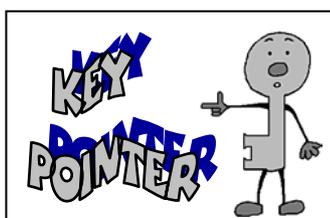


THE PERSUASION MINDSET

When getting ready to persuade, it is essential that you prepare yourself mentally as well as practically. This article looks at five principles you will need to understand in order to get the best results you can.

- 1) You are a rational AND an emotional being,
So harness the emotional and the rational.
- 2) You are made up of parts,
So make sure all your parts work together.
- 3) You have internal barriers that get in the way,
So identify your internal struggles and deal with them.
- 4) You make judgements that can set up self fulfilling prophecies,
So see your judgements for what they really are.
- 5) Your results are deeply affected by your level of confidence,
So give your confidence an extra boost.



Emotions are not “negative”, but the mismanagement of emotions can be. Emotions are an important part of who we are. It is no coincidence that the word emotional contains the word “motion”. Without emotion there is no motion or motivation to do anything. One of the keys of persuasion is the ability to motivate someone to be committed to your suggestion.

1) Harness the emotional and the rational

You have the potential to be both emotional and rational but it is extremely difficult to be both at the same time. What happens to rationality when you get emotional? It usually goes out of the window. Emotions act like lenses to the rational, distorting your thinking, blowing things out of proportion. If you are in a negotiation and you go into an emotional state, you are losing control and losing access to all the great preparation you have done beforehand.

Emotional states could include frustration, anger, annoyance, concern, fear, guilt, envy, resentment...

Strategy...

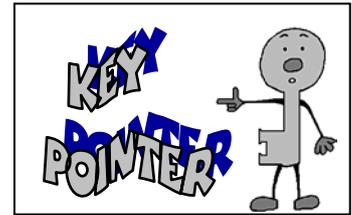
- Identify what kind of stimuli make you emotional when you are persuading and jot down what you will do the next time that stimuli arises.
- In order for an emotion to continue, it requires three components: a physiological/body state (including internal tensions and external body posture), a breathing state (including speed and depth) and a brain state (including what you are thinking about). If you interrupt any or all of these components, you change the emotional state. Most people can change their body posture, their breathing and what they are thinking about (From Julie Hay).

2) Make sure all your parts work together.

Have you ever considered that we are all made up of parts? Have you ever said: "Well, part of me wanted it, and part of me didn't" or "There was just some part of me that didn't believe I could make it happen"? If you are not fully committed to achieving a result, the likelihood is, you won't achieve it. It is quite possible to talk yourself out of a deal before you have even seen or spoken to the other party. Persuasion is much more difficult when you are getting in your own way. Don't be your own worst enemy!

Strategy...

- To help get yourself fully "on board", ask yourself beforehand, what are the benefits of me achieving what I want here and what are the consequences if I don't?



If you want to make any real changes in your mental state, you need to give yourself reason and motivation to make that the change consistent and long lasting.

3) Identify your internal struggles and deal with them

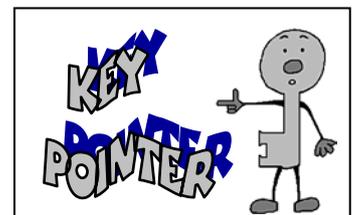
Ask yourself, "Why am I not always successful now when persuading?" Take a moment to write down the answers. The more reasons you can think of, the better.

This is a hugely powerful process because you are identifying your internal barriers. Some of them may have been unconsciously sabotaging you in the past. This is an opportunity to deal with them.

Look at your list of reasons. They will most likely fall into one or more of the following categories: a) beliefs, b) fears and c) lack of knowledge.

a) Beliefs are what you think about yourself, others and perhaps about the process and idea of persuasion. But are beliefs true? They might be true for you at a particular moment in time, but beliefs are not concrete. They can change. You have changed many beliefs during your lifetime. It is not a weakness to change a belief, especially if the old belief was limiting you.

b) Fears: Most fears take you beyond the reality of a situation by internally "catastrophising" and magnifying the possible outcome. When in a persuasion situation, what is the worst that could happen? In the vast majority of cases, the genuine worst case scenario is not anywhere near as bad as your fears would have you believe.



By identifying your internal barriers, you have a better chance of overcoming them.

Examples of limiting beliefs:

- I am simply no good at negotiating
- People I encounter seem more confident than me
- I don't get time to prepare
- It's too much hassle or too much like hard work

Examples of fears:

- I might look stupid
- I might lose
- They might get one over on me and I'll get stitched up
- They might not like me if I get pushy

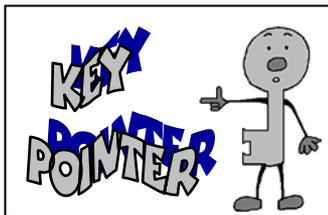
Examples of lack of knowledge:

- I don't know how to negotiate
- I don't know what makes people tick
- I don't have expertise in that area

c) Lack of Knowledge: It is an easy way out at times to use the excuse of "Oh I didn't know about that, I wasn't prepared". If you want to be an effective persuader, you need to do your preparation, have back-up plans and learn from the past (yours and others').

Strategy...

- Take each of your limiting beliefs in turn and write down an alternative for each that is no longer limiting. For example rather than: "I am simply no good at persuasion", replace it with: "The more I persuade, the better I get."
- Take your list of fears and remind yourself that whatever happens, you can handle it. The evidence is, that you have handled everything in your life so far, otherwise you would not be here. It may not always have been the result you were after, but you handled each situation none-the-less (based on an idea from Susan Jeffers' "Feel the Fear and Do It Anyway").
- If you don't know, then do everything you can to find out.



Judgements can make or break a negotiation before you've even started.

4) See your judgements for what they really are

Judgements are just judgements. They are not fact. However, we often go out of our way to prove to ourselves that our judgements are right. We either filter out the things that don't fit with our picture, or we generate a self-fulfilling prophecy. If we judge that someone is an aggressive type of person, we will treat them as we would treat someone who is aggressive, perhaps behaving defensively. This can generate aggressive behaviour in the other person in reaction to us. If we judge ourselves as not being good at persuading, we act in a non-confident manner, say things we didn't mean to say or in a way that is hesitant and unsure. This makes it easy for the other person to take advantage. As Phil McGraw says in his book 'Life Strategies', "We teach people how to treat us".

Another way of looking at this is what I call the "psychological house of cards". Although we can get very righteous and attached to our judgements, consider the following:

*Our Judgements are based on our Attitudes,
Our Attitudes are based on our Beliefs,
Our Beliefs are based on our Perceptions,
Our Perceptions are based on our Experiences,
Our Experiences are based on our Memories,
Our Memories are easily changeable and often unreliable.*

Have you ever heard two people describe the same holiday that they were both on. Their recollections are often quite different (and often the cause of an ensuing argument!).

If memory is at the bottom of the psychological house of cards, then this is a shaky foundation indeed. How sure can you really be about your judgements?

Strategy...

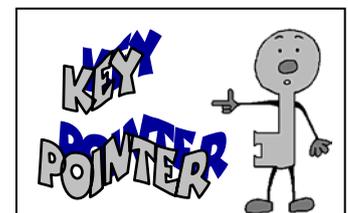
- Before going into a persuasion situation, check what assumptions you have made about the other party, about yourself and your ability to get a good deal. List them out and remind yourself that they are not fact.
- If you find a particular person difficult, ask yourself what it is about them that is difficult. Now do two things. Firstly, consider how much of this is about you and what you find difficult. Are you teaching this person how to treat you? Secondly, try saying to yourself, "So what if their behaviour is like that!". If you want to be effective in your interpersonal skills and your ability to communicate, then, from time to time, you'll have to deal with people who are not like you.

5) Give your confidence a boost

Most of us are confident in some areas of our life and not so confident in other areas. In each specific area or situation, confidence is a house built up of a number of bricks. These bricks include:

- Preparation – being ready for the situation.
- Practice – taking action, building up experience and expertise.
- Self esteem – how you value yourself in general (and how you value others)
- Your internal pictures of yourself related to that situation
- The messages you say about yourself and your ability in that situation
- The feelings you have about yourself in that situation.

Your performance will be based on all of the above bricks. If the bricks are negative or non-existent, the performance will suffer. This then has a negative consequence on your confidence, which in turn may become a downward spiral of lower confidence causing poorer performance causing lower confidence etc.



You have confidence in so many other areas of your life, it need not take long to get more confident at negotiating and influencing.

Strategy...

- ❑ Break a negative confidence spiral by preparing, practising, working on your self esteem, picturing yourself achieving, changing the messages you say about yourself, acknowledging feelings and letting the fear become excitement. Celebrate and remind yourself of your achievements.
- ❑ Think of someone that you know who is confident when persuading. Use them as a model, imagine that you are them, behave as they would behave. You can use their behaviours until your own confidence comes to the full. Sometimes by "acting" confident, it can boost your performance so that your natural confidence begins to shine through.
- ❑ Challenge yourself by haggling and negotiating, especially in situations where there is no real risk (eg. buying goods from shops or at car boot sales). Sometimes, it is simply a case of being cheeky enough to ask for what you want. This may feel nerve-wracking, even though the outcome doesn't matter. You may not always win, but actually giving it a go is all you need to do. Then learn from successes and mistakes. It is better to learn in low risk situations than fail miserably in a situation that really counts. Get playful with it. It is a game. Playing is a great way to boost your confidence.
- ❑ Remember that some of the best and most experienced persuaders feel nervous beforehand. You are in good company!

About the Author

Joe Cheal has been working with NLP since 1993. As well as being a licensed trainer of NLP, he holds an MSc in Organisational Development and NLT, a degree in Philosophy and Psychology, diplomas in Coaching and in Ericksonian Hypnotherapy, Psychotherapy and NLP.