

Persuading Others: Negotiation Techniques

with Robert Cialdini, Professor Emeritus of Psychology and Marketing, Arizona State University, Author, "Pre-suasion: A Revolutionary Way to Influence and Persuade"

The art of negotiation can take years to master, and because of the personalities and the objectives involved, no two negotiations are exactly alike. That said, we humans are predictable in some ways, and there are certain techniques that have been proven time and again in negotiations of all kinds to lead to more desirable outcomes.

- Match the verbal style of your negotiation partner. Focus on phrases, idioms, diction, vocabulary, and expressions.
- Pause before you deliver your strongest point. This causes the listener to orient to the next thing you say.
- Create trust with your listener. Reveal a weakness or drawback before you move on to your main argument.

Start with common ground. Look for the places where you and your negotiating partner share the same goals. Doing this work upfront will make things easier when you begin to discuss goals that are more mutually exclusive.

Also, we respond well on an unconscious level to familiarity. So matching the tone, verbal rhythms, and even the non-verbal expressions of your negotiating partner can lay the groundwork of trust necessary to get the results you want. This is a subtle practice—outright mimicry isn't advisable, of course, but finding a way to echo the other person's ways of expressing herself can help her better hear your side of things.

Another trust-building move is to begin by presenting a weakness or vulnerability in your case. This humanizing approach, counterintuitively, gets your negotiating partner's attention and primes them to listen more closely to your strongest arguments.

Finally, when presenting these arguments, try this little verbal trick: Pause for just a second before launching into the case. This, too, gets your partner cognitively ready to pay close attention when you make your big pitch.

Prepare

Before you watch the video

What techniques have you found consistently helpful in negotiations toward getting the desired outcomes?

Practice

After you watch the video

Recall a successful negotiation. Did you use any of the techniques Cialdini mentioned? If so, what effect did they have? Others that aren't mentioned here?

Sometime today, subtly and without telling the other person, practice the technique of matching the rhythm of their speech and non-verbal communication. Then reflect: how did it go? What effects did you notice on their behavior?

Why do you think beginning by finding common ground leads to more desirable negotiating outcomes for both parties?

Reflect on the technique of presenting a weakness upfront before making your strongest case. Why would this work? How about the verbal-pause technique?
