COM 31800: Prin. Of Persuasion

Devito Reading: Power in Interpersonal Relationships

Types of Power

Power is constant, six types; referent, legitimate, expert, information or persuasion, reward, and coercive power.

Difference in power and influence determines decision making and who can prevail in an argument.

Referent Power: others wish to be like you or identified with you. This power is greater when you are attractive and have prestige. This is also amplified by popularity, respect, similarity in sex, and similarity of attitude and experience.

Legitimate Power: The power gained when others believe you have the right, by virtue of position, to influence or control others. Stems from belief that people should have some control over our actions.

Derives from roles held by others, teachers, police, governors, and religious leaders have this type of power.

Expert Power: this power manifests as you have knowledge of some trade or subject. This is like how a doctor of mathematics would have less expert power over the things that a medical doctor would have power over.

This power increases with lack of a bias. Men are generally perceived as having greater levels of expert power than women.

Women have higher levels of referent power than men.

Information or Persuasion Power, is the result of appearing as someone who can communicate logically and persuasively. When you are perceived as persuasive, you are actually more persuasive. However, having large amounts of information in your mind and using it to present good arguments displays information power.

Reward power comes from the capability of rewarding others. These rewards can take many forms. The power you have is determined by the power of the reward you can offer.

Coercive power arises what you can dole out punishment for bad behavior. Reward power and coercive power typically go hand in hand, having one means you have the other.

Coercive power’s strength depends on two factors, magnitude of the punishment and the likelihood that it will be administered as a result of noncompliance. When threatened by mild punishment or by punishment you think will not be administered, you are likely to ignore it. Reward and coercive power are opposite sides of the same coin. Reward power makes you more attractive, while coercive power makes you not as much so.

When you use rewards to exert power, you don’t incur the same costs as when you use punishment. When you exert power, you deal with content and happy people. The use of coercive power leads to people being angry and hostile.

When you reward someone, it displays effective use of power and that you gained compliance of the other person.

You give reward for compliance, but the opposite is true of coercive power.

Lastly, exerting coercive power can diminish the power of other types. The opposite is true for reward power.

You rarely use only one type of power. Expert power can be followed by information and even legitimate power.

Negative power exists, negative referent power occurs when a son refutes his father, negative coercive power may be seen with children who do exactly what they are told not to, since some forbidden things are exciting or challenging.

Power can be communicated much like any other message.

Speaking power is the way that power, or a lack thereof, is displayed through speech.

Examples of powerless speech:

1. Hesitations such as “er”, “ah”, and “um” all serve to disempower, they make you seem unprepared or uncertain
2. Overuse of intensifying adjectives such as Really, greatest, very, or truly. Overuse of intensification makes everything seem the same and doesn’t really emphasize.
3. Disqualifiers, such as “I didn’t read” or “I didn’t see” indicate a lack of competence and uncertainty.
4. Tag questions, “That was a great movie, wasn’t it?”. You indicate a reliance on the thoughts of others before continuing.
5. Self-critical statements indicate a lack of confidence and may make public your own inadequacies.
6. Slang and vulgar expressions indicate low social class and hence low power.

Nonverbal Power is focused on the factors related to your ability to persuade and influence others. Affirmative nods, facial expressions, and gestures help express your concern and establish charisma, an essential component of charisma. Self-manipulation and backward leaning will damage persuasiveness.

Good expressions

* Responding in kind to eyebrow flashes, raise your own to acknowledge
* Avoid adaptors – self, other, and object – especially when you wish to communicate confidence and control
* Use consistent packaging: be especially careful that your verbal and nonverbal messages don’t contradict one another.
* When sitting, select chairs that are easy to get into and out of, avoid deep plush chairs that you have trouble getting out of.
* To communicate confidence with your handshake, exert a tad more pressure and hold the shake for slightly longer than usual.
* Walk slowly and deliberately, being hurried indicates no power.
* Maintain eye contact, people who maintain eye contact are judged as more at ease and less afraid to engage in meaningful interaction than those who avoid contact. When you break contact, gaze downward, otherwise a lack of interest will be communicated.
* Avoid vocalized ers and ahs, they indicate that you are not sure what to say.
* Maintain reasonably close distances between those whom you interact with and yourself. Too much distance indicates fearful-ness and too close indicates aggression.

Listening power is power elicited through listening. Listen to phrases such as “I want”, “it would help if…” etc.

Use phrases that indicate you understood what was said, powerless listeners will pretend to listen.

Powerful listeners respond visibly but in moderation, too little indicates apathy, too much indicates vapid attention. Powerful listeners use back-channeling cues such as head nods, brief oral responses that say “I’m listening”. Without back-channeling, the speaker feels ignored.

Powerful listeners maintain eye contact, and the eye contact is intermittent, look away and then return your gaze to them. In small groups, you should focus most of your eye contact on the speaker.

Adaptors, such as hairplay and fidgeting, give an appearance of discomfort. Adapators communicate weakness. They indicate self-concern and helplessness, absence of them gives an air of control to a listener.

Open postures are important for power, avoid covering the stomach or face with your hands.

You should also avoid interrupting a speaker in conversations or small groups. It is a basic rule that should be followed. Finishing a speaker’s thought demonstrates a powerless effect.

Interaction management is the techniques used by us to regulate and carry on an interaction. This will produce satisfying interactions. Maintain your role as a speaker or listener and pass the opportunity to speak back and forth through appropriate eye movements, vocal expressions and body/facial gestures.

Keep conversation fluent without long pauses. Communicate with verbal and nonverbal messages that are consistent an reinforce one another. Avoid contradictory signals.

Power can be signaled through visual dominance behavior, such as eye-contact while listening and lower level while speaking. When powerful individuals want to signal dominance, they may reverse this pattern. They can maintain high level of eye contact while talking but low levels while listening.

Compliance gaining and resisting, tactics that enforce compliance or resistance subtly. However, one time use of compliance gaining methods does not guarantee compliance, it is an affair of continuous renegotiation.

Compliance resistance involves resisting manipulation, this can be done through manipulating the image of the person making the request. This can be done negatively or positively, in negative identity management you may portray them as unfair.

Positive identity management involves resisting by making the other person feel good about themselves.

Nonnegotiation can be used, it is a direct refusal to negotiate. In negotiation you resist compliance by offering a compromise.

Justification can be used, you justify your refusal by citing consequences of compliance and non-compliance. You could also cite a positive consequence of non-compliance.

This is a transactional process that takes time. It is important to understand the basis on which you use these strategies and the relationships to which they apply. Improper use of strategies and inappropriate strategies will produce negative effects and positive strategies the opposite.

Empowering others involves helping others to gain power over themselves and their environment.

This is not altruistic alone, it provides many benefits. Empowered people are proactive, they will have personal interest in a job. They will take on more decision-making roles. Empowering someone gives them an edge and can produce a team that effectively deals with issues.

One should raise self-esteem, resist fault-finding, all criticism should be constructive, offer your perspective as an option, lend an ear to first-tries. Avoid verbal aggression, avoid winning arguments with unfair or harmful tactics.

Be positive, emphatic, and supportive. Be respectful. Attentiveness and active listening send a message of importance. Share skills and decision-making, relinquish control and allow the other person to make decisions. Encourage growth.

This is vital in communicating with the apprehensive and shy.

Do not overprotect, people will not learn to fend for themselves in many situations. Instead nudge and support indirectly.

Demonstrate understanding and empathyize with another person’s shyness, do not minimize the importance of their fear. Practice active listening, should you sense they wish to discuss their anxiety and shyness

Avoiding making a shy person the center of attention, this is the opposite of what they want, and can induce negative feelings.