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# The Art Of Persuasion

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She's the girl of your dreams. You have pursued her single-mindedly over the past six months. How do you convince her that you're the one for her? Or, perhaps, you're trying to start a new company that will make hiring babysitters easier. How are you going to convince people to fund your untested idea?

"All of life is about persuasion," says Dianna Booher, author of *Communicate with Confidence: How to Say it Right the First Time and Every Time* ([http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/0071770135/ref=as\\_li\\_qf\\_sp\\_asin\\_il\\_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=0071770135&linkCode=as2&tag=rew20&linkId=VRR2T6GBJ7ENP57R](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/0071770135/ref=as_li_qf_sp_asin_il_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=0071770135&linkCode=as2&tag=rew20&linkId=VRR2T6GBJ7ENP57R)). "You need to persuade to get a date, a mate, a good interest rate, a job, a raise, an apology, the best price, and a listening ear."

However, don't confuse persuasion with manipulation. "Manipulation is coercion, or intentionally forcing a person to do something that is not in their best interest," says Felicia Kinlock, a licensed social worker and confidence coach for women. "In manipulation, only you benefit; whereas, persuasion is a win-win."

Are you unable to convey your point across to people easily? Here are six tricks to help you put an end to your frustration and be a master persuader:

- 1. Build trust:** You can't convince people just by firing a compelling pitch. You need to back it up with solid evidence from the past that shows you can be trusted. "Tell the truth—no deception, blaming others for your own failures and mistakes, no inconsistencies in actions or decisions," says Booher. "Explain your reasoning for why you do or decide things—especially when you have to disappoint people." Simple lesson: if someone asks you to keep a secret, keep it.
- 2. Tell them what's in it for them:** Most people wouldn't buy your idea—even if it benefits them—until they can clearly see what's in it for them. "When you promise people a reward for doing what you'd like them to do, it should be immediate, certain, and emotional," says Jim Crimmins, founder of the ad-rating site, *Persuade the Lizard*. Want to encourage your brother to work out in order to lose weight? Don't say: you're going to lose weight and that's great for your health. Try the immediate and emotional: your mood will be uplifted and you will feel great.

3. **Show, don't tell:** Want to convince your boss that starting a digital marketing arm would benefit the firm? Don't just tell him, show him graphically. A study by [Dartmouth College](http://www.dartmouth.edu/~nyhan/opening-political-mind.pdf) (<http://www.dartmouth.edu/~nyhan/opening-political-mind.pdf>) this year showed that people are more likely to believe information presented to them in the form of graphs and charts.

4. **Use non-verbal cues:** [Body language plays a huge role](http://www.rewireme.com/journeys/new-study-reading-literary-fiction-enhances-reading-of-body-language/) (<http://www.rewireme.com/journeys/new-study-reading-literary-fiction-enhances-reading-of-body-language/>) in getting people to understand your message. "Use a weapon of universal validation—your smile—to persuade," says behavioral theorist and business coach Dr Linda Talley. "It must be a genuine smile, mouth and eyes engaged."

[Talley's research](http://www.lindatalley.com/leaders-influence-followers-use-nonverbal-communication/) (<http://www.lindatalley.com/leaders-influence-followers-use-nonverbal-communication/>) has shown that hand gestures can play a key role in convincing people. For example, humility hands—hands are clasped in front of the person at waist level—is a positive hand gesture, and leaders who use it can convince their followers. But if a leader spends most of his time speaking with his hands in his pockets, he will cut no ice.

5. **Stop at three claims:** This is a trick from the ad world. In formal settings, provide just enough evidence to make your case. Offer too little, and you won't close the deal. If you bombard the other party with claims, they might think you're trying too hard. In a [study](http://journals.ama.org/doi/abs/10.1509/jm.11.0504) (<http://journals.ama.org/doi/abs/10.1509/jm.11.0504>) published in *The Journal of Marketing* (<https://www.ama.org/publications/JournalOfMarketing/Pages/Current-Issue.aspx>) last year, researchers found that three claims strike the right balance between too little and too much. Want to convince your client to eat kale? Give her three benefits of the vegetable.

**6. Ask questions:** Persuasion isn't just about what you think. Find out what others think, too. "Be known for the questions you ask rather than the answers you give," says Booher. "To become a master persuader, guide others by asking appropriately reflective questions rather than selling your own ideas." For example, ask questions that will lead people to the argument you're trying to make: "What is your ultimate goal in dealing with this vendor?" "Will action A be the quickest, fastest, and least expensive way to achieve that goal?"

At every juncture of life, you will deal with people. So, you better get good at the art of persuasion.



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