



Leadership NOTES

Principles of Persuasion

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A key function of leadership is to activate and channel the potential of a group, and individuals within the group, toward a chosen goal. Communication, influence, and persuasion are three skillsets that make this more likely to occur.

Communication supports and organizes the efforts of most members of any organization who are already primed to fully engage and collaborate toward the organization's goals.

Influence is an interpersonal force that shapes people's thoughts and actions. Influence operates to subtly, but effectively, nudge and align individuals' efforts toward greater coherence in support of the organization's goals.

Persuasion seeks to course correct another's fundamental approach or way of thinking toward the aims and goals of the organization. "Persuasion: the act of replacing someone's worldview with something better." (Chris Anderson, author of Ted Talks- The Official TED Guide to Public Speaking)

These three skillsets are different from one-another, but complementary in their effects. A computer's operating system makes for a helpful analogy. When operating well, one only needs to be clear and skillful in using the apps and programs to accomplish one's work (communication). Sometimes a computer benefits from a restart, to nudge the apps and programs back into good working order (influence). Sometimes a computer needs a major upgrade to a newer and better operating system (persuasion).

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Priming

People are more likely to change their viewpoint if they receive information about other views ahead of time. A movie trailer primes an audience to choose to see an upcoming movie.

Commercials promoting a psoriasis remedy prime a patient to ask her doctor about the treatment, increasing the odds of a prescription. If several friends give a new restaurant good reviews, a person is primed to believe the food is better than if there had been no priming. A real estate agent, just before entering a house showing, primes the buyers by saying "I think this may be the one. I can't wait to see what you think."

Reasoning

People are more likely to change their viewpoint if the change makes logical sense. It is true that many decisions are made based largely on emotional factors. Still, there is a logical component to every shift of view. If the reason for an outcome is either A, B, C, or D... and it can be shown that reasons A, B, and C are highly unlikely... reason D starts to look more reasonable.

Familiarity

People are more likely to change their viewpoint if the new view seems familiar rather than alien. It is effective to proactively place artifacts of the new viewpoint into the context and environment of the person to be persuaded. Speak, write, create visuals, introduce new vocabulary, ask questions. When the new viewpoint is more officially presented it will be seen as a familiar (more trusted) alternative, rather than an outlier.

Association

People are more likely to change their viewpoint if respected others hold the new viewpoint. This is why celebrities and athletes are often asked to endorse products. We associate the person's success and notoriety with the advertised product.

Versatility

People are more likely to change their viewpoint when important others show versatility in their approach to persuasion. Logical types do well to offer some emotional connection in their arguments. Talkers are more persuasive when they also listen. Impatient types are persuasive when they wait. Team players are persuasive when they choose to stand alone.