offer. He must experience the benefits *in his own imagination* so that the effect and impact of the script will linger for *days*. In your next meeting, try asking for compliance again – you might be surprised with the subject's answer then.

48 Discover Three Little Known Facts about How Decisions Are Made

Most persuaders feel that subjects are often in a critical state of mind during interactions. Nothing could be further from the truth. Unless a person makes a conscious effort to always analyze everything around him, he's most likely working on 'autopilot'.

This simply means that he will be barely working with this logic center and most of his decisions, words and actions will be based on simple cross-referencing and mental heuristics. That's why you should always structure your input and questions in such a way that you are able to *lead* the subject to a logical end point that will benefit you *and* the subject.

Why? Because people form opinions and ideas based on available input. People's minds react to current stimuli and nothing more. Here's another shocking truth about people: what they say and decide on *now* has no bearing on what they have done in the past and what they will do in the future.

They will simply make the decision based on *present circumstances* and nothing more. People rarely stop to think what would happen to them in five years after they've made the decision. This simply does not happen. Also, a person might change his mind later on *but* that doesn't change the fact that you can get a favourable decision or action *now*.

Here's another strange fact – people can formulate strong opinions about stuff that doesn't even exist – like a hypothetical new law or regulation. This only proves that most people are creatures of the moment and they are preoccupied in what they will get *now* more than anything.

And this is the reason why objections must be handled swiftly and strategically because people often have a one-track mind when it comes to decision-making. But the good news here is that persuaders can have *full rein* over a person's thinking if the right strategies are used.

49 Handle Buyer's Remorse Like a Pro

Buyer's remorse can ruin repeat business because it can dissuade people from having dealings with you again. Before that even happens, you have to make sure that the subject has been 'inoculated' against buyer remorse even before he leaves your sight.

Imagine you were talking right now with a person who seems to be suffering from buyer remorse. He just bought something from you because your offer looked so tempting at that time.

And now he's telling you that he won't be ordering again because of reason A, reason B, etc. What can you do to end this irrational remorse? You can 'inoculate' this person by supporting his decision outright and by helping him prepare for the remorse that is sure to come. You can say something like:

"We both know that you invested a lot into this service because you want your home and business establishment to be secure, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. It's for your own peace of mind. What will you tell people if they ask you

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about your decision to invest a sizable amount for your peace of mind?”

After dropping that vital question, let the subject think of ways as to how he can fully justify his decision to take your offer. By doing this, the subject won't feel hopeless and helpless when the pangs of buyer remorse start kicking in.

Even if no one really asks the subject why he invested resources for your offer, the justification that he has crafted in his mind will be enough to halt buyer's remorse. Because in the end, other people's words won't really matter – what does matter is what the subject thinks and feels.

If he is defeated by buyer's remorse, you can forget about repeat business. But if he is successful in battling buyer's remorse, your influence stays with that person for good.

50 Empathy is the King of Objection-Handling

Empathy is defined as “the action of understanding/being aware/being sensitive as well as vicariously experiencing the feelings, thoughts and experiences of another person”. To be empathetic means you are consciously putting yourself in the other person’s shoes in an effort to understand him and to communicate with him more effectively.

This might not sound like a solution to objections at all, but if you look at the nature of objections, you will see why it can be such an effective tool of persuasion. Let me repeat a point I made in a previous section: *people only say “no” because you haven’t shown that you can bring them to your target destination safely.*

The “no” will stay until you are able to show that you will not cause harm or grief in any way. Empathy is a fast and easy way to project a genuinely caring persona during a social interaction.

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To be empathetic means you must show that you are interested and you are an active listener as well. You are there not to take away someone's hard earned resources but to *add* to those resources through whatever you have to offer.

When a person keeps saying no to you that simply means that trust and rapport has not yet been achieved. If you are unsure as to how to express your genuine care for the other party, you can ask them questions that will help them relate what *they want to achieve* and *what kinds of solutions* they want to see.

As the other party begins to share his thoughts you must continue asking questions so you will get a fuller picture of what's going on in the other person's mind. Statements like "I feel the same way about that issue..." can be used to reinforce the idea that you are there to *solve the other party's problems* and not add to it.

51 Encourage Compliance with Strategically Vague Words

Before I draw any violent reactions, let me be clear – strategically vague words and sentences are used *frequently* by so many people to gain compliance from people; people just don't know they're actually using such words. Here are some examples of strategically vague words:

1. You need a streamlined and proactive system to iron out the wrinkles in your business.
2. The technological revolution will save businesses from going bust.
3. The best vacation ever is the one that combines leisure with pleasure.
4. The best decisions are the ones that are done in the heat of the moment.

At first glance, the sentences above appear to be really positive messages – but in reality, these are vague

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sentences. That is actually the strength of vague words and sentences; in the absence of clear meaning, the brain assigns meaning to make sense of the input.

Sometimes, it would be best to just let the other subject make his own conclusions on the issue based on a strategically vague input.

When you are getting a lot of objections and flak from your subject, backtrack a little and reintroduce your offer with strategically vague words. Your subject will probably be surprised at the change and he will start thinking differently about your offer.

If that works, stick with the theme and start building your persuasion groundwork once again. We must all remember that the process of persuading others is not linear nor does it follow a singular, traceable path.

It's filled with ups and downs and so many twists that sometimes it's hard to keep track of what you had to go through just to gain compliance. This is the reason why you should always strive to add to your repertoire of persuasion strategies because you never know which one would come in handy.

52 Encourage Physical Involvement to Minimize Objections

If you are planning to persuade someone who is known for saying “no” to new ideas, this technique just might help him say “yes” faster. This technique doesn’t involve verbal techniques or complex persuasion structures.

The only thing that you have to do is to lead the person to do something *physically* during the interaction. By allowing a person to perform an action related to the interaction, defenses are brought down immediately and the person is forced to show body language that *approves* of the interaction.

Here’s a sample scenario: let’s say you were about to be joined in a meeting by a person who was known to disagree with almost anyone he meets. How can you ensure that this person won’t disagree with the points you will be raising later on in the meeting?

You can try asking the subject to arrange the chairs for you or you can ask him to help you carry stuff to the front of the

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meeting room. Think of something for the other person to do so that he would a claim over the meeting itself.

Doing so will reduce friction and disagreement and will ultimately help you persuade and influence that person. There has to be some degree of involvement especially in situations where you have to sell something (urgently) to another person or to a group of people.

If a person becomes involved, he will feel that he *partly owns* the event/situation and he will feel responsible for producing a positive outcome (any positive outcome always benefits the persuader, or both parties).

The best thing about this technique is that it can be done covertly/secretly – the other party will never know that you were trying to persuade him/her in the first place.

This is a good thing because people have a tendency to think that they are being manipulated. If manipulation becomes an issue, the other party might decide to simply walk away from dealing with you.

53 All Lines of Questioning Should Lead You to a Goal

As master persuaders, we know just how important questions are for the purpose of persuading someone to agree with us or believe in our side of the story. But does this mean that all questions can help you draw compliance from others?

The answer is *no, not all questions are helpful*. All lines of questioning that come from the persuader must be goal-oriented. You must have a clear goal in sight when you engage the subject, otherwise, you would be wasting your own time or worse, the subject's precious time.

Here's another reason why you should line your questions strategically: people have a tendency to 'push back' when they receive information. They push back because people don't like being told what to do. How can we work around this negative tendency?

Since people don't like being told what to do, we have to question them in such a way that they actually *tell us what we want to hear*. Here's an example: let's say you were

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trying to sell an expensive water filtering system to someone.

The system is high end and it would cost over \$3,000 to make the subject's establishment completely covered by the system. How do you convince the subject to fork out \$3,000 for your system? Use the right questions:

- *What kind of water do you want to flow in your establishment's pipes and taps?*
- *Do you want rust and other undesirable components to continue flowing into your personal water system?*
- *How much do you think you can spend on healthy water?*

These are just basic examples of strategic questions used by persuaders during a dialog. Think of your own questions *ahead of time* so you can modify the questions during the actual social interaction.

54 Handle Objections with Three Covert Concepts: Pleasure, Pain & Ease

Masters of persuasion need to be adept not only with communication but also with *human nature* in general. Persuaders need to be knowledgeable about the various tendencies and values of people, too.

For example, did you know that there are three things that could capture people's attention the most? These three things are *pleasure, pain* and *ease*. Believe it or not, these three things are *interrelated* because pleasure would be meaningless without the threat of pain and *ease* is the *only* way to go as far as 99% of the population is concerned.

If you want to be truly effective in persuading and persuading others, you have to show them that what you are offering will not only give them a benefit or advantage but will also *save them* from something extremely painful or disadvantages.

If what you are offering your subject provides a simple benefit but does not save them from any negative consequence, they won't be motivated to take action at all. On the flipside, show them that acquiring the solution to their problem is as easy as pie.

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Give them everything they would possibly need to be able to decide on the spot. If they have to talk to people, give them time to talk to these people. That's the *ease* component. It's easy to get the solution to the problem and therefore, it would only be logical to acquire the solution from *you*.

To improve your chances of persuading the subject, focus on the theme of *loss*. Emphasize that he would suffer from a clear loss if he lets go of the opportunity to solve the problem by acquiring the solution that you are offering. The risk of losing something must be *absolute*. You must highlight this as early as possible during the interaction.

55 Determine the Roots of Objections

Why do people disagree? Why do they object to other people in the first place? These are just some of the more common questions that master persuaders have to deal with on a daily basis. But more than anything, a master persuader has to be aware of the *most common reasons* why people object to offers and ideas.

The first reason is people generally do not like making decisions. Decision-making can be a real headache and if your subject feels this way, he won't be making a decision anytime soon. The second reason is *old habits die hard*. People don't want change.

People don't want to disturb the equilibrium that they have created for themselves. To humans, change might mean discomfort and we modern humans avoid discomfort like the plague. The third reason is closely to associated with the second reason – people don't like giving up what they have now to make way for something new.

Again, people like having old things and ideas by their side because they've had those things *the longest*. They will hold on to those beliefs and ideas because they believe those beliefs are a part of them. The fourth reason is probably the hardest to resolve – the other party may have

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had a bad experience with you (or your business) in the past.

People find it easier to say no to someone who has caused some degree of harm or misfortune in the past. If you offered something in the past that failed, the other party might use this as a reason to say no to you. The fifth reason is *resistance to the idea of being controlled*.

No one likes being controlled and if you appear to be a very dominant person, prepare for heaps and heaps of resistance. The sixth and final reason is *perceived threat to the self*. If what you are offering sounds a little threatening to the subject's self-image or his resources, he would most likely say no to you.

56 Dealing with ‘Economic Excuses’

Let’s face it – most of us have to deal with people to gain some income. And most of the time, the selling process becomes twice as hard when the subject uses *economic excuses* to get rid of you. But don’t fret – there is an easy solution to counter such objections.

When the subject uses ‘absolute’ objections to end the conversation and send you home without your hard earned victory, the first thing that you should do is to evaluate what the subject knows so far.

Is the subject aware of the price of what you are selling? If he isn’t aware yet, don’t volunteer to state the price of the product. Tell him that at this point in time, it is a little risky to state the price of what you are offering before you have even shown him what the offer can do for *him* and his target problems.

When he insists on knowing how much the product or service is, just tell him outright and quickly transition to the features and benefits. Don’t forget to outline what the offer solves and what would happen to him if he doesn’t take action soon.

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Remember – pleasure, pain and ease go together nicely during social interactions. Link together these elements to encourage the other person to take action quickly. If you are successful in creating the persuasion groundwork, the price of the product or service won't matter anymore because the benefits or advantages have easily outweighed the mere monetary value of what is being offered.

However, I must warn you that this technique will only work if you can paint an amazing picture that will capture the subject's heart and imagination. The subject must be able to imagine himself *using* what you are offering and he must also imagine himself being free from the negative consequences. This is the only way to modify the behavior of the most resistant of subjects.

57 Differentiating Valid Objections from Invalid Objections

By *nature* objections can be categorized into three groups: *information-seeking objections*, *sale-related objections* and *invalid objections*. Invalid objections must be dealt with swiftly because these are mostly rooted in irrational thoughts and ideas.

Simply put: a person who has an invalid objection doesn't really know why he's saying no in the first place – you have to slowly condition the person to listen to what you have to say first. Examples of invalid objections are:

- *“Do you think this product would have been better if it was produced by Company X instead of Company Y?”*
- Silence can also be a form of objection. If the subject is too quiet throughout the presentation he may not have been listening at all. You have to build your groundwork once again and establish rapport before trying to sell your idea or product again. Otherwise, the dialog will end in a stalemate.
- *“I think I will just think about for a week or two...”*

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- *“Maybe I will have the funds for it the next time we see each other.”*
- *“I’m interested but I don’t think I’m ready for it yet.”*

Information-seeking objections are made because the subject still lacks vital information about the offer and he does not feel comfortable doing business with you just yet. Examples of information-seeking objections are:

- *“I’m not interested in what you are offering at the moment”*
- *“I don’t think I can spare any extra cash or credit for what you are offering.”*
- *“I’m happy with what I have at the present time.”*
- *“Your competition offered me something better”*

Sale-related objections are almost always just personal requests veiled by objections. Here are some examples:

- *“I don’t like blue, I prefer red most of the time.”*
- *“The size is too small”*
- *“I like double coated paint jobs”*

When you hear a sale-related objection, the subject is actually telling you “I’m ready to buy, just give me what I *really need!*”

58 Remember This Simple Blueprint for Handling Objections

There is no single method of dispelling objections and persuading other people (which is evidenced by the fact that we will be exploring 101 different techniques in this book).

There is no single route to success; but what I can assure you is that if you are well-prepared, there are few things you *can't* accomplish when it comes to persuasion.

Many people have asked me in the past: *is there a blueprint for handling objections?* Well, I can't really pack *all* of the things that you need to know in a short list but what I can give you is a *blueprint* of sorts. And here is the blueprint:

1. Attitude adjustment is just as important as behavioral modification especially when you want to persuade a person to just go with you plan at the present moment.

If the other person seems doubtful of what you are offering, it would be best to keep his attitude *positive* at all times. Draw out the objections and answer all of his questions as satisfactorily as possible.

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2. People want to work with allies as often as possible. If you appear to be an adversarial character, the subject would have more reasons to object to what you are bringing to the table.
3. Objections are not meant to be blocked or cast aside. When someone is objecting, he is most likely looking for answer or *looking for your help*. Be gracious when objections come and be sincere when answering these objections.
4. If the subject is not responding to most of your techniques, ask him a question and give him options (your offer being the best option, of course). This shows other people that you genuinely care about their interests.
5. Never forget to explore both sides of the coin. You will be seen as more credible if you explore the pros and cons of your offer.
6. Do not show that you are affected by the person's objections. Instead, view the objections as simply parts of the conversation that have be handled carefully so you can sustain the conversation.

7. Before entering into a dialog that requires influence or persuasion, make sure that you have brought along your long list of benefits and advantages!

59 How Well Do You Know Your Offer's Benefits?

When we approach someone with the intent to sell something (like an idea or product) we of course have biases (e.g. your offer is the best among all other similar offers).

If what you have to offer is truly amazing, you won't have any problems *selling* it to people by stating its benefits. But here's the problem: most persuaders are aware of the fact that they need to pitch features and benefits but most of them don't know how to do it.

I can't tell you all there is to know about the craft of pitching benefits because even seasoned copywriters will tell you that they never stop learning about this essential step in persuasion.

What I can tell you right now is that *there are many ways to express the idea of getting a clear benefit*—you only have to be really creative about your pitch to make these benefits shine. Here are some examples of benefits:

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1. They need your idea/service/product right now because it will solve one of their biggest problems. Not acting now will bring clear losses.
2. What you are offering is a direct solution to an issue that has been bothering the subject for a long time.
3. The subject should accept your offer because of your long history of excellence.
4. The subject should deal with you or your business because you offer the best possible *experience* in your field or industry (as proven by testimonials from your past customers).
5. The best time to accept your offer is now because you will be offering incentives and rewards to early birds. That translates to more benefits, more ease and more benefits, too.
6. You are always fair in dealing with people and you have made this one of the core principles in life.

60 Analyze Objections Like a Pro

If there was a magic key that would unlock the power to dissolve objections, I would easily give it to you but the sad truth we must all face is that there isn't one and persuaders are almost always alone in times of crises.

That's why it is so important for you to be able to analyze objections like a true master of influence. If you don't have the ability to analyze objections, you will end up making a lot of missed shots and that is never a good thing because we always have *limited time* to persuade someone to do something for us. Below is a step by step guide to analyzing objections of *any kind*:

1. You won't be able to understand the subject unless you hear him out first. Don't react to the objection – listen carefully first. If he has to speak for fifteen minutes straight, just listen the whole time. If he's mentioning technical requirements and other such details, don't forget to write that down, too.

2. After hearing out the subject, try to classify the problem. Does the problem have to do with *you* or the offer itself? Does the problem point at glaring flaws of your offer? Don't be afraid to ask questions because you need clear and specific answers from the subject if you are to validate the objection.

After the subject has said his piece, ask again: is there anything else that you want to tell me? This is an effective way of uncovering *hidden objections*. Objections are better off exposed than hidden, because if the objections are hidden, you won't be able to address them!

3. The next step is to *harmonize* with the subject even if he has objected to your offer. Acknowledge that he does have a point and that his perspective is logical and serves a purpose.

Remind the subject that you are on his side all the time. At this point in time I want you to start leading the subject so his frame of mind shifts from objection to acceptance.

4. Give your answer to his objection. Do this only when you have fully understood why he is objecting in the first place – you have to be aware of the nature of the objection as much as the details of the objection.

NLP TACTICS

61 How to Shift a Person's Mind Flow in an Instant

Too often we are faced with the problem of having to deal with a subject whose line of thinking seems to be stuck in one direction. Unless you know how to shift that person's mind flow, you will have to wait until he finishes with what he has to say.

Sometimes, it's better to interrupt and then shift the issue at hand so you can accomplish your goals faster. It's not that I'm encouraging you to *not listen* to your subject.

What I am emphasizing is that you have to learn to stealthily shift the conversation to your target issue or topic so you can lead the subject more easily to where you really want to go. You can do this by using the redefine pattern. When can you use the redefine pattern? Here are some instances where this NLP pattern would be most useful:

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1. When you find yourself in an endless argument with someone who doesn't seem to want to back down from a single issue.
2. When you encounter an invalid or stalling objection.
3. When the subject seems to be talking about something that is not even remotely related to the target issues.
4. When you want to ask someone out on a date but the other person is talking about something else.

As you can see from the list, the redefine pattern can be used in business and even in the most basic of personal interactions with other people. It can be used in everyday situations. The pattern itself is also very easy to remember:

“The real issue here is not (A), it's (B) and because of that...”

The (A) variable represents the non-target topic or issue while the (B) variable is the new topic or issue that you want to open up.

62 Use Agreement Frames to Improve Your Chances of Gaining Compliance

One of the biggest problems in the field of persuasion is that we *can't* persuade a subject if the subject doesn't even *want* to listen in the first place. We can't execute any of our brilliant plans if the other party is ignoring or worse, *being defensive* to the point that he is no longer capable of listening to any logical argument.

In such instances, you can use an agreement frame to ensure compliance – and I can assure you, the subject won't even know *why* he has complied with you and why he has chosen to consciously listen to what you have to say.

As you can see, this particular NLP pattern will work on creative thinkers and logical thinkers alike. No matter what kind of mindset the subject has, it would work. An agreement frame allows a person to agree with another person but at the same time he would be able to add elements that are completely opposite to what the other person is actually saying.

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It sounds a little crazy straight from the page but trust me – this is classical neuro linguistic programming at its best. Before I reveal the pattern to you, I have to remind you at this point in time that no pattern will be effective unless your vocal skills are supporting what you want to accomplish.

Your voice has to be just as influential and persuasive as your words. Most persuaders get too excited and rush the words as they come to mind. Don't do this anymore because it reduces the effectiveness of your message.

Transform that energy and excitement into a deep and slow cadence so that the other person would easily absorb and process the information coming from you.

Now that we've discussed that, let's proceed with the pattern. This pattern is just as easy as the previous NLP pattern I discussed with you. The basic formula is "I agree and would like to add that _____". Notice that you will be using "and" instead of the more usual "but".

You will be using "and" because it cues the other person to listen intently at what you have to say. If you use "but", that would cue the subject to be defensive because you are about to drop something negative. Try this pattern and see how it actually encourages people to listen to views that are different from theirs.

63 How to Get People to Agree With You With “Yes Sets”

Wouldn't it be wonderful if there was a language pattern that you can use that would make people say “yes” even if they haven't really thought about what they agreed upon? Well, since you are an ethical fellow who probably won't use such a pattern to cause harm to anyone, I'm going to share it with you in this section.

You may have heard of “yes sets” elsewhere; it has been around for decades and it has only been revived recently when the interest in influence & persuasion increased. A “yes set” is actually a line of statements that pace and lead people to say “yes!”.

Pacing and leading are basic skills of hypnotherapists and NLP trainers. You will be able to pace and lead someone if basic rapport has already been established.

If not, you have to go back to square one because people won't respond to a yes set if they haven't an idea why they should trust you in the first place. “Yes sets” can be quite effective because they lead a person to believe that

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everything that is contained within a statement is *true*. Here's an example:

“As you are reading the words on this page, taking in all the useful information, you are feeling more and more relaxed”

Did you get the formula just by reading the sample sentence? If not, that's alright, here's the explanation: a yes set is a statement that is usually comprised by three elements. Two elements in the statement are true and can be easily verified by the senses (taste, smell, sight, touch, hearing) while the third element can either be true or false.

But since it's a yes set, the person would agree twice in a row and he would most likely accept the third element as true, too. This NLP pattern works well because it latches on cleanly to the cross-referencing tendency of the subconscious mind.

As you are reading this book, remembering these lessons, you will feel the need to practice these methods at least 10 minutes every day to get the best results.

64 Familiarize Yourself With the Subject's Perceptual Position

A perceptual position is simply a person's viewpoint in any given situation. There are two truths that you have to keep in mind whenever you set out to persuade another person. The first truth is that the only perceptual position *you have* at the present time is your own.

We don't carry around the full perceptual positions of other people because we live only our lives and not anybody else's. The second truth is in the game of persuasion and influence, the only perceptual position that truly counts is the other person's position.

This might sound a little harsh but you have to hear me out. When you want to persuade another person, you will lose the battle for persuasion if you don't know what the subject *might* be thinking.

Of course, we will never know the exact thoughts but we can certainly approximate them. So here's my advice to you before even attempting to use any persuasion technique: take a leaf from NLP and try to determine the perceptual position of the subject first.

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Put yourself in the other person's shoes throughout a dialog and I can assure you that would have an immense impact in the way you will be formulating patterns and tactical statements throughout the interaction. When you put yourself in the subject's perceptual position, you would also be able to 'test' your statements for effectiveness.

For example, if you are aware that the subject has a creative bent, do you think statistics would matter to him the most? Statistics may not work but if you just take into account *your own* perceptual position, you would end up sticking to that route and you will ultimately fail to persuade the subject because that is simply how he *thinks*.

65 Strategic Uses for “But” and “And”

These two words are probably the most overused terms in the English vocabulary, right next to “I”. But no matter, we’re going to talk about these two terms even *more* in this section of the book because strategically using these words can have a massive impact on how your subject will *process* the information that you are giving him.

In NLP, it’s all about results. Language patterns should more or less produce the intended results; otherwise, some language elements may have been misappropriated during the interaction. Now, you might be wondering: what’s so special about “but” and “and” anyway?

Why devote an entire section to these two words. “But” and “and” are very familiar connecting words and since they are very common, people rarely pay attention to their use and placement.

But little do people know that these connecting words can have a profound impact on the way they process facts when a master persuader uses these connecting words strategically.

So how can you use these words strategically? Here's how it works:

1. Use *and* when connecting two elements in a statement if you want the subject to remember and accept both elements. That's why we use "and" in agreement frames because we want the subject to note that you have agreed with him *and* you have provided additional input after you have expressed your agreement with the other person.
2. Use *but* when connecting two elements in a statement if you want the subject to completely discard the *first element* in the statement. People usually make the grave mistake of putting a positive element at the beginning of a statement and adding a *negative* element toward the end. This is one of the main reasons why people become defensive when they hear the word "but". It doesn't have to be this way at all. To avoid resistance, simply reverse the order of the elements. Consider the example below:

"I think you are in good health but you really need to see a therapist to help alleviate those joint pains"

“You need to see a therapist to help alleviate those joint pains but the good news is that apart from that you have almost perfect health”

66: Levying Criticism without Damaging Your Ability to Persuade

Sometimes, we set out to persuade others through criticism. By nature, people greatly dislike criticism because it puts them in the wrong. But then again, there are times when we can't do without criticism. What is a persuader to do?

Thankfully, neuro linguistic programming has several language patterns that can be used to avoid the common problems associated with criticism. The first pattern that you can use is the “delete” pattern that can be accomplished with a simple “but”.

As I have already discussed in a previous section, “but” can be used to disconnect two elements found in the same statement. The “but” immediately negates the first element of a statement. Here's an example:

“The project that you have just finished needs some tweaks but overall it is an excellent example of how a star programmer can work with the highest level of pressure”

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“I don’t want you to hang out with your friends until 2 AM but if your friends can wait for you until Saturday night, that’s a completely different thing”

You can also combine “and” and “because” strategically to give both praise and constructive criticism in a single statement. Here’s how that would look like:

“The work that you did was exquisitely done because you spent a lot of time working on it and how great would it feel if you went ahead and reviewed parts 1 and 2 just to check if there were any errors worth correcting?”

Here is another combination that uses the word “yet” to set a long statement into motion without interrupting the flow of ideas:

“I almost agree that you shouldn’t be working overtime yet because it’s your first week on the job and you could just work on the stuff you have to finish now so you can leave for home sooner.”

67 How to Heighten the Subject's Awareness Instantly

Practitioners of persuasion and influence know how hard it is to get a subject's attention and it's even harder to encourage a subject to *focus* on specific parts of a presentation.

If you thought you had to repeat yourself over and over again until your subject finally pays attention, think again: you don't have to do that anymore if you are using an *awareness pattern*. An awareness pattern makes use of terms like:

- Aware
- Realize
- See

This particular pattern can really create a huge impact on any audience because words like "aware" can instantly change the subject's perception of what's coming *after* the trigger word. If all goes well, the subject will believe that everything that you will be stating after the trigger word is *irrevocably true*.

I know – this is pure gold to a persuader because nothing could be more powerful than a simple language pattern that could evoke this effect on a subject. And the best thing about this pattern is that you could modify the pattern to create an even more powerful effect. The basic formula of the awareness pattern looks like this:

“Notice that as you read these words the power of NLP is increasing tenfold”

This is just the basic pattern. You can modify it just a little to give it a little boost:

“Did you notice that as you read these words, the power of NLP increased tenfold?”

It takes practice for statements like this to come out naturally, but I can assure you, over time it would begin to feel natural and these NLP language patterns will slowly become part of your regular, day-to-day language.

That is why I highly recommend that you practice NLP language patterns at least ten minutes every day. Ten minutes (or even just five minutes) every day is better than practicing for eighty minutes on a Saturday morning. It doesn't work that way – the brain needs time to get used to

something new. Frequency wins over volume in the case of NLP.

68 A Hassle Free Approach to Establishing Rapport

In a previous section of the book I discussed with you how rapport helps persuaders win over the hearts of any audience. I've also shared a few tips that would make the process of establishing rapport easier. In this section I'm going to share with you a special technique that will help you establish rapport *naturally* without having to consciously mirror the other person.

Now, rapport is important because it allows a subject to feel at ease with the other party. Rapport also builds confidence and trust. Without confidence and trust, no one is going to hand over resources to you. Without these two important elements, people will also find it easier to object to anything you have to say.

Classical NLP recommends matching and mirroring to establish rapport. When we say "match" you are simply going to act parallel to the other person. Breathing rate, rate of speech and posture are three of the most common elements that are mirrored during the rapport-building stage.

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For a lot of people, this classical approach is difficult to use because it involves a lot of ‘mechanical copying’. And it can be quite a challenge to hold an engaging conversation if you become preoccupied with mirroring the other person’s breathing pattern.

I’m not saying that you shouldn’t do this but I’ve found a better technique: *think of the subject as a close friend that you are dying to have a conversation with*. That’s it – with this simple shift in the way you view the other person, you will be able to establish rapport more easily.

Why is that? Well, when we are talking to familiar people, rapport comes naturally (sometimes instantly) because we are at ease. When the subject sees that you are relaxed and at ease, he will begin mirroring *you*. And over time, this mirroring will eventually transform to rapport. Try this technique today with a friend!

69 Why Pacing Matters

Verbal pacing is a necessary component of persuasion because it reduces the possibility of objections. When you verbally pace someone, you give statements that you know he will agree with so that eventually, you will be able to gain his compliance when you are ready to make your offer. So technically pacing is a form of *subject conditioning*.

You will condition the subject to trust what you know so that he will agree to everything that you say. Asking a series of ‘common sense’ questions is the easiest way to get someone to say yes to you.

Let’s say that you were trying to sell an air conditioner to someone who lives in a humid part of the country. The following questions might be able to condition the person to eventually buy the air conditioner for you:

“Do you like feeling cool and comfortable?”

“Will you invest in something that would make the whole family extremely happy?”

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“Will you invest in relaxation at home so you would be energized for work the next day?”

Unless the subject hates air conditioners, it is probable that you will get three yeses immediately after you use these statements. You can then add the most important element in this set of questions:

“Will you let me install the air conditioning unit in your house today?”

The fourth statement is the *leading* statement because it presents a completely different proposition. This is the subtle turn in the process of persuasion.

If the subject has been saying yes to most of your statements, adding the shifting statement would probably give you instant compliance because there would be no real reason for the other person to say no to you.

70 How to Use Future Pacing

Outcome based thinking is one of the hallmarks of influence and persuasion. It's a hallmark method because it can work in almost any situation. Unless you are trying to influence a Martian, outcome based thinking would most likely give you the results that you want.

And it is fortunate that you can encourage a subject to think in such a manner through future pacing. Future pacing allows an influencer to quickly build anticipation in a subject. Anticipation is important especially if you have been relating to the subject all of the benefits of your offer that you could possibly think of.

Future pacing is used primarily to quickly change a person's behavior because he will be anticipating a positive future event. Anticipation can easily double personal desire which is the reason why this technique works so well in business settings. The basic formula for future pacing is:

[Agreement frame] + [Regular pacing/yes set] + [Future pacing]

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This pattern is a little more complicated than the previous patterns that we discussed because it makes use of three *other* distinct patterns. The first part of the pattern is put in place to gain the trust of the individual.

The second part of the pattern is used to condition the subject to agree with the rest of the statement. And finally, the third part of the pattern adds the element of anticipation. The final element in the formula is actually the last step before the ‘call to action’. Consider the following example:

“I agree that you should have been the one who has been given the higher paying role in the company and I would like to add that the our focus now should be how we can help you attain your personal career goals. At the present time I fully understand that you feel depressed because you want to be valued as a true asset to this company. Why don’t we talk on Friday about how we can help you achieve your other career goals?”

71 Effectively Utilize Internal Representations

Internal representations are simply ideas that people conjure in their imaginations. While many people believe that folks have a more or less unitary view of reality, we persuaders know better. Each person has his own unique take on the world.

And having this unique perspective of the world most certainly means that people would also *imagine* things differently from you. Wouldn't it be great if there was a way for you to sneak into your subject's subconscious so you could plant *specific internal representations* in his imagination? Well, NLP offers a powerful pattern that does exactly that.

When you use this pattern, you will actually *command* the subject to think in a particular manner about an idea that you have *but he won't know* that you have been giving him commands throughout the interaction.

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How is this possible? Well, people normally associate dominating individuals with abrupt command (e.g. “do this right now”). NLP offers a more subtle method of commanding people. The basic pattern for modifying internal representations is:

[Command word] + [modified internal representation].

Command words that you can use include the following:

- Imagine
- Think
- Suppose

As long as the command word appeals to the other person’s imagination, you can use it. We won’t be ordering the other person to do something for us directly – we would just command him to think of something for us so that later on, he would naturally *want* to do what we want him to do.

It’s a covert strategy and it can really work wonders even in the most pressured of situations. When a person is led to imagine something that would benefit *himself* the desire for that object shoots up considerably. The person begins making a connection to the idea that would provide a benefit to him.

72 Transforming Conversations into Opportunities to Persuade Others

People usually dismiss conversations as minor and insignificant interactions (even persuaders sometimes think this way). There is a general misconception that there has to be a lot of preparation before a person can persuade another person.

The truth is quite the opposite: you can persuade anyone even if you have not formally set out to influence a person. If you are able to interact with a person even in the strangest of environments, you can still persuade him. How can this be achieved? Below is a step by step process that will allow you to persuade another person even if you two are just having a regular conversation:

1. The first step is to make a clear statement about something. If you have something on your mind, lay down this information clearly to the other person so he can start processing it in his mind.

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2. When the initial dose of information has been given, ask for the other person's feedback or response regarding this matter.
3. Show the other party that you were actively listening to what he has to say. This can be achieved easily by saying things like "I understand that you think _____". Repetition shows the other party that you were indeed hanging on to his every word.
4. After acknowledging the input of the other party, it's time to pitch you idea/product or service.
5. Once the subject is aware of what you are offering, immediately invite the other person to become involved with whatever you are offering.
6. Get the other person's feedback and perform active listening once again.

As you can see, a simple conversation can become the groundwork of much larger persuasion-related projects. Structure matters a lot to NLP so don't forget to use patterns as they are until you are 1000% sure that you can achieve the same results even if you modify the pattern a little.

73 Using NLP to Introduce Change

As I have mentioned countless times before, humans are intrinsically wary of any kind of change. We are so hardwired to gravitate toward stability that the very thought of change can actually cause instant stress. This can be a real problem when you are attempting to persuade another person.

The idea of change might prevent you from changing that person's behavior (which again, *is* the end-goal of persuasion). I know that a lot of persuaders experience difficulties in introducing change, so I prepared a simple, step-by-step plan to reduce resistance to change as much as possible in any situation.

1. Begin the conversation by laying down some expectations about the other person. You can also begin leading the subject by using agreement frames and yes sets. Any frames used in this step must be closely associated to the change that you are about to introduce.

2. Quickly transition from the first step to the second step. Tell the subject about the change that you have in mind. The subject will most likely react negatively to this new information. This is normal and it is no cause for concern.
3. Don't give the subject time to complain about the change. Instead, tell him about all of the good things that will come about because of the change.

This step will constitute the very center of the interaction so make sure that you have prepared for this step very well before trying this method. Otherwise, the subject would probably continue resisting the idea of change.

4. Finally, show the subject that you are there to support him throughout the transition period. You can also tell the subject about his new responsibilities and how important his role is to the whole plan.

74 Deal with Difficult Subjects Using the Relevancy Frame

It is fairly common to encounter subjects who seem to have a fondness for two things: *objecting* and *changing the topic*. If a persuader cannot keep his subject focused on the goal of the interaction, persuasion and influence may not be forthcoming at all.

As an active agent in the interaction, it is up to you to keep the interaction moving in the target direction. How will you accomplish this? You can use an NLP language pattern called the *relevancy frame*.

The relevancy frame, unlike the agreement frame and yes sets, actually *challenges* the subject to keep him focused on the valid points of the dialog. Of course, you shouldn't be openly hostile or annoyed at the subject if he veers away from your target topic.

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Doing so would probably trigger a defensive reaction and even more objections might pop out of the woodwork. Instead of embattling the subject by expressing hostility, it's much easier (and safer) if you used statements like these:

“How would that information relate to the items that we are analyzing right now?”

“What kind of relationship does your point have to the point that we were discussing before?”

“In what way does that relate to this?”

As you can easily see from the sample statements, this NLP pattern really does challenge the validity of what the subject is saying. However, the challenge is framed in such a way that it doesn't directly offend people.

The challenge was presented in such a way that the subject can express his thoughts about the issue. A regular challenge (e.g. That doesn't have anything to do with this) cuts off communication and also demeans the other party. Relevancy frames attempts to pace and lead the subject so that relevant dialog can continue.

75 How to Practice Your NLP Skills

Neuro linguistic programming is a lot like tennis or basketball – the more you practice, the better you get over time. But if you practice it only once in a while, you're not going to improve even if you practice for 1 hour every week.

You need to make your practice sessions frequent (but short and sweet). Ten minutes a day is all the time you need to practice formulas and NLP language patterns. If you can devote a whole hour to the process, then by all means, do it – but I've found that 10 minutes is the magic number for most beginning persuaders.

People usually ask me for tips on how to improve their rapport-building skills and how they use the various language patterns they've learned elsewhere. I only have three tips for those who really want to learn NLP for real-life applications.

First, you need to repeat the stuff that you have already mastered. Repetition helps the mind remember. You need to remember the language patterns in their entirety if you want to apply them in real life social interactions.

Second, I highly recommend that you have fun. Having fun takes away the stress of the day and also facilitates the learning process.

You can't learn language pattern if you are stressed out from work and you view the practice session as an intrusion into your private relaxation time. And my third piece of advice is to be relaxed during the practice sessions. NLP wasn't meant to be tackled like a complex math problem or a political issue.

You don't have to be extremely serious when practicing your NLP language patterns. If you are relaxed, the words will come to you more easily and you will feel more creative and confident, too. Practicing with a friend is also better than practicing alone – so find an NLP buddy to work with.

76 Applying NLP Language Patterns for the First Time

Most people I have met who want to use NLP for their day to day interactions come across problems that have nothing to do with their language skills or NLP itself.

The biggest challenge to beginners, for instance, is not memorizing the NLP language patterns but finding the confidence to try these patterns in real life situations. It seems that people are only confident when they are visualizing themselves *using* the patterns but when it's time to use the patterns in real life, the persuaders shy away.

If you feel this way too, you have to learn to let go of your fear of not succeeding. That is just how influence and persuasion works; sometimes you get the results that you want while other times, the subject remains resistant to your message.

If you fail one, twice or a hundred times, just keep refining and practicing your NLP. Because every time you try to persuade someone with an NLP language pattern, the more you learn about how these patterns actually affect specific people.

If you never try, how will you learn? You can't. In fact, if you just keep these language patterns to yourself you will probably forget about them in a week or two. Again, if you fail numerous times it won't matter because there is no harm in applying these patterns.

Some people also feel that NLP is a little devious because it exploits how people naturally process information. That's like saying a car is evil because people have been injured in vehicular accidents.

The real issue here is how people appropriate NLP. If you are an ethical person, everything you do is done with the knowledge that both parties involved should benefit from the encounter. For me that's not really manipulation; it's just effective communication.

77 Create a More Influential Personality with NLP

A person who wishes to become truly influential must possess the right knowledge and a potent and persuasive personality as well. Your personality constitutes a significant part of your public image.

Your public image is the picture of you that people see whenever you interact with others. You have an idea of who you are and what you are capable of; however, this does not mean that other people will automatically see how persuasive and genuine you are.

Unless you make an effort to exhibit these qualities to people, people will rely on their own perceptual positions and internal representations to make sense of who you are and what you are really all about. So how will you develop a dynamic and persuasive personality? The answer can be found in NLP.

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Neuro linguistic programming, more than anything, is a method of transferring any type of excellence to a subject. You can use NLP to influence *yourself* so you can have a more powerful and influential personality.

NLP is like a key that unlocks a vault of endless mental resources. People have immense potential; it's just that most of the time people don't know how to access their own treasure trove of potentials and mental resources. NLP solves that problem. Here is a simple exercise that will allow you to have a more powerful personality, which you can then use to persuade or influence others:

1. The first step is to remember a time when you did not act or behave in a way that was personally satisfactory. This has to be a notable event in your life where you felt that you could have done better.
2. The second step is to identify the mental processes and values that you employed to come up with your behavior and personality in that given moment.
3. Next, I want you to visualize a completely different set of mental processes and values that you think would have altered the outcome of the situation that you were imagining in step one. Visualize that you are implementing new actions and you are changing the

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outcome of that situation. Think of how the new you would act, feel and think at that moment in time.

4. As you are implementing the new behavior, I want you to adopt a detached observer position so you can observe yourself from afar. As you see the new you, I want you to merge yourself with the new self that you have imagined.

78 How to Gain Access to a Person's Deepest Thoughts and Emotions

The usefulness of persuasion techniques is not limited to business meetings and presentations. You can use these techniques when you are trying to get someone to go out on a date with you or if you want someone to support you in what you are trying to do.

Persuaders usually have problems drawing out *what people think and feel*. In a previous section I discussed with you an NLP method that helps persuaders think more like the subject.

There are times when this method is not enough since you will be working purely with presuppositions about what the other person might be thinking and feeling at the moment. If you find yourself in such a situation, you can use a simple pattern that that will cue your subject to actually reveal his sentiments and thoughts about a particular issue. This is how the NLP pattern looks:

“How would you know when you are getting the results that you want in a particular situation?”

The aforementioned statement is only an example. You can modify it to get very specific answers from your subject. The pattern cues the subject to talk about what he thinks and there a close connection to the subject is established immediately upon asking the question.

The subject would then begin to relate two things to you: what he feels and what he wants to see. By accessing this vital information you can then formulate a better influential groundwork to persuade and influence the other person.

You can also use the previously discussed technique (internal representations) to boost the effect of the current technique. After asking the person what he wants, you can cue him to think of a particular outcome that involves what you are offering. Again, this encourages the person to put *himself* in the imagine situation so that he could ‘experience’ firsthand what you are talking about.

79 Shifting the Issue and Cueing the Subject to Take Action Immediately

When it comes right down to it, influence is and persuasion is most effective when you can get the person to say yes because he thought it was the best course of action. Some people resort to shady tactics just to get someone to say yes.

Of course, as masters of persuasion we know better than these shady individuals who toe the line between unethical manipulation and ethical persuasion. There are so many methods for persuasion that direct manipulation becomes useless and a most destructive option.

For instance, take this pattern that we are about to explore in this section. Did you know that you could actually shift the topic of a conversation while at the same time persuading a person to take action? It might sound like a tall order but trust me, it isn't. Here's the pattern:

The real issue here is not (A); it is (B) and would you like to (C)?

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The first element in this pattern is the issue that you want to delete from the conversation and from the person's present concerns. The "not" acts like an instant delete button.

The second element (B) serves as the replacement for the deleted element. The third and final element on the other hand, is the call to action. This pattern might look confusing at first, but it really isn't because it frames a *single idea* and attaches a *single action* to that idea as it negates the first idea.

This pattern has been found to be useful in situations where the persuader has to deal with difficult subjects who are hell-bent in getting something that cannot be offered by an influencer. For example, if someone was asking you for a refund and you cannot give it to the subject, you can say:

"The real issue here is not the refund; it is customer satisfaction and how would you like it if I sent two people to your house to repair the machine free of charge?"

80 Imploding the Subject's Past Decisions

There are times when a persuader arrives 'too late' because the subject has already made a decision in the past that is directly blocking what you have to offer. Is there actually a way to implode a past decision to make way for what you have to offer?

Normally, people would simply battle the subject to the death just to debunk the past decision. That sounds 'logical' especially if the persuader has brought along with him statistics, facts, etc. But that doesn't mean that he will get the results that he wants.

People become irrationally protective of their past decisions when someone embattles them. It's just how the human mind operates. It doesn't matter if the decision in the past was made by the subject while he was half-drunk.

He will defend his decision to the death *if* you press the wrong buttons. To avoid such problems, you need to take a subtler approach to imploding past decisions. Instead of

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telling the other person that his decision was really bad, use this pattern instead:

“The issue here is not (A) but how we both can move forward by (B)”

This is the basic pattern that you can modify later on depending on what type of reaction you want to elicit from the other person. A stands for the past decision or action while B stands for the new action/decision/route that you want to recommend to the other person. You can also try this pattern if the first one doesn't work for you:

“That is correct, you had (A) but what do you think we should do so that you can (B) and (C)?”

In the second pattern, B stands for the action that you want the other person to take while C represents the list of benefits that the subject will gain if he takes that route.

PSYCHOLOGY TACTICS

81 Understanding How Herd Mentality Works

We all know that people have a tendency to go with the flow – meaning people are most likely to act fast if they think that others are doing the same. But the question here is what type of group would actually encourage people to behave in a particular manner?

In one study that explored the possibility of convincing hotel guests to reuse their towels, researchers discovered that people were more likely to reuse towels if they were informed that the former users or occupants of the hotel room have engaged in such behavior.

From one angle it would appear that people won't be paying much attention to the fact that previous occupants of their rooms have reused towels. But the results of the study

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showed that people are more likely to follow the behavior or subscribe to the norms of the *immediate environment*.

The previous occupants of the hotel represented the subgroup within the hotel environment – and people identified themselves with this subgroup. If we were to apply this to a business situation, you can tell the subject that accepting your offer would not only mean that he would be getting all of the benefits but also, he would be behaving exactly like your other satisfied customers who are reaping the rewards of using whatever you are offering.

Your subject must first see or identify the subgroup that he will belong to before he can fully understand what he will be getting and why he should be complying with your request. When the subgroup is revealed, it would be much easier for the person to think that he is doing the right thing because *others before him* have also done it. Trust is established quickly and the subject ends up being more confident about his decision to accept your offer.

82 Expect Negative Messages to Bring Negative Results

We see this type of technique every day in the newspapers and on national television. Nonprofit organizations and even the government make use of negative messages in their effort to persuade people. And yet, so many important advocacies and worthy messages are immediately ignored or forgotten as soon as they are transmitted through any media.

The medium of the message is not to blame; it's the message itself. For example, when the government wants to convince people to reduce their garbage output, they say that millions of Americans produces tons of trash a year.

People take one look at the message and walk away. Why is this? The problem with this type of message is that it makes use of negative social proof. Negative social proof is *still* social proof and when people realize that so many other

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people are engaging in the behavior, there really isn't any motivation to change one's behavior.

The same applies to anti-smoking advocacies. "Millions of people die from tobacco-related diseases every year" – this is a very common line used in antismoking campaigns. Is it true? Yes. Does it work? Barely. When people hear this message, they imagine *millions more* who are not dying but are still smoking tobacco products.

The message is terribly lacking in terms of personal motivation. And the worst part about this is that people associate themselves with the invisible subgroup that is not explicitly shown in the message. People think beyond the message to avoid taking action.

So the next time you want to use negative social proof, I want you to reconsider because more than half of the time, that negative message won't work because people would simply side with those who did not take action at all. Use positive social proof instead and give the subject motivation to take the proper course of action *now*.

83 Blasting Away the Gray Middle Zone

It is interesting to note that people often modify their behavior accordingly once they are able to compare what they're doing now to what others are doing at the moment. Consider a study made by researchers to test whether a comparison of energy consumptions in a neighborhood would affect the energy consumption of individual households.

The households were given a report that stated whether they were consuming more than the average or less than the average. Ideally, households that consumed less than the average should be content with the fact that they are not using that much power compared to their neighbors.

But the funny thing about this study was after these households received that information; they were drawn to a gray middle zone. They started increasing their energy consumption because they found out that they were consuming less than others.

What about those who found out that they were consuming *more* power than the average household? Well, those households automatically reduced their power consumption. These individuals were drawn to the gray middle zone as well.

While the research itself was sound, it still remains that some households had increased their energy consumption because of the data they received. So what did the researchers do? The researchers used the power of symbol to encourage the target behavior.

Seals of approval were added to the next set of energy consumption reports and as expected, the households who were consuming less than the average did not increase their energy consumption. As you can see, the resulting strategy from this study can easily be applied to a myriad of social situations.

The important thing to remember here is when you are setting an ideal and you are creatively communicating that ideal to people, you should always include a feedback system so that those who are already ‘in the bandwagon’ will not drop out of it because they are drawn to the grey middle zone.

84 More Options Might Mean Lesser Impact

There is a popular notion that suggests that the more options you give a person, the more likely it is for that person to decide or take action on the spot. No victory is sweeter for the persuader than to be able to convince someone to comply within a short period of time. But do choices really help sell an idea or product to someone?

Or does it do the exact opposite? A spearheaded by behavioral researchers confirmed that people don't necessarily react positively to having so many options. In fact, one study showed that when people were barraged with so many options, they simply walked away and they didn't buy any of the options at all.

On the flipside, the group of people in the study who were given fewer choices was more likely to buy on the spot. Why did people react in this manner when they were given more choices? The answer lies in the fact that most of the time, people work on autopilot.

They do not want to spend precious cognitive resources on stuff that aren't really that important. So the people who were given more choices decided to walk away because

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they didn't want to put themselves through the task of differentiating between all of the available options.

The sheer number of options presented to them paralyzed their ability to make a decision on the spot. Those who had fewer choices on the other hand, were able to decide because they had fewer things to take into consideration.

More options means having more stress on a person's cognitive abilities. Some people like options but if the options are excessive, the opposite effect is achieved. So the next time you offer something to someone, stick with the best options and discard the rest.

85 When Bonuses Go Bad

This technique is especially important for those who make a living out of offering products and services. We all know that people like getting bonuses. In fact, bonuses can readily increase sales in almost any field or industry and it can be used as an easy incentive to push people to comply with rules and requirements.

But it's different when you are using one of your own products or services as a bonus to sell something more expensive. It is likely that you will make the sale but it is also possible that during the sale, the value of the bonus product or service will drop like a rock.

This sharp drop in *perceived value* can damage your business too, because no one would want to spend good money on something that is simply being given away as a bonus.

This is the reason why you should be very careful about what you are offering as a bonus. Do not give away a valued product or service as a bonus because if you do, people might not be open to paying well for that product or service anymore.

So how can you avoid this scenario where the bonus-giving suddenly backfires on you? The solution is simple: you have to make sure that you fully inform the subject about the value of the bonus that you are giving away. Use monetary values if you need to and emphasize that you are giving it away as a bonus because you value the subject the most.

This will increase the perceived value of the bonus immediately. You can also tell the other person that he would have to spend more resources if he chose to acquire the bonus from a regular provider. So in the end, you will be able to give away the bonus without harming its value *and* you will show the subject that you value him.

86 Discover the Power of Compromise

Compromise is the oil that reduces friction and improves the movement within a system. Compromise also prevents people from being stuck around a certain state (like when it's time to make a decision or when it's time to take action about something).

And it appears that compromise is also the prime mover when a person is faced with the choice between an advanced offer that costs more and a middle choice that costs less but still delivers. A recent study in the field of decision studies showed that people are more likely to ignore the newer and more expensive choice in favor of the 'crowd favorite' or the option that has been around the longest.

Unless the new offering is *cheaper*, if the subject is given only two choices, he will gravitate toward the older and less expensive option. People do this not because they want to save money but they want to save their resources while getting the quality that they require.

This applies to services and any other item that can be offered in exchange for financial resources or personal

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resources. If you want the first offer to be noticed, you have to add yet another more expensive option so that the subject will focus on the *first* option.

You will be able to sell the more expensive option because it will appear to be a compromise between the oldest and least expensive option and the most advanced and most expensive choice. It's all about compromise – people are always on the lookout for options that won't cost them a lot of money but would still deliver what they need.

You can see this tactic at work when retailers bring out new models of appliances. There is always the “old reliable” line and then there's the middle range that are more expensive and then you have the top of the line range of appliances for those with advanced needs (and large financial resources).

87 Why Fear May Not Be a Factor (In Decision-Making)

It's easy to say that fear can drive a person to do nutty things. And it's true – we can do a lot of nutty things when we are afraid. But is this also true for people who are directly interacting with other people? If you were to persuade someone by using fear as your main verbal technique, would it work efficiently to help you accomplish your goals as a persuader?

A study spearheaded by Levanthal showed that fear is really not enough to motivate people to perform a target action. In the study, people were informed of the dangers of tetanus. One group received information about tetanus and another group received information about tetanus *and* how they could prevent it.

Both groups of people received the same amount of fear-driven facts. But only the second group really showed initiative in getting tetanus shots. It sounds a little strange but it appears that people will only act if they know exactly what to do avoid the painful consequence of inaction.

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Without a clear program of action, people are paralyzed by mere facts. They won't seek out the proper course of action; they will remain paralyzed. What does this teach us about persuasion? Simple: if you are planning to scare someone with facts and statistics, make sure that you have a solution in hand to solve the problem that you presented.

Otherwise, you will just succeed in scaring the subject. A frightened subject will remain paralyzed by the facts that you have presented unless you present a clear path for him so that he can avoid all of the negative outcomes. Unless this program is given to the subject, don't expect the subject to simply comply with what you want. You have to give the subject details – clear details that will reassure him that there is a way to avoid the consequences.

88 Don't Forget to Add Your Personal Touch

Sometimes persuaders can become so engrossed in the process of establishing rapport and using strategic language patterns that they forget that they are still just having a conversation with another person.

And if *you* forget how to treat the other person *as just a person* you may be missing out on big opportunities to gain compliance quickly. In addition to using different verbal and nonverbal strategies to get the other person to say yes, you should also use basic strategies that would bring you're genuinely closer to the other person.

One such strategy is *adding a personal touch* to any dealing or interaction. There is actually a study that supports. The study (which was led by Randy Garner) showed that people *complied with requests* much more frequently (up to 75% more) if they received a simple post-it note with a handwritten request.

They compared agreement rates with groups that did not receive post-it notes at all and the researchers found out

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that fewer people paid attention if there wasn't any trace of personal effort on the part of the one making the request.

The respondents were simply asked to fill out a form but there was no contact between the ones making the survey and the respondents themselves. The researchers let the post-it notes do all the talking. If you think about it, post-it notes are not really that special or valuable.

It's everywhere – and people don't really think highly of these items. But for the researchers, the post-it notes were enough to gain compliance from complete strangers. Isn't that something? So the next time you set out to persuade someone, don't just bring your long list of benefits. Come with something with your personal touch and see the compliance rate increase tenfold.

89 How to Increase the Perceived Value of Gifts

We know how gifts can capture the hearts of people. But is there a way to actually increase the perceived value of a gift even if you didn't give away an expensive gift? And can gifts be actually used to gain compliance from other people?

A study led by research David Strohmetz sheds light on these questions. In Strohmetz's study, waiters at a restaurant used different approaches to give away dinner mints. The group of waiters that succeeded in getting the biggest tips were the ones who pretended that they were giving away extra dinner mints to people just because they wanted to.

What does this show us about how people view gifts? Easy: people view gifts highly when it is given with a personal touch and the gift has been given unexpectedly. The principle of reciprocity comes into play when a person

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thinks that he has received something genuine and valuable.

People feel obliged to return the favor because that's simply how things work. Strohmetz's study also proves that you don't have to give away expensive gifts to gain compliance from people. It's the *way a gift is given* that matters the most to people.

Why did the restaurant patrons tip the waiters who went back to give extra dinner mints? In their imagination, they thought the waiters did it just because they were fond of the restaurant patrons.

The waiters' intentions might be unclear but the act itself was enough to convince the restaurant patrons that they were worth tipping. The restaurant patrons gave them extra tips because they felt special – and it didn't really matter what the waiters felt. The action itself was enough to convince the patrons to reciprocate the act of generosity.

90 Give Incentives *First* Before Asking for Compliance

Incentives have been used for a long time to gain compliance for people. But what if your subjects have little or no interest in what you are asking of them because there would be no earth-shattering consequences for them? What should the persuader do?

Well, if you can offer them an incentive to comply with what you want, give them the incentive but don't offer it *after* they have complied. Most people would see that as a manipulative act and no one likes to feel that they have been manipulated (even if what you're asking is a relatively small thing). The old formula was to ask first before giving.

This doesn't work anymore. The new formula is the complete opposite – give something that people would find genuinely good and then ask for compliance. You will be showing people that you have acted *on their behalf* and their compliance with your request would be support for *you*. Most people would happily comply because you have selflessly done something for others.

Selflessness is a virtue that every culture recognizes and again, the principle of reciprocity comes into play. People *will* comply because who wouldn't want to help out someone who has shown drive and initiative? A study that focused on reciprocation showed that people were 45% more likely to comply if the incentive was given first before the request was made.

This particular technique would work in any situation, not just in times of advocacies and campaigns. For example, if you wanted your child to help clean his room, you can tell him that you have already bought the ice cream that he is going to enjoy later after he's done picking up his toys. The ice cream is already there – the child simply has to support you for preparing the reward.

91 Adjust Your Expectations of Personal Favors

Favors can be real lifesavers; in time of need, one can call upon a favor and that just might help solve the problem. In the world of persuasion, favors are important because they help the persuader level the playing field in specific circumstances.

But here's a question that's worth exploring: *do favors get better with time?* We know for a fact that people are generally focused on their own comfort and survival; so where do favors stand when time becomes an issue? One researcher by the name of Francis Flynn hypothesized that favors are never one-sided.

A person's perception of a favor would depend on his *role* in the whole transaction. If the person was the one who is indebted to someone, the favor itself loses its value *over time*. So as time passes, the indebted one feels *less and less* indebted to the second person.

On the flip side, if a person was the one who had done something for another person (and was therefore seeking a favor), the value of the favor will *increase over time*. So for givers, favors are like bread – they become moldy and

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rotten after a while. For the seekers (of favors), favors are much like wine.

They get better and *taste better* after a long period of time. You might be wondering: what in the world does this have to do with persuading people? Well, think about it: if you want to persuade someone to do something for you because he owes you a favor, you have to take into consideration the *time that has elapsed* since the other person has started owing you the favor.

If you sought a favor after five years, the other person might think you are just using or abusing his generosity or kindness. So be careful when citing and seeking favors – because the favor-giver’s perceptual position is wildly different from the perceptual position of the favor-seeker.

92 How Small Commitments Can Help Large Causes

We live in a day and age where people are almost always focused on their *own personal commitments*. People find their days too tiring and stressful, which is why they find it very easy to disagree with people.

This can be quite a problem for persuaders who have to convince people to comply with what they want/need even if the offer itself is not completely attractive. For example, a manager needs help organizing an office-wide party – but no one really likes to help. What should a person in this position do to get the support of people around him?

The answer lies in *commitments*. Most people view commitments as an essential part of who a person is at the moment and who wishes to become in the future. People don't normally commit to something unless they think it is worth their time and energy.

If you have a cause or advocacy that would require the personal involvement and resources of other people, you need to get their commitment *first* before making the offer. How can you do this? You need to approach the subjects

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and ask them to commit to something relatively small and easy.

After they have said yes, you need to wait it out because people need time to realize that they are supporting something and they have already committed to something. When you think people have realized how valuable your cause is, you can proceed to step two, which is asking for a bigger commitment.

Studies show that there is a higher success rate with this particular method because once a person has committed to a cause *in any way* he will feel that it is his responsibility to support his commitment. Commitments are very important to people because people associate commitments to the fabric of their identities.

93 Discover How a Simple Question Can Help You Gain Compliance Effortlessly

Throughout this book we have discussed numerous ways of using questions to gain compliance from people. Well, we are going to delve into another method in this section that also makes use of a particular type of question that covertly persuades people to do something that you really want them to do.

This method has two steps. The first step is to ask the subject a question that would push him to say yes because it wouldn't be acceptable, desirable or normal for him to say no. A good example of this type of question would be:

“Would you support the drive to end world hunger?”

Any sane person with even a little idea of what world hunger means will most likely say yes. Of course, there would be a small fraction of people who would say not, but it would still remain that a significant percentage of individuals will answer in the affirmative.

Now, after asking this important question (and after the subject has given an affirmative response), you will then tell the person that you would be writing that down so you

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can tell the others that he has already agreed. The transition between the first step and second step must be swift and you must show that you are firm in holding on to what the other person has already told you.

Some people might find this method a little unnerving because of how it covertly pushes people into a state that benefits another party, but trust me – people can just say no and move on. If they say yes, that simply means that on one level or another, they believe that the cause is worth supporting.

A person can say “yes, I drink gin everyday” even if medical science frowns upon this practice dimply because people have the freedom to express themselves. And it is this freedom of expression that you will be utilizing to gain instant compliance through this method.

94 Focus on Getting Active Commitments

Any person can say yes to you but still fail to deliver what he has promised. This is one unfortunate truth that we all have to deal with. A persuader can pull out all the stops he has when it comes to persuading another person and he can even get a solid yes during the interaction.

But sadly, there really is no assurance that the other party will follow through. There will be times that the subject of the persuasive interaction will make an excuse and simply back out of what was agreed upon. What is a persuader to do in such cases?

The solution to this problem can be found in *active commitments*. In the previous section I discussed with you how small commitments can lead to big commitments because people want to follow through with their personal obligations.

This technique becomes even more potent when the subject *actively makes the commitment* for himself during the interaction. The simplest way to do this is to write down the commitment on paper. I will leave it to you as to how you can create the perfect document that can be used for this purpose.

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As long as the commitment is written on paper, the subject is actively committing to what you are offering. One particular study showed just how powerful active commitments can be. In this particular study people were asked to volunteer for an educational program.

In one group, people were asked to leave their forms blank if they wanted to join. In the second group, the respondents were asked to *fill up* the form if they wanted to join. Sure enough, those who filled up their forms were the ones who had the highest percentage of attendance during the actual event.

95 Make Consistency Your Best Friend in Persuading People

We now know that people have individual perceptual positions and most people will defend their core beliefs and values until the very end because they view these things as a part of who they are.

So this means that if you are planning to persuade or influence someone by negating his beliefs that don't jive with yours, you are going to have a very rough time indeed. Does this mean that you should just give up when your offer negates so many pre-existing values and beliefs of your subject? Of course not!

Every problem that concerns influence and persuasion has a solution. If you are attempting to offer something new to someone who is known to stubbornly hold on to his old beliefs and values, the key is to never adopt a combative attitude.

Forget about the strong words and the hailstorm of statistics – those things don't change beliefs that people have held on for decades. Instead of battling the other person, adopt an approach that utilizes the concept of consistency.

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What does this mean, anyway? Well, people like consistency. People like it when their lives are stable and unchanging (especially if they have made their lives very comfortable at the present time). Anyone who comes with something new might not be welcome because he represents change that might rock the very foundation of a person's consistent life.

To avoid being driven away, you have to show the subject that what you are offering isn't just *new*, it's exactly what he needs because it is aligned with everything that he cherishes and believes. For example, if you were trying to sell an idea to a resistant boss, you can say that your idea is a perfect example of a plan that epitomizes his work ethics.

96 Winning Over People... With a Strange Technique

When Benjamin Franklin encountered opposition in the state of Pennsylvania back in his day, he didn't want to engage in behavior that would put him *under* the hostile legislator. Instead, he waited it out and when he found out that the legislator possessed a volume that was interesting enough for Franklin, Benjamin Franklin actually wrote him a note so that he could borrow the book.

After the book was sent, the formerly hostile legislator became friends with Franklin and expressed his eagerness to help out the famous inventor whenever he can. It is a little strange to see someone succeed in ending opposition by using the element of inconvenience – but for Franklin, this technique worked!

In more recent times, researchers tested Franklin's own technique. Researchers let a group of people win money in a contest. Afterward, one of the researchers asked specific people to give back some of the money (because the money was 'out of the pocket' and giving it away left the contest master without a dime).

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After asking the favor from the respondents, the respondents were then interviewed and were asked to rate the contest. Believe it or not, those who were asked to give some money back were the ones who gave the highest praise for the contest while those who have not been inconvenienced didn't rate the contest high at all.

Why are people behaving in this manner? Weren't people supposed to act negatively when an element of inconvenience has been pressed upon them?

The answer to this question is simply consistency. When a person grants another person a favor, he automatically becomes supportive of the other person. After that, he would feel that he has to be consistent with his behavior and therefore, support for the other person will continue.

97 Showcase Your Competence Without Hurting Your Image

It's a fact: when we know a lot of stuff about a particular topic, we want to show the whole world what we know. It's a natural tendency that we see even in small children.

A child who knows a lot about dinosaurs will proudly announce that the tyrannosaurus rex was probably the biggest and meanest meat eating machine during its reign here on Earth. People tend to take children lightly, so even the loudest know-it-all kid on the block would still look lovable.

It is a completely different thing when an adult wants to share with the world the fact that he is an expert. Adults tend to view other adults in a negative light and it's much easier for people to think negatively because it's how we were actually wired (instinctively, that is).

So how can you show your expertness without being labeled as a miserable blowhard? One way that you can avoid this common pitfall is by having another person introduce you to the rest of the group (or to the other person that you desperately want to impress).

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Having someone introduce you not only lessens the tendency to label someone a blowhard but also raises your trust rating (because someone actually stuck out their neck for you). Some of you might be wondering: won't people react negatively to the fact that I have someone with me who will essentially be singing all the complements and praises for me?

The answer is: not necessarily. According to recent studies people don't really think this way anymore. The important thing is that you have someone who will tell others who and what you really are.

That's the important thing. So the next time you want to impress a group of people, it would be best to bring along someone that the group is familiar with so he can do the introduction for you.

98 Don't Act Like You're the Brightest Bulb in the Room

True persuasion is not just about getting people to say yes. Genuine persuasion also means putting yourself in a position where other people will secretly agree that you have made the right decisions almost all of the time.

If you are able to accomplish this, your persuasion over people will be deep and long-lasting. And that's the focus of this section – I want you to become a good leader because leaders have the ability to automatically persuade a whole group of people (we call them 'packs').

Most people believe that if a person wants to be a good leader he has to be the most intelligent and keenest person in the group. Well, that's actually wrong. Good leaders aren't necessarily the smartest or brightest. What separates good leaders from bad leaders is how they actually connect with people.

Good leaders know how to utilize the power of the whole group to solve problems. Bad leaders are too bright and intelligent to ask for help. And this tendency to be the brightest bulb in the room often leads to people's downfall.

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Nine times out of ten, a leader won't be able to solve a big problem if he doesn't *collaborate* with other members of the group. Since the bright leader is too proud to ask for help, he will try to compensate by thinking and thinking... until he discovers that he cannot do it on his own.

By then, the group itself (which is still working as a unit) would have solved the problem. And unfortunately, the bright leader would have no way to collaborate with the group then because he has ignored them before, during the crucial time when people were eager to resolve the problem.

99 Use Dissenting Opinions to Improve Yourself

Persuasion doesn't only work by getting other people to agree with you; it can also be used for self-betterment. Believe it or not, objections and negative opinions can actually be used by the persuader to make better decisions. A true master of influence knows that the perceptual position that matters the *least* is his.

The perceptual positions of his *subjects* are the most important. A persuader that cares little for the perceptual positions of other people would be hard-pressed to convince *anyone* in *any situation* because he doesn't even understand the basics of persuasion.

You can begin seeking out dissenting opinions so you can evaluate and modify what you are bringing to the table. I know that it sounds like hard work but in the end, you (as well as the others) will benefit from this rigorous process.

Another way that you can utilize dissenting opinions is when you think the unanimous decision of a group needs to be re-evaluated. Your role in such a situation would be to uncover all of the faults and potential landmines that the

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group will encounter when they push through with what they have agreed to, initially.

If all goes well, your efforts will ensure that your group will choose the *best possible course of action* in that particular situation. Seeking out multiple opinions also prevents the collapse of group dynamics during interaction.

There is a tendency for groups to divide itself when members are in disagreement. Seeking out different opinions prevents this from happening.

And another thing – dissenting opinions also prevent “groupthink” which can be harmful to your interests or the interests of others. If you think you have valid reason to oppose an idea that the majority of the members of a group have already agreed upon, don’t think twice about using this technique.

100 How You Can Make Any Form of Training Twice As Effective

There are times when we are faced with the responsibility to training others so that they would become more efficient at what they already know best. The old model for training was to provide a large resource of best practices so that the trainees would be able to emulate these best practices.

Theoretically, performance should improve through simple emulation. But does this age-old method still *work* in our time-pressured and hectic modern era?

Studies suggest that showing people the *best* practices may not be the *best approach* during training. According to one study led by researcher Wendy Joung, performance of individual trainees will improve much faster if they were taught the *common errors* in their field and how to avoid these errors in the future.

Joung's study focused on firefighters – people who are, by nature of their work, required to make lightning fast decisions that are so vital for the survival of other firefighters and those around them. The respondents were divided into two groups.

One group was taught the errors that could be avoided and one group was given the best practices drill. After the study, the researchers discovered that the group that received the “error” training was able to exhibit a more adaptive mindset than the group that had received the “best practices” training.

I’m not saying that all forms of training should focus on just the errors that could be avoided. What Joungh was pointing out though was that trainees need to be thoroughly exposed to common errors and problems that can easily be avoided by getting the right knowledge.

If you belong to an organization or company that is in dire need of decision-making training, you can use this technique to mold the training program.

As for the errors that you will be presenting in the training, you can probably get some from the more seasoned members of the company who would have no qualms about sharing their experiences – provided that you can offer them complete anonymity.

101 Exposing Little Faults Can Help Persuade Others

In our day and age, it's easy to think that only the prettiest and most perfect people will succeed. One only has to look at daytime television to see that the world seems to be preoccupied with perfection.

If you look at magazines (any magazine at all) you will see people presenting the world in a way that strives to engage people – as if people don't have the ability to spot perfection and beauty by themselves. In this lopsided reality, do regular people like you and me have a place?

Will it be easy to persuade others even if we don't look like Brad and Angelina? The answer is *yes*, because no matter how convoluted and 'perfect' society becomes, it still remains that the world at large *isn't* perfect and people know that they can only approach an approximation of perfection at any given time.

That's why you should actually be interested in the *flaws* of what you want to offer others. Let's say you were trying to sell a software suite to a company. Your software suite was independently created and so it is a little expensive when it is finally deployed over a large scale.

The boss doesn't want it because of the price. Most persuaders would try to placate the subject by offering incentives and bonuses. But what if I tell you to scratch those ideas and instead make your biggest weakness your biggest strength?

Yes, you read that right. You can do this by attaching what we call a silver lining to a weakness or fault. Your software suite may be expensive but this will be offset by the fact that their systems will be running at full power with an up time of 99.9% after the installation of your software suite, saving them hundreds of thousands of dollars over a period of time. Can you think of ways of how you can make your biggest weakness your biggest strength?

CONCLUSION

Whew! That was a lot.

It took me years to put these techniques together.

And my hope is that they serve you in becoming the most persuasive person you can possibly be.

Should you need anything, hit me up at paul@influentialmind.com

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