**Persuasion/Trust/Empathy**

**Three Ways to Persuade**

Aristotle, perhaps the most famous arguer, described three routes to change the mind of the other person.

**Ethos**

Ethos uses trust, and focuses first on the speaker. showing the speaker as a person of integrity and good character.

**Reputation**

The reputation of a person depends on their past, and what is known and spoken about them. Note that although there is usually a close relationship between reputation and reality, this is not always so. Politicians, for example, guard their reputation carefully, yet many still have skeletons in the closet.

Leveraging reputation often means reminding others of your illustrious past, perhaps through stories of your successes, of how you have helped others and been able to see the truth where others have not.

**Character**

Character paints you as a three-dimensional human, even with a few flaws (though these should not be important to the audience). It shows you as being subject to the same problems and pressures as other people. It says 'I am like you'. It also shows you as a person of [virtue](http://changingminds.org/explanations/values/seven_virtues.htm), who stands by their good [values](http://changingminds.org/explanations/values/values.htm).

**Credibility**

Credibility, depends both on expertize and how this is portrayed. If you want people to believe you, you must first show that you believe yourself.

To use credibility, position yourself as an expert. Talk as if you cannot be challenged. Show how others look up to you. Use powerful gesture, eye contact and so on to position yourself as a leader.

**Pathos**

Pathos appeals to the [emotions](http://changingminds.org/explanations/emotions/emotions.htm) of the listener, seeking to excite them or otherwise arouse their interest.

An effective way of arousing passions is in appeal to [values](http://changingminds.org/explanations/values/values.htm). Tell stories of poor values, for example where innocent people are harmed. Use Ethos to show your own values and how you put others before yourself. You can also work with their [goals](http://changingminds.org/explanations/motivation/goals.htm) and [interests](http://changingminds.org/explanations/motivation/interest.htm) or even challenge their [beliefs](http://changingminds.org/explanations/belief/belief.htm).

[Language](http://changingminds.org/techniques/language/language.htm) has a significant effect on emotion, and [hot and cold](http://changingminds.org/explanations/emotions/hot_cold.htm) key words (fire, child, anger, smooth, etc.) can trigger senses and feelings.

**Logos**

Logos focuses first on the argument, using cool logic and rational explanation, as well as demonstrable evidence.

**Evidence**

Science and scientific proof are based on the use of [empirical](http://changingminds.org/explanations/research/philosophies/empiricism.htm) evidence. If you argue without evidence, a scientist would dismiss your argument as metaphysical (literally, outside the physical world).

Evidence cannot be refuted, as courts of law seek to demonstrate. If you show, then it is very difficult to deny without calling into question the validity of the evidence produced.

Evidence can include statistics, pictures and recounted experience (especially first hand). Pathos may also be evoked when giving evidence as you give it an emotional spin. Ethos is also important to establish the credibility of the witness.

**Reason**

Reason uses [rational](http://changingminds.org/explanations/research/philosophies/rationalism.htm) points that call on accepted truths and proven theories. Where evidence does not exist, reason may still prevail. A common tool in reasoning is to link two items together, for example by cause and effect.

Reasoning often uses syllogisms, that include a major premise, a minor premise and a conclusion based on the combination of the two premises.

From <http://changingminds.org/disciplines/argument/making_argument/three_persuade.htm>

# AIDA

AIDA is a simple acronym that was devised a long time ago as a reminder of four stages of the sales process (Strong, 1925). AIDA stands for Attention, Interest, Desire, Action.

It is, in modern terms, a fairly simplistic model. This does not mean that it is no longer of value--it simply means that it is not the whole story. The bottom line is that it is useful to use it as a checklist and guideline, but not as the *only* checklist or guideline.

## Attention

First get their [attention](http://changingminds.org/principles/attention.htm). Without attention, you can hardly persuade them of anything. You can get attention in many ways--a good way is to [surprise](http://changingminds.org/principles/surprise.htm) them.

When you are talking to them, the first few seconds are essential as they will listen most then and rapidly decide whether you are worth giving further attention. Don't waste these precious moments on niceties, grab the other person's attention immediately.

It is generally better to open with something that [pulls](http://changingminds.org/principles/pull.htm) them towards you rather than something that scares them (as this may [push](http://changingminds.org/principles/push.htm) them away).

Good openers address their problems and begin with such as:

* *Have you ever...?*
* *Are you noticing...?*
* *Can you see...?*

Bad openers give them something to object to, demonstrate your disrespect, or just bore them to tears, and may begin with such as:

* *I've got just the thing you want...?*
* *I just dropped by so that I might...?*
* *I was only wondered whether you could...?*

## Interest

Once you have their attention, sustain that attention by getting the other person interested.

You can get interest by:

* Listening to them talk about their problems.
* Telling them things that affect their problems.
* Demonstrating things, rather than just telling.
* Getting them actively involved.

Watch out for the boredom factor. You may be able to get someone interested, but you cannot expect to keep their attention for ever. If you want to come back some day, you should leave them wanting more, at least of your company.

## Desire

Once they are interested in you and what you have to say, then next step is to create a desire in them for what you want them to do.

They can recognize that they have a need, but this is not desire. Desire is a motivation to act and leads towards the next stage.

Desire is like a fire, and can be stoked by many methods, such as:

* Showing them how the item to be desired will not be available for long ([Scarcity principle](http://changingminds.org/principles/scarcity.htm)).
* Showing how other people approve of the item and have acquired it for themselves.
* Showing them how what you have to offer will solve some of their problems.

## Action

This is the magic stage when they take action on their desires and actually buy the product or agree to your proposals.

The scariest point is where you ask for the sale or ask them whether they actually do agree fully with you.

Listen to the signals they are sending. Are they asking you about when you can deliver or what after-sales support you give?

Summarize the problem you are solving for them and how what you are proposing solves that problem.

Use the appropriate closing technique, such as alternatives ('Do you want the red or the blue?) or presupposition ('What *time*shall we meet next week?').

## And...

A variant on AIDA add a 'C' for *Conviction*or *Confidence*. The ideas is that before you get to a final purchase action, a cognitive state of understanding the value is needed that matches the emotional state of desire. This sometimes appears before Desire (AICDA) and sometimes after (AIDCA), perhaps showing two different approaches: one which starts with getting a logical agreement and then moving to emotional desire, as opposed to creating desire first and then reaching the state when the purchase also makes logical sense.

The letter 'S' for satisfaction also gets added (AIDAS or AIDCAS), indicating the fact that happy customers will buy more (whilst unhappy customers will tell their friends!).

An even more extended version is Wijaya's AISDALSLove, that stands for Attention, Interest, Search, Desire, Action, Like/dislike, Share, and Love/hate. 'Search' indicates looking for more information and the ideal product, including comparing products until the most desirable is found. Like/dislike is a relatively early experience that later turns into the more emotional Love/hate. We also tend to tell others, sharing our experiences (even more these days with the ease of social media).

Another AIDA variant is ACCA, which stands for Awareness, Comprehension, Conviction and Action. This is found in the DAGMAR (Defining Advertising Goals for Measured Advertising Results) approach.

<http://changingminds.org/disciplines/sales/methods/aida.htm>

# Empathy

## Feeling what other feel

Empathy is the ability to not only detect what others feel but also to experience that emotion yourself.

This can be both a bane and a boon. If you can read another person's emotions then you can both avoid making a faux pas and also utilize their state to move them in another direction. When people are in emotional states their ability to decide is often significantly impaired. Thus you cannot expect aroused people to make rational choices at this time.

Empathy is a bane if you end up experiencing all the bad feelings of everyone around you. This is one of the problems that therapists and other carers have to handle.

## It's not sympathy

Empathy and sympathy are very close and are sometimes used as synonyms. The easiest way to separate them is to remember that empathy is about *feelings*whilst sympathy is about *actions*. Thus you may empathize with another person and then act on this by telling them how sorry or happy you feel for them.

Empathetic people are often very sympathetic - they can hardly stop themselves as they really do feel for the other person.

A person who is sympathetic but not empathetic may appear a little shallow, as they are less likely to show an emotional connection. 'Terribly sorry and all that, old chap' they might say, in a friendly but relatively cold voice.

## It's definitely not psychopathy

A defining element of a psychopath is that they do not and probably cannot empathize with other people. They are often good at imitating this, but in doing so they are using it in a cold and manipulative way.

Having said this psychopaths have been described as having 'cold empathy' whereby they do not experience what others are feeling but nevertheless are able to detect emotions through reading [non-verbal](http://changingminds.org/techniques/body/body_language.htm) signs. In this way they can appear normal whilst simultaneously caring nothing for others.

This lack of empathy is one thing that makes a psychopath so dangerous. If we cannot empathize with others then we are unlikely to care about them. Psychopaths can this easily [objectify](http://changingminds.org/explanations/preferences/empathy_object.htm) other people, treating them like 'things' and even killing them without any remorse.

## It has many benefits

The value of empathy comes not from understanding the other person's feelings, but what you do as a result of this.

### Empathy connects people together

When you empathize with me, my sense of identity is connected to yours. As a result, I feel greater in some way and less alone. I may well, as a result, also start to empathize more with you.

In a therapeutic situation, having someone else really understand how you feel can be a blessed relief, as people with emotional problems often feel very much alone in their different-ness from other people. The non-judgmental quality can also be very welcome.

### Empathy heals

Therapeutically, it can be a very healing experience for someone to empathize with you. When someone effectively says 'I care for you', it also says 'I can do that, I can care for myself.'

### Empathy builds trust

Empathy displayed can be surprising and confusing. When not expected, it can initially cause suspicion, but when sustained it is difficult not to appreciate the concern. Empathy thus quickly leads to trust.

### Empathy closes the loop

Consider what would happens if you had no idea what the other person felt about your communications to them. You might say something, they hated it, and you continued as if they understood and agreed. Not much persuasion happening there!

The more you can empathize, the more you can get  immediate feedback on what they are experiencing of your communications with them. And as a consequence, you can change what you are saying and doing to get them to feel what you want them to feel.

# So what?

So how do you do it? How do you find out what other people are feeling? All you have to go on are what they say, how they say it and what they do, which can also be described as 'words, music and dance'.

If you want to move someone, detecting their emotional state is the first step. If you can feel that state then that detection is even more accurate. When you can sense their emotion, you can then use this to move them in the direction you want them to take.

The trick in spotting feelings is to pay close attention to changes in the other person in response to external events. If you say 'How are you?' and the corners of their mouth turn down and their voice tone goes flat, then you might detect that all is not well.

The better you are at spotting small changes, the greater your potential ability at empathizing. Watch for small changes on the face. Watch for lower-body movements when the upper-body is under conscious control. Listen for tension in the voice and emphasis on specific words. Listen for emotional words.

To avoid getting swamped by their emotions learn to dip in and out of the [association](http://changingminds.org/explanations/emotions/emotion_association.htm) that makes you feel what they do. Go in, test the temperature and then get out to a place where you can think more rationally.

Unless you are really sure, it can be a good idea to reflect back to the other person what you are sensing of their feelings, to check that you have got it right. After all, the only person who can confirm empathy is the person whose emotions are being sensed.

Reflecting back itself has an effect, typically leading the other person to appreciate that you really care about them and hence increasing their trust in you.

Empathy is far more effective when it is offered, as opposed to when people ask for empathy (in which case a negotiation exchange dynamic is set up).

By the way, The usual [caveat](http://changingminds.org/and/caveat.htm) applies here - taking advantage of someone who is upset breaks many social rules and negative manipulation is likely to lead to [betrayal](http://changingminds.org/explanations/trust/effects_of_betrayal.htm) effects.

<http://changingminds.org/explanations/emotions/empathy.htm>

# Persuasion SPICE

Dutton (2010) identifies five common patterns in persuasive methods that he fits to the word SPICE: [Simplicity](http://changingminds.org/techniques/general/overall/spice.htm#sim), [Perceived self-interest](http://changingminds.org/techniques/general/overall/spice.htm#per), [Incongruity](http://changingminds.org/techniques/general/overall/spice.htm#inc), [Confidence](http://changingminds.org/techniques/general/overall/spice.htm#con) and [Empathy](http://changingminds.org/techniques/general/overall/spice.htm#emp).

Here's a discussion of each of these:

## Simplicity

It is not what you say, it is how you say it. And the simpler the better. People understand simple. The more complex the wording, the more misunderstanding (and non-understanding) there will be.

When you want to get across a subtle message, you can use simple headlines to [distract](http://changingminds.org/principles/distraction.htm) or cloak the inner persuasion. If you want somebody to [remember](http://changingminds.org/techniques/memory/memory.htm) something, make it simple. And if you want to hammer home a point, say things in [threes](http://changingminds.org/techniques/general/repetition/triple.htm).

[Repetition](http://changingminds.org/techniques/general/repetition/repetition.htm) and other patterns are all about simplifying. Acronyms do the same -- this page uses 'SPICE' to help get the message across and memorable. And there are many[figures of speech](http://changingminds.org/techniques/language/figures_speech/figures_speech.htm) that use simplicity in subtle ways. Brevity helps too. Less is more.

Watch people when they are trying to persuade others. They may start complex but, faced with confusion, their message gets simpler and simpler. Politicians and journalists know this already and use headlines to quickly get the message across.

Complexity has its place too. In the [confusion principle](http://changingminds.org/principles/confusion.htm), you occupy the mind in trying to work something out whilst you slip past with the real message. Paradoxically, the complexity method is quite simple.

## Perceived self-interest

Although we are social animals, we are ultimately self-interested. The whole realm of Game Theory use classic experiments like the Prisoner's Dilemma to test (and, sadly, prove) our ultimate selfishness. Faced with the threat of others taking advantage of us, we are easily tempted to get in first.

It can be argued that even altruism is designed to make us feel good as we help others. When they feel good, our [empathy](http://changingminds.org/explanations/emotions/empathy.htm) makes us feel good, and so this is our ultimate aim.

An important point is that self-interest is about [perception](http://changingminds.org/explanations/perception/perception.htm). People do things that they *think*are in their own interest. So if you can convince other people that an idea is good for them, then they will likely go along with it, whether or not this is true.

In this way, you can play to self-interest when influencing and persuading. When working with a new boss, for example, a useful approach is to say 'My job is to make *you*successful'. Find out what their boss wants and deliver it, making sure that your boss looks good. Of course you can gain some glory too, but beware of grabbing the limelight from the person who is effectively your personal employer.

When designing your persuasive message and action, always remember WIIFM and WAMI, a pair of thoughts that we all regularly have. WIIFM stands for 'What's In It For Me'. And WAMI is the other side of the same coin: 'What's Against My Interests'. This is not all we think and we may not noticing ourselves doing it, but the thoughts are often in there somewhere.

A complexity here is that when you are doing the persuading, you are also thinking WIIFM and WAMI. And, just as you are thinking about the other person's WIIFM and WAMI, they are quite possible thinking the same about you, too.

## Incongruity

Congruent shapes are those that are identical in all respects. Incongruous ones do not fit together. When perceiving our personal universe, we seek patterns that we recognize. Patterns are [safe](http://changingminds.org/explanations/needs/safety.htm) and [predictable](http://changingminds.org/explanations/needs/prediction.htm), and our brains reward us by making us feel good when we recognize their [harmony](http://changingminds.org/principles/harmony.htm). The flip side of this is that we feel uncomfortable when we cannot fit things into our patterns.

When things are not as they 'should' be, we become [confused](http://changingminds.org/principles/confusion.htm). We fall into the [fight-or-flight reaction](http://changingminds.org/explanations/brain/fight_flight.htm) or otherwise resort to [coping](http://changingminds.org/explanations/behaviors/coping/coping.htm). We [satisfice](http://changingminds.org/explanations/theories/satisficing.htm), seeking any solution, including self-deception, to resolve our discomfort. We will see what we want to see rather than what is actually there.

In trying to figure out what is happening, we may well pay a lot of attention to the incongruity, which means we will miss all kinds of other things going on. We also may ignore the incongruity completely as we are unable to process it. In a classic experiment, a group of students were shown video of people playing basketball and were asked to count the number of bounces of the ball. Most of them completely missed a person in a gorilla suit dancing through the scene!

In persuasion, this means the confused person will grasp at straws, including the solutions you offer. They will pay attention to incongruity and miss things you want them to miss. You may also succeed in getting them to ignore the blatantly obvious if it is outrageously odd, especially if it is not where they are currently paying attention.

## Confidence

Confidence will cover a lot of sins. If you are as bold as brass and speak like you know what you are saying, then it is amazing what you can get away with.

Confidence tricksters know this as they confidently play roles and purloin your goods. Actors know it too, as do leaders in all walks of life. Be [assertive](http://changingminds.org/techniques/assertiveness/assertiveness.htm). Act big and people will assume you are big. This is one trick that shorter people may learn as they compensate for their physical lack of advantage.

This appears in the [authority principle](http://changingminds.org/principles/authority.htm), where even the symbols of power are accepted as showing that you must be obeyed. In the famous Milgram experiments, about 65% people off the streets were persuaded to administer 'lethal' doses of electricity to strangers, only because they were told to do so by a man in a white coat. When trappings of authority, such as the 'supervisor' not wearing the white coat, the conforming number dropped to around 25%.

## Empathy

Humans have [evolved](http://changingminds.org/explanations/evolution/evolution.htm) as a tribal species. Living together is good for survival, although this means we must [trust](http://changingminds.org/explanations/trust/trust.htm) others, which in turn means we need to have some idea of how they think and feel. [Empathy](http://changingminds.org/explanations/emotions/empathy.htm) is 'feeling what others feel' and leads to caring for them. [Care](http://changingminds.org/techniques/conversation/rapport/active_care.htm) is a key aspect of trust (I will trust those who care about me). In this way, showing empathy gains trust which increases your chance of persuading. It also helps, of course, to know something of what the other person is feeling.

A classic way of connecting with people is by [building rapport](http://changingminds.org/techniques/conversation/rapport/rapport.htm) through methods such as demonstrating [similarity](http://changingminds.org/principles/similarity.htm) and relevance to the other person.

All this is deeply embedded in our psyches. We all have a powerful need for a sense of [identity](http://changingminds.org/explanations/needs/identity.htm), much of which we get through our interactions with other people as we socially construct out selves. A critical social process here is [bonding](http://changingminds.org/principles/bonding.htm) with others, which is effectively a joining of identities. When we 'become one' our fates are synonymous and when you ask me to do something it is like me asking myself.

<http://changingminds.org/techniques/general/overall/spice.htm>

# Three Types of Persuasion

There are three ways to persuade people as you seek to get them to do what you want them to do. These are very different both in method and in the effect they have.

## Control

### What

Gaining control over a person is like having them as a puppet. Of course it is not that simple but the principle remains that you are seeking to control their actions without worrying too much about what they think.

### How

To gain control of another person, so they do what you want even if they do not want to do it, you need [power](http://changingminds.org/explanations/power/power.htm). This can be the power of authority, such as when a manager directs a subordinate. It can also be the power of money or knowing a person's secrets or other levers of direct influence.

Another way is to use persuasive methods that [distract](http://changingminds.org/principles/distraction.htm) the conscious mind while you make suggestions to the unconscious. [Conditioning](http://changingminds.org/explanations/behaviors/conditioning/conditioning.htm) is a further method that focuses on the unconscious mind and can work on humans as well as animals.

### Problems

The problem with control is that we are an intelligent species and we do not stop thinking when people are trying to control us. In fact we tend to think even harder as we figure out what is going on and what to do about it.

We have a need for a [sense of control](http://changingminds.org/explanations/needs/control.htm) and when we realize others are trying to control us we will often become annoyed and [resist](http://changingminds.org/techniques/resisting/resisting.htm) their efforts, fighting back or taking sly revenge. This makes persuasion by control hazardous and best used only when the other methods are impractical.

## Convince

### What

Convincing people seeks to gain their agreement, getting them to think about what is being said and concluding that it both makes sense and is the best option for them.

When people agree, they will act in aligned ways that seem sensible. They need less ongoing management and will effort to sustain their agreement.

### How

To convince someone, you need to get their [attention](http://changingminds.org/principles/attention.htm) so they will listen. Then you need to create a convincing [argument](http://changingminds.org/disciplines/argument/argument.htm) that presents your case and negates alternative views. You want them to think and agree, typically so they will act on this appreciation into the future rather than just taking immediate action (which is where Control focuses).

To convince, you need to show that your argument makes sense, with appropriate logic and [cause-and-effect](http://changingminds.org/disciplines/argument/types_reasoning/cause-and-effect.htm) explanation. An argument also becomes more convincing when the person sees how it affects them personally, impacting their [needs](http://changingminds.org/explanations/needs/needs.htm) and [goals](http://changingminds.org/explanations/motivation/goals.htm).

Gaining conviction often makes significant use of [language](http://changingminds.org/techniques/language/language.htm), and care with words is needed. The ancient Greeks were masters of [rhetoric](http://changingminds.org/disciplines/argument/five_canons/five_canons.htm), and their methods can still be seen today in courtrooms and other formal contexts.

While sales people use some tricky methods, they also seek to convince, particularly when dealing with business and other repeat customers who may think later about how they were persuaded.

### Problems

Convincing people is much harder work than the simple application of control. You need to think about how other people think and, to some extent, be a psychologist as well as a linguist and logician.

Even though convincing can work well, it may well not be enough. The confounding factor that stymies the logician is [emotion](http://changingminds.org/explanations/emotions/emotions.htm). When we are emotional, we think less, and when we are highly emotional we almost completely lose our rationality.

## Convert

### What

Conversion seeks to change a person's [beliefs](http://changingminds.org/explanations/belief/belief.htm) and [values](http://changingminds.org/explanations/values/values.htm), getting them to truly buy into what is being suggested so they connect [emotionally](http://changingminds.org/explanations/emotions/emotions.htm) and even change their sense of[identity](http://changingminds.org/explanations/identity/identity.htm).

### How

Conversion often uses more emotion-based methods than the cooler logic of trying to convince people.

The emotional aspect of conversion means it is a more social activity and finding ways of [bonding](http://changingminds.org/principles/bonding.htm) with the target person can be very helpful. Building [rapport](http://changingminds.org/techniques/conversation/rapport/rapport.htm) is a classic way of doing this.

Natural methods such as [storytelling](http://changingminds.org/disciplines/storytelling/storytelling.htm) seek to get people to connect with idealized characters in the tale. These can be woven into [conversation](http://changingminds.org/techniques/conversation/conversation.htm) or used as stand-alone teaching tales.

Some [cults](http://changingminds.org/techniques/conversion/cults.htm) use aggressive [conversion](http://changingminds.org/techniques/conversion/conversion.htm)methods such as [isolation](http://changingminds.org/techniques/conversion/isolation.htm) and [breaking sessions](http://changingminds.org/techniques/conversion/breaking_sessions.htm) to [destroy](http://changingminds.org/techniques/conversion/identity_destruction.htm) and rebuild the person. Other ways include [engagement](http://changingminds.org/techniques/conversion/engagement.htm) and [striving](http://changingminds.org/techniques/conversion/striving.htm). While cult methods seem harsh, more civilized versions of their methods may be seen in more traditional religions and businesses.

When a person's beliefs come from another person or source, you may want to undermine the source rather than the belief. Show the source as lacking credibility, with a shaky foundation.

### Problems

Converting can be both easier and harder than convincing. People often hold their beliefs and values tightly and do not change easily. On the other hand, we may be converted by emotional appeals that do not need complex reasoning.

To change what a person [believes](http://changingminds.org/explanations/belief/belief.htm) is particularly difficult when they hold strongly to that belief and when it is associated with other beliefs, such that attacking a single belief is to attack the whole system. This is what happens when one aspect of a region is criticized.

Studies of cults have shown that even though they can cause a person to adopt very different beliefs, these effects fade when they leave the sustaining cult environment. What we believe is closely related to what people around us believe.

## Discussion

Control is probably the most common persuasive method used (think parents, managers, military), though it is the least effective in changing minds. This is probably because, if you have the power needed, it is quickest and easiest. Convincing and converting require more skill, which relatively few people have.

These are equivalent to another triple: The Three H's, or Head, Hands and Heart. Control directs the hands, getting people to do things without worrying about what they think. Convincing engages the head, asking them to think and agree. Conversion goes for the heart, seeking emotional buy-in.

If you wanted to be cynical, you could call these 'the three cons'. In practice, they are a very real choice and understanding the distinction can be critical.

<http://changingminds.org/techniques/general/articles/three_types_persuasion.htm>

# Three Ps of Persuasiveness

To persuade or change the minds of others you should develop three qualities that will sharply increase your success rate: Positivity, Politeness and Persistence.

## Positivity

Attitude is critical in negotiation and other forms of changing minds. If you are negative and pessimistic then failure is both expected and common. But if you adopt and sustain a positive attitude, even through the darkest moments, then it will be remarkable what you achieve.

Assume an agreement can be found, even when a negotiation seems stuck or impossible. See disagreement as not yet agreeing rather than a final position, and that all that is needed is a little more understanding. Stay hopeful even when others might give up.

Also assume that others are positive. People notice what you think of them and tend to align with your expectations of them. When you assume they are selfish and negative, then even if you are careful what you say, this attitude will leak out through your body language. You have to believe in the basic goodness and positive intent in people to be able to draw this out and create collaborators rather than competitors.

With your overall thrust and individual requests, seek positive action that moves things forward towards an agreeable outcome. Ask them to do things to help even as you are doing likewise. Offer goodwill and expect it as a natural response.

## Politeness

Sustain a polite and civil tone, even when they act in ways that may privately anger you. Use careful language, starting with a formal approach that assumes they are worthy of respect. Likewise dress tidily, typically wearing a clean and pressed shirt and suit or smart casual clothes as appropriate. Use formal greetings and farewells, wishing them good health and success.

If they relax, you can relax more and become more friendly. If they suggest using first names thank them and do so. Note how starting more formally makes a step towards familiarity a distinct event that brings you closer. Further steps can be taken, but always stay a little more polite than them. Also sustain a basic politeness beyond which it is inappropriate to go, even if they become too casual and chummy. Their attempts at friendliness may be a part of their attempt to persuade you.

While conversation can be cordial and friendly, increase the formality around key actions such as final agreement of who does what. Letters should be more formal than email, which should be more carefully constructed than speech.

Polite language uses words like 'please' and 'if you could' that acknowledge their status and support their identity as a worthy person. Politeness also includes listening attentively and without interruption.

## Persistence

Persistence means never giving up. It requires both patience, the ability to go slowly, and determination, the resolve to keep going, even when things are looking bad. Other words which fit include resilience, steadiness, fortitude and grit.

If you are in a hurry, then you are more likely to accept the first offer to come along or at least get a worse deal than you could. Those who hurry are a gift to negotiators who just need to offer a little and stand their ground. Hurrying can also harm both sides as it misses possibilities from which both may benefit.

Persuasion can be rather like line fishing. You cast your bait then slowly reel them in so gently they do not realize they are hooked. If they pull back, you let them, then carefully resume the reeling process. The opposite is net fishing where you just sweep them up in a single, surprising move. While netting can sometimes work, patient reeling is usually a far more reliable method.

Many people take time to think and decide. They may want information and demonstrations, which of course you can provide. They may want to weigh up several options and you hence will need to carefully influence how they choose. They may need to persuade others before they can proceed, for which you can provide persuasive arguments and material.

When people say no, when they put obstacles in your way, when they just will not decide, then despite the frustration and exhaustion, giving up can not be an option. You just need to keep going, putting one foot in front of the other until you reach your goal. Remember that the other side will tire too and it can sometimes turn into a war of attrition where the winner is the side which persists the longest.

<http://changingminds.org/techniques/general/articles/three_ps_persuasiveness.htm>

# Incremental Persuasion

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## Description

When persuading, do so one small step at a time.

Get them to agree to a small point. Then get agreement on a further smaller point. Then another and another until you have got them to your final destination.

Make each small point very easy to accept and as logical as possible so they cannot really object to it.

## Example

*Could you hold this? How does it feel? Comfortable? Can you imagine using it at home? Would it feel good? Would it feel better than what you have already? Would you like to replace your old one with this? How would it feel taking this home and knowing you could use it every day? ...*

*Do you like having fun? Would you like to have fun today? Have you ever had fun when you did something new? There's a new playfield in town. I've seen others there having fun. Would you like to have a go some time? How about this afternoon?*

## Discussion

Incremental persuasion works because perception is based on [contrast](http://changingminds.org/principles/contrast.htm), which in this method is between small increments. We largely judge the impact of something on us in this relative way rather than against an absolute standard, making incremental approaches less easy to notice.

There is a classic story of boiling a frog in a saucepan. As the water warms up, the frog does not notice the incremental change in temperature and does not jump out, and so quietly boils. The same is true of many changes in life, where we accept many small differences, not taking action until it is too late.

Incrementalism works in many different places. For example if you're seeking information, ask for a little at a time. It can be effective if you ask different people, as this allows you to gather a lot of knowledge without appearing to be particularly acquisitive. You can also get a lot done by asking for small favors. Paradoxically, this can lead people to feel they should do more for you, as in the [Ben Franklin Effect](http://changingminds.org/explanations/theories/ben_franklin_effect.htm).

<http://changingminds.org/techniques/general/more_methods/incremental.htm>