

# Powerful Communication

Social Skills Mastery

by Social Skills University

# Powerful Communication

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## 1. Make Your Conversations More Interesting

Many people will struggle to avoid awkward silences or simply have meaningful and interesting conversations.

The problem with conversational skills is that there is a fine line between an interesting conversation and crossing your interlocutors' boundaries. That's for those who are courageous enough to speak up.

Others will face a different type of problem where they feel like their interlocutor is being invasive.

The trick I want to talk to you about today solves both issues.

This is a 3 step system that you can use over and over during the SAME conversation without it getting either boring or too invasive.

It goes like this.

1- Pick up a clue:

People talk.

They talk a lot.

But are you listening to everything?

Yes? You shouldn't.

No? You should.

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I know this might be confusing but let me explain.

You don't have to listen to everything.

In fact, there are keywords you should focus on in order to filter the noise and useless information while still managing to stay involved in the conversation.

Keywords like "I like" "I love" "I was" or "I am".

You get the idea.

You need to pay attention to when people give you more information about themselves, this is your ticket to controlling the conversation.

2- Ask!

Once you get your clue and topic, it's time to ask an open-ended question.

Now that you've spotted a topic that interests them, you have to let them tell you more.

Now there are two potential scenarios:

1- You have no clue wtf they're talking about

2- You have to know what they're talking about

This determines whether you will start the process again or not.

Let me explain.

3- Your turn to talk:

Let's dig into each of the before-mentioned scenarios.

A- You're clueless:

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If that is the case, don't dive right into the topic like an idiot.

Ask more.

In this scenario, you have to restart looking for cues to find a topic on which both of you converge and are knowledgeable; which makes the conversation more interesting and also brings you more opportunities to speak and exchange.

The good thing is, this can allow you to make your interlocutor talk more (it doesn't mean you have to actively listen, you can give the illusion that you're doing so; a topic for another post).

Even if you never reach a common topic (assuming you and your interlocutor are way too different) this allows you to drag the conversation longer and make your interlocutor talk more so you don't have to.

Remember, people love to seem knowledgeable.

They will not miss an opportunity to "teach" something or simply talk about something they value.

B- You have a certain level of knowledge about the topic:

Your goal is almost attained.

At this stage, what you should be looking for is the limits of knowledge of your interlocutor about the topic you guys are discussing.

Once that is done; it is your opportunity to teach them something new; they'll love you for it (as long as they do show signs of interest; which you can recognize through their body language.)

The goal and process of this technique are to drag the conversation longer without being intrusive.

It allows you to put into practice all aspects of a conversation:

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1. Listening
2. Talking
3. Adding Value

You can never go wrong with this.

Bonus tip:

Smile. I don't need to explain this. Wait maybe I do.

Don't smile all along long like a fanboy idiot.

Smile when they're explaining something; show that you understand and appreciate their explanation.

This will bring you closer to your interlocutor and create feelings of intimacy.

## 2. How to Beat Shyness

Shyness is an emotional state in which one feels uncomfortable or even fearful of the prospect of interacting with other people.

This feeling can be especially exacerbated when meeting strangers.

Individuals that are experiencing shyness often relate a feeling of self-consciousness.

Their attention is almost completely centered on themselves rather than the person in front of them.

These feelings of self-consciousness often translate to a fear of what others might be thinking about them.

Shyness can obstruct a person's capacity to do or say what they want, and can even prevent that person from ever developing healthy relationships.

There is a strong relationship between shyness and low self-esteem, with social anxiety also playing a crucial role in some cases.



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A person can exhibit different levels of shyness, depending on the context of the social interaction and their mental state at the time.

Sometimes, you may feel a mild sensation of discomfort, something quite easy to overcome.

Other times, you may experience an intense fear of a particular social situation, to the point that it can be debilitating, keeping you from doing the things you want.

Shyness can lead to inhibition, social disengagement, anxiety, and symptoms of depression.

Shyness is a universal feeling across almost all human beings but at varying degrees.

However, the way that we interface with our feelings of shyness (how we interpret them and how we cope with them), often has a lot to do with our culture.

Some cultures, including several sub-cultures within the Western World, tend to see it negatively.

Others, including some Asian cultures, tend to see shyness as a necessary and positive emotion.

Most people who are inherently shy eventually learn to manage that aspect of themselves so that it doesn't get in the way of their favorite activities.

They develop a tolerance for unfamiliar situations in general. By working on their confidence by constantly exposing themselves to unfamiliarity, they can mostly overcome their feelings of shyness in the long run.

However, for a small percentage of people, shyness can be intense and hard to overcome.

When the feelings are this intense, it makes it difficult for a person to engage, participate in a class or the workplace, and socialize in general.

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Someone with severe shyness sees his emotions develop into a powerful fear rather than just a minor hurdle.

As a result, they could avoid going into social settings entirely, unless they have to attend.

Talking to peers or professors might be awkward and seem impossible. And, worst of all, they can squander a lifetime of opportunities by never attempting new things and never meeting new people.

Extreme shyness can make it difficult to socialize.

This, in turn, can have an impact on one's self-confidence and self-esteem.

Extreme shyness is a symptom that can allude to social phobia, which is an anxiety disorder.

Getting over such extreme feelings of shyness in people with a social phobia could sometimes require a therapist's assistance.

A person who is extremely shy or suffers from social anxiety can get over it! It needs practice, perseverance, courage, and time.

But the efforts are worthwhile.

Gaining more friends, having more fun, and feeling more confident are benefits that may seem trivial to some.

But, to those who lack them, they can be life-changing in the most liberating way possible.

If your feelings of shyness hold you back, know that there is a way to significantly improve your situation.

While you cannot change the core of who you are, and you shouldn't look to do that anyway, you can very well put some effort into gaining confidence with strangers.

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You probably already know that socializing becomes easier the more you do it.

By exposing yourself to new situations, you can overcome shyness, gain confidence, and enjoy life on a deeper level simply through practicing social skills.

These include assertiveness, conversational skills, as well as friendly, confident body language.

This is not, however, something that you can develop solely through knowledge and theory alone.

Reading a thousand books about human psychology and the power of confidence can never teach you how to act well in social situations.

They can be helpful, but actual practice is a necessity. In this spirit, here are four practical things you can do to overcome your shyness:

1. Stop seeing yourself as a shy person: Your words carry a lot more weight than you might think, particularly the names that you choose to call yourself.

According to research in the field of narrative psychology, the way you identify with yourself has a significant impact on how you behave in social settings.

People who view themselves as shy often also advertise themselves as shy.

They see their shyness as an intrinsic part of themselves.

This association may originate from childhood experiences, and often from the way the person was treated by the people around them.

To overcome this way of viewing yourself, making use of a journal is, again, recommended.

Whenever you notice yourself identifying as a shy person, take note of the feelings and thoughts that come with that identification.

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Then, start to question that supposed truth.

For example, next time you are in a social setting that feels unfamiliar, keep careful watch of what you desire and what you tell yourself to not pursue it.

You may find out that you are afraid of embarrassing yourself, maybe you couldn't take being viewed negatively by others, or perhaps you are petrified by the prospect of loneliness.

Whatever it may be, you need to identify what makes you tick.

Take as much time as you need and write as much as you feel is necessary.

Another thing you should do is question the potential origins of your shyness.

To do this, ask yourself when exactly your feelings of shyness start to manifest.

Look for these insights in memories of your childhood.

Go over the circumstances that bring out in you that poignant feeling of shyness.

Finally, look for ways to rewrite the narrative of your everyday life.

Stop using such phrases as "I am shy" or "I'm awkward", and replace them with positive affirmations of your confidence.

### 2. Eliminate bad habits:

Feelings of shyness can sometimes emanate from our habits, things we take for granted and never question as much as we should.

By realizing this, you might start noticing the tiny things you do every day that make you feel shy, and that communicate that shyness to the people around you.

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This can lead the people around you to start treating you a certain way, which in turn only further fuels your shyness.

Without realizing it, your avoidance of social situations makes it less likely that other people engage with you.

As such, you should look to eliminate the habits that make you shy and let other people know too.

If you are someone that frequently avoids interacting with strangers in the street, you might want to learn to make some friendly eye contact, put on a smile, and simply say “hi” as you pass someone.

Pay attention to your body language: Is it usually open or closed?

If you always put on earphones at full blast when you go out, keep a lowered gaze, or cross your arms when you sit at a café, it signals that you do not want to socialize, and people will usually avoid interacting with you.

What you could do instead is signal others that you want to socialize, by facing them, having a relaxed posture, and an inviting facial expression.

A great way of practicing getting rid of bad habits associated with shyness is to do it with service workers.

Whenever you visit your local café, bar, or supermarket, put on a smile and simply say hi.

These people interact with the general public as part of their job and are quite easily approachable.

Just ask them how their day is going, and try to keep the interaction short.

3. Look for common ground in conversation:

Talking to someone for the first time is arguably a sure way to bring out feelings of shyness.

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When doing so, you will probably resort to small talk. Here, you should view small talk as an introduction to real conversation.

If it goes well, you can then move on to deeper topics.

Small talk is used as a means of exploration, of building intimacy between people who just met each other.

When entering into such a conversation, use questions and statements that can launch you into a longer, deeper conversation.

You might ask the person if they are working on something interesting or exciting, or ask them about their trip to your meeting place, or how they came to know a mutual friend of yours.

4. Take deep breaths before stressful interactions:

If you are the type of person who feels high levels of stress when in unfamiliar social situations, you should know that there are ways of controlling these feelings.

One of the best ways of calming yourself when feeling anxious in social situations is to control your breathing.

The next time you find yourself in such a situation, start by doing some positive self-talk and then take five slow, deep breaths before engaging the other person in conversation.

Breathe using your diaphragm (i.e., your belly) instead of your chest.

Deep breaths help a lot in reducing your heart rate as well as your blood pressure.

This, in turn, can help you get out of a fight or flight mindset and adopt instead a calm and more self-assured demeanor.

## 3. Avoiding Awkward Silence

Everyone knows that very uncomfortable moment when you're talking to someone, everything is flowing great...

Until it doesn't anymore.

You both shut up and start looking around in a cringe atmosphere.

Thankfully there are ways to get around this.

First, you need to understand that some answers and questions simply kill the conversation

If they can answer with less than 3 words, think about another one...

Or rephrase it.

Instead of:

What do you do for a living?

Ask:

What's your field and how did you end up in it?

The goal is to make your interlocutor more comfortable and force them to say more about themselves.

Another good way to reorient the conversation is to include other people in it.

-Ask them how they met.

-Talk about your common friends.

-Ask for a third person's opinion or integrate them into the discussion

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All of that using open-ended questions.

What you need to keep in mind is that the more you will talk the more likely the conversation to lead to an uncomfortable silence.

The goal is to make your interlocutor do the talk while you direct what they say through your open yet not invasive questions.

Awkward silence comes from uncomfortable moments.

Another way to avoid such unpleasant occurrences is to find common interests with your interlocutor

Push the conversation that way.

It creates stronger bonds and ensures the conversation never stops.

If you can make your interlocutor more relaxed and create a mood of trust that will push them to talk more.

People won't say anything to someone that doesn't seem genuinely interested.

That being said, you should never feel uncomfortable in silence.

Silence is a tool you can use to your advantage and communicate with.



### 4. How to say “No”:

When you are asked to do something that you do not want to do, then you can just say no.

When saying 'no', keep your refusal short, but not so abrupt as to unnecessarily upset the other person. Make sure what you are saying is crystal clear, with no scope for the other person to think that you might yet be persuaded.

You can make the message clear by starting your response with 'no'.

You do not need to qualify or explain your response. The fact that you have made a decision is enough. It may be helpful sometimes to explain a decision, but do not allow this as something for them to challenge.

Do not apologize for your refusal and do not be apologetic in your tone. 'I'm sorry, but...' often appears weak and leads to challenges and further argument. Be firm: neither weak nor aggressive.

Do not make up excuses. If you are to give a reason, then be honest, even if it is uncomfortable. Be careful about giving them explanation on which they may use objection-handling.

Do not be persuaded by pleading, whining, wheedling etc. Listen to rational argument and make rational decisions based on what you have heard. Only change your mind if it makes real sense.

It can help to acknowledge the other person, for example by using their name.

Show that it is you making the decision rather than hiding behind other people or impersonal rules. Say 'I' rather than 'we' or 'they'.

If the other person persists, repeat your reasons (do not look for new reasons to decline). Use the broken record method if necessary.

Example

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I can't take on any extra work. My calendar is completely full for the next month.

Sorry, Mike. You're a nice guy, but I do not want to go out with you.

I do not want double glazing. I am happy with my house as it is, thank you.

Saying 'no' is something with which many people have problems.

Whilst it is easy to say yes, saying no is risking the wrath of the person involved or the other people they might tell. Ultimately, refusal may seem to risk hurting a relationship, being ostracized from the group, being fired from the company or otherwise being severely punished for your lack of cooperation. When you refuse, it may seem as if you are also giving up your right to ask something of the other person.

All this is, of course, untrue. You have a basic right to refuse. The good news is that reality is nowhere near as bad as imagination. When you say 'no' assertively and clearly, you are more likely to gain respect than lose it.

### 5. The tone of Voice 101

Research psychologist Albert Mehrabian developed a theory wherein he argued that successful communication was built on three main pillars: the content of the speech, body language, and tone of voice; with the content of the speech being the least important factor in the overall meaning of the message.

This effect is so powerful that even dogs pick up on it, as a Hungarian research team has found that dogs can differentiate very well between the praising, neutral and negative tones of voice of their masters, with the reward centers of their brains activating only when a praising intonation matched their masters' praising words.

When we communicate with one another, there is a lot of information that is carried not in the meaning of the words said per se, but instead, in the way these words manifest in tone.

The tone of voice is understood as the way we use our voice to make our point to others. It can be seen as the non-verbal melody of the words that our voice produces. However, limiting ourselves to this understanding of tone would be quite restricting, as the phrase "tone of voice" carries much more colloquial meaning than just the melody of one's voice.

As such, some of the most crucial elements that relate to the phrase are one's tone, pacing, volume, emphasis, and the use of pauses during speech. One of the most interesting characteristics of the tone of voice is that it can completely reshape the meaning of one's speech, in such a way that it becomes completely different from the meaning of the content of the speech on its own. In order to illustrate this point, let's look at a simple example:

Take the phrase: "I never said that he missed work".

If you say it out loud without emphasizing one word over the other, you would get one meaning for the phrase. Now, try to emphasize each bold word individually:

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*I* never said that he missed work.  
I *never* said that he missed work.  
I never *said* that he missed work.  
I never said that *he* missed work.  
I never said that he *missed* work.  
I never said that he missed *work*.

You will see that although the content of the speech remains unchanged, the meaning carried by the phrase can change drastically depending on the word being emphasized. In order to better understand the way tone of voice shapes the end meaning of the words we speak, let's explore how it manifests itself in our pursuit of politeness in our everyday social interactions.

Tone of voice and politeness:

Various non-verbal cues, including one's tone of voice, are seen by the scientific community as crucial in the communication of politeness. It is often the case that researchers would gauge politeness by looking only at verbal content data, but the tone of voice, facial expressions, and other mannerisms hold crucial informative insight on attitudes, feelings, and even internal states of individuals. The sociolinguistic theory is considered by most to be the most notable theory of politeness.

In it, it is suggested that every person has two primary desires: positive face (wherein one seeks to maintain their self-image), and negative face (wherein one desires to act unhindered by others); and that these two primary desires are sometimes threatened in everyday social interactions by either criticism (which threaten positive face), or requests (which threaten negative face).

The sociolinguistic theory argues that politeness is an attempt to remedy these threats to positive and negative face. As such, there a number of elements that revolve around remedying face-threatening threats that you should take into consideration when building your tone of voice; with non-verbal communication cues (including the voice's pitch and tone) being just as important as linguistics.

Research on the topic has revealed some interesting information:

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Vocal pitch, as well as facial expressions, have been found to vary with the intent to convey politeness. Tonal cues of politeness have been found to vary reliably depending on status, with culture also playing a crucial role in shaping this variation.

Culture has been found to play an enormous role in the use of both verbal and nonverbal politeness strategies. Nonverbal messages manipulated to vary in politeness (on a polite/impolite spectrum) affect how polite or impolite critical messages are perceived. Specifically, during criticisms, a polite nonverbal tone increased perceived politeness and an impolite nonverbal tone decreased perceived politeness.

Nonverbal cues play an important but limited role in conveying politeness. Sometimes, the content of one's speech is perceived so negatively that it supersedes one's non-verbal efforts at politeness.

For example, no matter how hard we try to soften the blow of a negative statement, nonverbal cues may not be able to compensate enough to result in a polite message overall.

## 6. How to use the tone of your voice

You Communicate Meaning with Your Tone of Voice:

If you've ever traveled in a country where you did not speak the language and eavesdropped on a conversation.

You might have been surprised to find yourself following along and picking up the feeling of the conversation even though you didn't understand any of the words.

The field of paralinguistics studies vocal communication that is separate from the words that are spoken.

Think about this for a minute.

You can say "This new team configuration will work out great" in many different ways.

You can say it with a lot of enthusiasm, or with sarcasm, or with boredom.

The way you say the sentence conveys as much meaning or more than the words themselves.

Here are some things to think about:

- Vary the pitch and volume of your voice, based on the meaning of what you're saying.

If you talk at the same pitch and volume all the time, you'll sound boring and appear to lack emotion or passion for your topic.

- Match your paralinguistics with your message. If you're excited or passionate about an idea, convey that passion by speaking a little louder, a little faster, and with more variety in your pitch.

- Speak loudly enough for your audience to hear you.

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Being too soft-spoken conveys timidity or nervousness.

- Pronounce all of your words.

Watch out, especially for the endings of words and the endings of sentences. These are the places that people tend to cut off.

Articulating well conveys confidence and authority.

- Think about using pauses.

If you get nervous, you'll tend to talk faster and faster with few pauses.

Pause before and after you make an important statement or ask a question. Your silence can be as important as your words.

## 7. Lead & Control Conversations: Easy Tricks

Conversation can get boring.

VERY quickly.

In fact, at least half of the time, you're responsible for that. If both sides fail to take the lead, or one side fails to keep up with the conversation, it goes to waste. And what could have been a very informative and exciting conversation becomes boring and dies away.

But there are ways to lead and control the conversation in order to avoid such instances.

Here are a few ways to lead and control the conversation.

### 1- Mirroring: Body Language & Words

A straightforward way to make your interlocutor more comfortable is by mirroring their body language and matching the lexical field they use.

By doing so, you create a stronger sense of intimacy and complicity with your interlocutor, you make them more at ease and encourage them to contribute more and get more engaged in the conversation.

Of course, if not properly done, mirroring can give off vibes to the person you're talking to.

Here are a few rules to follow for mirroring:



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- Don't abuse mirroring, diversify your techniques (refer to the next points)
- Acknowledge their boundaries: if someone leans in towards you, do the same without getting too close and stepping into their personal space.
- Don't use words you don't understand, it might be tempting to start using complex words to match your interlocutor's lexical field. But if you use the wrong words, you destroy everything you were building and might put off the person you're talking to.
- Don't mirror what you don't appreciate. The behavior that might cross your boundaries is not to be mirrored because it will encourage the reoccurrence of such behavior. It's important to assert one's own boundaries as much as it is important to respect your interlocutor's boundaries.

## 2- Questioning:

Leading with questions can be a very effective way of leading and entertaining the conversation.

However, one should focus on asking open-ended questions rather than ones that require a simple Yes or No answer. By asking open-ended questions, you can direct the conversation to more interesting topics if the conversation gets boring.

Example:

"That's very interesting, how can this be applied to [Insert topic of interest]"

## 3 - Reflecting & Paraphrasing:

This technique requires you to be an active listener. Because you cannot reflect or paraphrase what you were not listening to.

What this does is that it invites your interlocutor to further explain themselves while signaling to them that you're listening to what they have to say.

The best way to do this is to use a technique called "Chunking"; which consists of summarizing all the points said in one sentence.

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One effective way to do this is by asking yourself:

"What is the main point they're trying to convey to me?"

The good thing is, by formulating your response as a question, you can afford to get it wrong.

And if you do, it's still all good. Because it will incite your interlocutor to further explain themselves.

This encourages further discussion.

A few examples:

- "So you're saying that [summary of what they said]?"
- "Okay, so let me recap what you said. [Quick recap]. Did I miss anything?"
- "Interesting. I really like the point you made about [Insert Point made]. Could you give me more examples?"

## 4- Encourage & Validate:

You might face people who are shy and fail to express themselves properly, the abovementioned methods can be extremely helpful but you'd still need to encourage them to contribute more.

One way to do this is by asking for their opinion when they get silent or encouraging them to talk more if they decide to say something.

- Ask for their opinion: "What do you think of this?"
- Encourage them: "Please go ahead" or "Very interesting point, could you expand?"

We often fail to realize that some people need an extra push to get more involved in the conversation.

Oftentimes, that person is ourselves.

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By using the information in this article, you can avoid putting yourself in such a position and become the one that leads and invites others into the conversation.

This is a sure way to avoid being put aside when a discussion occurs.

All these can be done effortlessly and don't require much practice or preparation.

## 8. Staying Calm Under Pressure

This is a recurring question and something many people struggle with. Let's explore ways of proactively, actively & retroactively making sure that we can stay calm under pressure.

What is meant by the above paragraph is that we will explore 3 different dimensions of achieving the desired result:

1. Preparing Ourselves
2. Dealing with the situation
3. Reflecting on the past and Practicing for the future

A - Proactive Preparation:

The best way to make sure you don't lose your temper or your words during stressful situations is to first be ready for it.

After all, if something is completely unknown to you, you will always struggle with it. But in this part, we will not talk about practicing situations but rather some exercises and tips that give you the best tools to be ready for any sudden pressure or stress.

1. Physical Activity:

This might sound unrelated but it's not.

Physical activities put you in conditions similar to what you might experience when in a stressful situation.

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If you are a combat sports enthusiast, you know well that staying mindful, calm, and focused on the fight plays a role of paramount importance in the performance of the fighters.

The increase in heart rate, the sweat, and in some cases trembling, are all examples of common aspects of intense physical activities and a situation of stress or panic.

As such, being physically active can help you prevent negative body language reactions as you are used to such instances.

## 2. Mindfulness & Breathing

These exercises are extremely effective to learn how to control your emotional impulses along with having overall higher self-control abilities.

## 3. Condition Yourself

An easy trick you can use is to have an object to use as a calmness totem. One of the amazing things about the human brain is that it can associate emotions with material objects. Practice holding this object while doing mindfulness exercises so that your subconscious associates it with this calmness and control state.

Disclaimer: This is not applicable to everyone, but rather for extreme cases of panic attacks.

## B- Putting It To Practice:

Preparing yourself is good and all, but the important part is this one. It's being able to remain calm when in the situation and not just preparing for it in different ways. Let's see how you can manage to keep your calm.

### 1. Eyes on The Prize:

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The most important thing that will allow you to remain calm is to not lose control of your own thoughts and emotions. As such, when in a stressful argument or other pressure-inducing situations, it's important that you focus on the points you want to make and not the external parameters that don't help your cause.

This is surely easier said than done, but it becomes more natural as you practice more. The trick to properly filtering out the noise is asking yourself the following question:

"How is it relevant?"

The eyes that are watching you, the tone of voice of your interlocutor, the arguments they might make, how people might interpret your words and reactions etc... These are all examples of futile things that you might start to think about which causes you to put even more pressure on yourself.

Most of the time, it is simply by realizing that what's bothering you is irrelevant to your point and what you want to say. It is best to ignore it. If it is something relevant then you can use it to bounce back and have a proper answer. Using elements around you is a good way to have good and quick-witted responses.

So although you should be mindful of everything around you, it's important to consider their level of relevance with regard to the points you want to make.

Remember: Do not let external components impact your own thought processes unless they serve your own point.

Doing this will help you achieve the next point.

## 2. Impose your pace

A lot of people fall for this. Sometimes, the only thing that makes you lose control is your attempts to match the pace and intensity of the situation instead of imposing your own rhythm and pace.

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As such, you should not be the one trying to fill in the awkward silences but rather the one imposing them. Not only does this give you more time to think but it also allows you to stay in control of the frame of the conversation.

You're not reacting anymore, you are contributing and you will do so as you please and not as implicitly "asked" from you.

In a way, this is a way of refusing the pressure applied on you and denying it. When doing so, remember however that it's better to maintain eye contact with your main interlocutor.

### 3. Say less:

What's making you shake and feel trapped is, as mentioned above, your attempts of filling the silences and blanks. When what you should be doing is working on your assertiveness and ability to convey short yet precise messages.

The less you say, the less you will have to think about what to say.

Make silence your ally.

### C- Retroactive Work:

When you poorly handle a stressful situation, the first thing you should do is analyze your own behavior. Awareness is key because you cannot fix what you're not aware of.

Identifying the negative behavior you might have, will help you avoid it next time. A good way to do this is by associating your undesired reactions with your emotional state at that time. These are again exercises of association & mindfulness. The trick is to mix the Proactive work with the Retroactive one by preparing yourself based on past experiences where you had an unsatisfying reaction.

Let me know if you'd like us to do practice and debates to better practice your skills with regard to this.

## 9. Quick-Witted Responses: A beginner's guide

You know that feeling when you answer something and then think:

“Shit I should’ve said X” or “Why did I say that?”

Well; here are some solutions.\*

One of the most important social skills is the ability to answer right away (especially when the situation is tense or stressful). In fact, your ability to be quick-witted in your answers will often indicate that you’re not someone to fuck with.

And that.

That is priceless.

As in any problem-solving situation, let’s start from the beginning and understand why you’re unable to answer rapidly and with accuracy.

Well, the reasons are quite simple.

1- You don’t control your emotions

2- You lack the courage to simply say what you have in mind

3- You don’t know what to say.

Number 3 might sound like the most important one but it’s in fact the opposite.

Knowing what to say is only a byproduct of fixing the first two obstacles.

So here are ways to become able to answer quickly, accurately & powerfully.

I - Preparing Yourself:



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In this part, we'll see how you can work on yourself to be ready for any situation. In the second part, we'll put things into practice and see how you should behave when faced with such a situation.

## A - Grow your short-answers stack:

First things first.

If you'd like to improve your ability to respond, you need to observe and learn from people for whom it is natural.

This will help you absorb answers that can apply to different situations and memorize them for future use.

Political debates are a great source to study.

## B - Work on your self-confidence:

If you lack self-esteem and self-confidence, chances are you're gonna shit your pants when your moment comes.

I could go on about how related both concepts are but I'm sure you're not stupid and you understand the importance of self-confidence with regard to our topic today.

This should always be a work in progress and as you improve it, your ability to answer quickly and accurately improves too.

## C - Practice Alone:

One thing you can do to practice this is to watch videos of uncomfortable interviews & pause it to answer difficult questions instead of the interviewee.

What this does is help you work on your improvisation skills & get feedback through how the interviewee later answers. You can see if their answer was right and accurate or if you've done a better job right away. This gives you instant feedback and is a great tool to practice on your own.

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## D - Practice on Others:

This should be done in regular situations, not necessarily in conflict. The more you can practice your short and quick answers, the more you'll filter which ones are effective and which ones should never be used again.

Tip: You might offend some people by doing this, add a smile at the end of your answers to disguise it as a joke.

## II - Real Setting:

Ok good, you've been practicing and trying to learn on your own.

How should you handle a real situation?

The first and most important thing is to keep control over your emotions.

Some emotions like anger or shame can make you freeze and prevent you from finding words.

Emotional Control is the basis of it all.

Second thing is to take risks & go for it.

The first thing that crosses your mind. This is again why self-confidence is of paramount importance.

But, how do you make sure you don't miss?

There are 2 things to keep in mind:

1 - Uncover your interlocutor's underlying intentions (Bragging? Seeking sympathy? Trying to dominate you?)

2- Use questions

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Once you figure out what they're after, ridicule their intentions with an easy question.

Asking a question will open the door for you, you can't miss it if you don't affirm something wrong.

What this does, is put pressure on the other person.

One easy answer you can use often is:

"What are you trying to prove?"

With more practice, this will become a natural skill and you won't need to think much.

### 10. Rhetoric 101: An Introduction

Rhetoric refers to the art of persuading others through one's words or writing. You can use rhetoric to provide information, persuasion, or even motivation to an audience in the pursuit of a specific goal.

Persuasion can indeed take many forms, and can be applied in even more situations: arguing with a partner, haggling for a better price, as well as giving a speech. It is important to keep in mind that rhetoric is an essential ingredient for successful persuasion. It is a powerful tool in the hands of people that know its power and how to use it.

Aristotle delimited three types of persuasive speech:

1. Judicial Rhetoric explores issues of justice and the validity of accusations, and it seeks to mount evidence on past events. This type of persuasion is widely used in courts of law and in legal matters broadly.
2. Demonstrative Rhetoric, on the other hand, is most concerned with issues of morals and values and expresses either praise or blame through making a declaration about a specific circumstance. One example of demonstrative rhetoric would be a wedding speech.
3. Deliberative Rhetoric seeks to entice a specific reaction on the part of the audience, by means of asking them to envision a possible future. This type of rhetoric is often used by politicians when they give their vision of a better future through applying their policies.

Furthermore, it is important to underline the fact that different rhetorical techniques appeal to different issues or values, and it is important to choose the right rhetorical device for the right situation:

- Logos refers to an appeal to logic
- Pathos refers to an appeal to emotion
- Ethos refers to an appeal to ethics
- Kairos refers to an appeal to time

Since the Ancient Greeks first established these categories thousands of years ago, they have remained virtually fixed. This makes sense since our decision-making processes haven't changed: we still base most of our decisions on these core issues.

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We either employ our reason, our emotions, our sense of morality, as well as the reality of urgency as guides to our decision-making. Persuasion will often revolve around one or more of these core categories when trying to change another person's view on a specific topic.

When it comes to making use of rhetoric in a real-life situation, it is best to initially analyze the nature of the rhetorical situation. You should match your speech to the rhetorical context as best as possible.

Next, you should identify what elements exactly need to be communicated to the other party in order to make your point, and it is very important that you take a strategic approach when responding through the use of rhetorical tools.

There are a number of elements that you would need to take into consideration when you analyze a rhetorical situation. The first two of these elements are yourself and the audience. The audience and the individual who speaks to the audience, both have characteristics that are crucial for determining the optimal way to present your argument.

You should take into consideration the age, gender, location, education, life experience, social status, and many other elements, both for yourself as the rhetor as well as for your audience.

For the latter, one way to think about how to engage with the audience is to concentrate on their knowledge of the issue, their reservations, and expectations, as well as an understanding of where you should conform or strategically restrain from meeting their expectations.

The setting of the interaction is another important element. Your rhetoric should be in harmony with the context of the issue in question, as well as the broader context of the environment. You should distinguish between different settings and the appropriate language that best fits these environments.

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Other important elements to keep in mind are the topic and the purpose of the interaction. The topic is crucial in that you have to determine what parts you want to share with the audience as well as how you are going to present that information.

You should also do your best to make your point even without the ability to layout the entirety of the topic, as that would be difficult if not impossible in some circumstances.

In terms of purpose, you should always remember why you are making your speech. Is it for entertainment, education, or persuasion? The reason for giving your speech will provide much insight into the strategy of your rhetoric.

As such, you should always keep in mind the purpose of your speech so as it does not stray too much from that goal.

### 11. What is framing?

Human beings are able to interact with the world by assigning meaning to its different components and phenomena. You and every person you know are constantly interpreting the meaning of events, actions, and the world generally. This mechanism allows us to make sense of the world and know how to act in any given situation. This act of interpretation is a crucial component of 'framing'.

Framing lays the foundation of how people understand the world around them and is also a pillar of the art of persuasion.

Persuasion, the art of bringing someone to believe something else, or to do something specific, relies greatly on shifting people's interpretations of a certain topic, something is often done by presenting a "cognitive frame" as a starting point from which to think about and interpret a given topic.

Think of this cognitive frame as a pair of glasses, or a prism, from which people can view the world. While the world itself remains objective, fixed, and unchanged, different people will make sense of it in different ways. These diverging interpretations depend in a major way on the prism, the "cognitive frame", through which one observes the world.

Another way to think about framing is to view it as the frame of a painting. While the painting remains the same, the meaning it brings to the observer can be shifted just by the frame of the painting. In the same way, the meaning that we extract from our observation of the world isn't created just by the main issue itself, but also by the minute details surrounding that issue: the framing. By changing the surrounding elements, it is as if we view the issue from a different prism.

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As our understanding of the problem depends largely on that prism, it then dictates not only our understanding of the issue but also the way we should act in the face of it. As such, one of the best ways to get people to act a certain way is to reframe the problem, leave the big issue, and focus instead on the details surrounding it. Understand that the main issue is the center of contention, the thing on which people are usually most focused. This tendency to concentrate on the main issue can allow you to shift the frame, and thus change the meaning of the issue entirely.

Let's look at an example:

Let's say that you are a writer for a local paper, and have to cover the main story for the week. The issue at hand is a protest that is taking place during the week, led by members of a racist and xenophobic group. Regardless of the moral underpinnings of this issue, the way that it is framed and presented to the reader can lead to different outcomes. Here, depending on the outcome you want, you can frame the issue in a number of ways.

Let's say you want the protests to be viewed positively. In this case, you might want to frame the protest as an issue of personal liberty and freedom of speech. You would take the reader's attention away from the main issue, the fact that the protests are hateful and xenophobic, and concentrate instead on the surrounding elements: the fact that we live in a free society where people have the freedom to express their views, as hateful as they might be, and so on.

On the other hand, if you want the protests to be viewed negatively, you can choose a frame that would highlight as many negative elements surrounding the issue as possible. For example, you can bring attention to the fact that the majority of these protests that took place in previous years ended up turning violent. By framing the protests as an issue of public safety, you can shift the reader's understanding of the issue so that they have a more negative view of the protests.

To conclude, just understand this: By framing a topic in a certain way, you are telling your audience how to think about it. As such, the way you present an issue to your audience can greatly influence how they understand that issue, and even what to do in the face of it.



## 12. Avoid Getting Framed by Reframing The Conversation

Disclaimer: *The technique mentioned in this thread requires you to put bad faith in the argument & conversation. But, this is useful against people with poor intentions & high conversation skills.*

When having a conversation or argument, power dynamics come into play. This means that beyond the arguments and logic involved; there are domination and power games being played. Oftentimes, those power games overshadow the actual reasoning and logic.

One technique often used in such cases is the “Framing” technique. Which basically allows the person using it to direct and control the conversation in a way that suits their own points.

Framing refers to the act of setting up a stage for the conversation.

By staging and controlling the settings and parameters of the conversation, your interlocutor gets the upper hand and control. They drag you into a side they control.

This is like cornering your opponent in a boxing game.

You frame them in a corner they can't get out of and start punching.

You have the freedom to move and land punches, all they can do is defend themselves.

What we're about to see are tricks that would help you get out or not fall into their frame at all.

1 - Elements of Language:

The choice of words is probably the most important aspect when it comes to framing a conversation.

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When arguing with someone from the “woke” movement; they will instantly use words like “phobia”, “oppression” & “minority”.

Using an emotional pull and a specific vocabulary to depict their side of the story as the “victim”. These elements of language imply a victimization process, which makes you; being their interlocutor, the oppressor.

You haven’t said a word yet, but you’re already framed.

The best way to counter this is to acknowledge it as an emotional argument and ask your interlocutor to stay rational and logical. What you would be doing here is pushing back their frame and forcing them to try something else.

Upon doing this, you should introduce your own elements of language in order to reframe the conversation and get rid of the settings your interlocutor has set.

### 2 - (Mis)leading Questions:

If someone wants to frame you, one thing they will do is ask misleading questions to make you slip. What this does is make you frame yourself with your own words.

Their directing question always has an underlying intention to it in order to make you let your guard down before landing a punch right in the middle of your face.

There are two ways to deal with this.

Blocking the punch: a result of not letting your guard down, you simply ignore the question and keep going.

Dodging the punch: this is when you can see it coming, meaning you clearly understand the implications of the question.

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The way to do this is by highlighting the bad faith of your interlocutor and the poor intentions behind the questions. “So you just want me to say that X..., I’m not going to say it”. This way you simply lock the door they were trying to open.

But there is a 3rd way to deal with this.

And it’s an attitude you should have during the whole conversation.

3- Striking back:

If someone wants to frame you, the best way to deal with them is by reframing everything they say.

Frame them.

The most effective way to do this is by combining the information above.

Let me explain.

What you should be doing (this is the bad faith part I mentioned in the disclaimer), is using manipulative methods.

The first is Denial.

Denial of facts makes you hard to talk to.

Which will force your interlocutor to make concessions or make the mad to the point that “they’re the stubborn ones”. This way, your interlocutor either becomes softer in their way of talking or a bit more cooperative.

Or they refuse the discussion and you can frame them as closed-minded (they’ll hate it).

The second aspect to add is by forcing your own elements of language and constantly directing the conversations by asking questions about the inconsistencies of your interlocutor.

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But all of this can only work if you do this ONE THING:

Work and improve your assertiveness skills.

If you get angry, you get framed.

If you get emotional, you lost.

Keep calm and reframe everything.

### 13. The "No return" framing technique

"You have no choice, it's signed".

Have you heard this before?

People who are good at manipulation use this extensively.

The aim is to get the victim to go down a path with no way back.

In politics, one way to trick a newcomer is to get them to make a public statement, take a stand on a controversial issue, or denounce a fact in order to remain consistent with their moral principles.

The youngster is happy to make a public appearance.

But the youngster is trapped, and will never be able to reposition himself politically.

His career is over.

This was also the technique used by the Spanish conquistador Hernán Cortés when he conquered the New World in 1519 in Veracruz (modern Mexico).

He burned his ships in order to provoke an overland expedition to seize the treasures of the Aztec emperor Moctezuma.

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The aim of the manipulation: to push his team to "conquer or perish", with no possibility of return.

This is what is known in poker as an "ALL IN."

This process of influence is also found in the guerrilla techniques of American terrorist groups and gangsters

They ensure the full and sincere commitment of their new recruits by forcing them to commit voluntary homicide.

By involving them directly, this offers the leaders a way to blackmail them.

Murder is often an excellent glue for transgressive communities.

Now that we understand how the technique works, how do we defend against it in everyday life?

Read on.

1. Create credible exits to postpone action:

Never give in to self-righteous injunctions.

Never give in to guilt-tripping or pressure to do or say things you might regret.

2. You ALWAYS have a choice!

It is never a question of context, environment or circumstances.

The future is built on our choices (free or not).

3. Dare to say no!

For many, this is a difficult exercise.

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It is difficult because it is contrary to the education and the moral and social codes that teach us to do what is asked of us by those in authority or power.

4. Make it clear that you are not an idiot.

Manipulators often fool themselves into thinking that no one else can see what they are doing.

Catch them off guard.

## 14. Equivocation: What are they and how to use them?

An equivocation refers to the use of a particular word or phrase to change the meaning of a sentence, in order to knowingly shift the intended message.

Equivocations are hardly used in everyday conversations, although some clever person might find a way to weave them into their deceitful web.

Equivocations are essentially wordplay.

They fall under the broader term of the fallacy, which is defined as faulty reasoning, which is intended to make an argument seem better than it actually is.

Examples of equivocations include the following:

"Dating my girlfriend is a real headache. Aspirin can make headaches go away, so maybe I should take an aspirin to make my girlfriend leave."

"I have a right to free speech. Therefore, it is right for me to say what is on my mind at all times."

Equivocations are often a great source of funny jokes that you can tell at



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every opportunity.

For example:

Two cannibals were eating a clown, and one turned to the other and said,

“Does this taste funny to you?”

In all seriousness, though, equivocations are hardly your biggest worry when it comes to deception.

At best, equivocations will bring you some laughter in your life; at worst, you are likely to end up confused, but only for a couple of minutes before you figure out what’s going on.

### 15. How to NOT LOSE an argument

Many (if not most) people, fail to make their point across or fail to prove their point although they might be objectively correct.

Communication skills and rhetoric are an art.

When faced with a better communicator, even if you are a brilliant individual, you might struggle in the debate. Not because your points are invalid but because your delivery sucks and theirs don't.

Let me explain what you're doing wrong.

1- Don't defend, attack:

This is a very common mistake.

When someone is attacking your point, what they will usually do is diminish the value of your argument and present their own opinion as the alternative & correct solution.

The mistake most people fall into is defending their opinion.

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This is a strategic error because you allow your point to be discussed.

Listen, let's face it.

No matter how objectively correct you are, a smart dude will find flaws in it.

If they can find flaws, they can frame you and corner you by attacking your point.

While you're busy defending yourself, their own argument is not doubted.

At the end of the discussion, doubts will be raised about your claims and not theirs.

Never defend your point.

Strike back.

If you put yourself into a defensive position: You take the hits.

If you attack their argument: You are the one giving the hits.

2- Control your emotions & body language:

Let's put it this way:

If you lose control over your own emotions, you will behave in ways that harm your credibility.

Whether it's anger or frustration, never let it outgrow your rational mind.

If you let your emotions take control, you will lose sight of the rational argument and you allow your interlocutor to attack your behavior.

Always focus on the main point of the argument, and avoid letting your emotions speak for you.

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But, there is a downside to this.

The more you hold back, the harder it gets to keep control over your body language.

You might start shaking or trembling and this is no good.

Let me give you a secret tip.

Voice it out loud: "You're not gonna get on my nerves".

This plays at two levels.

Your interlocutor will feel like they need to do more to destabilize you.

Ultimately, it destabilizes them.

The second level is that it allows you to manipulate yourself.

It conditions you to live up to what you said and helps you remain calm.

Declare victory in the middle of the argument.

3- Ask, don't answer:

If you're the one questioning, you're the one leading.

If you're the one answering, you're on the losing end.

Unless you MASTER your argument COMPLETELY (which is very rare).

You need to be the one raising doubts and leading the course of the conversation.

This can help you frame instead of getting framed.

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You use your questions to lead the conversation towards an area that you master.

A good way to frame people is asking questions that require a Yes or No answer.

If they refuse to answer or divert, you can use the old trick of: "Are you scared of answering?"

## 16. How to win a debate: Logical fallacies (Everything and its contrary)

No matter how good the logic may be, you cannot rely on an argument which has certain falsity built into it. For a sound argument true premises are needed, as well as valid logic.

The problem with contradictory premises is that they cannot both be true.

If one is true, the other must be false, and vice versa. In other words, we can be certain that at least one of them must be false, and cannot therefore generate a sound argument.

“Everything is mortal, and Cod is not mortal, so God is not everything.”

(This might look like an argument against pantheism, but it is in fact an argument against common sense. Since the premises contradict each other, one must be false. This makes any conclusion unreliable.)

The fallacy is an interesting one because it permits the logic to be valid. It usually amazes non-logicians to hear that with inconsistent premises any conclusion, no matter how irrelevant, can be validly inferred.

Logicians, however, do not use the word 'valid' to mean 'sound'. If there is known falsity built in, as there must be with contradictory premises, then it matters not how good the logic is: the argument is not sound.

This is the fallacy which enables us to prove that the moon is made of green cheese. The proof is quite complicated, but quite fun:

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We are given two premises, that milk is white, and milk is not white. If 'milk is white' is true, then it is also the case that 'Either milk is white or the moon is made of green cheese' is true. (This is correct.) Since we are also given that milk is not white, the second alternative must be true, namely that 'the moon is made of green cheese'.

There is nothing wrong with the logic. The known falsity in the contradictory premises can be used to establish anything, including a rather smelly satellite.

It is difficult to use the fallacy of contradictory premises in everyday argument, because your audience will normally see that you are contradicting yourself. What you can do, however, is to use contradictions which are normally accepted in loose speech, and proceed to wrap them up in tight logic.

## 17. How to react to physical intimidation

When someone tries to intimidate you, it is most often in order to get something from you.

To get you to agree to a request, which you would not otherwise agree to.

In this article, I will share with you 4 tips to get out of such a situation.

### 1 - Identifying intimidation

You may not always recognise bullying directly when you are experiencing it because bullying can take many different forms.

It can also be quite insidious and you may mistake it for insistence or pressure you put on yourself.

This is why it is important to learn to recognise bullying when you experience it.

A simple rule:



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If you feel pressure to do something you don't want to do and you feel that your physical or psychological integrity is at stake or that there is a form of blackmail, which could harm you, if you refuse it is bullying.

Also ask yourself whether what is being asked of you is justified, according to your own moral code or common sense.

Most of the time, an attempt to bully starts out as verbal.

When that is no longer enough, it can become non-verbal, sometimes with very simple things like raising your voice.

When it gets to that point, it is already a failure and the only real solution is to get out, when possible.

To avoid this, there are strategies for dealing with verbal bullying before it goes any further, which we will look at.

2 - Hold the line.

This advice aims to defuse the situation by trying to make your interlocutor understand that you are not going to get into the dance with him.

You refuse to take part in the intimidation game and for this, I advise you to put a stop to it directly.

You must make it clear that he is overstepping the mark.

To do this, you can say: I will think about your request, but there is no need to try to intimidate me to get your way.

Firstly, you give yourself an out so that you can more easily dismiss the person by saying that you will think about it.

In addition, you are gaining perspective on the situation.

You show that you are perfectly aware of the little trick your interlocutor is playing.

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This technique is based on a simple psychological principle:

The more you show that you are prepared to defend yourself, the less likely you are to be attacked.

Be sure to mention what you think is unfair about the other person's request.

It is all the more important not to let yourself be pushed around and to set limits.

And that, from the beginning, if you are not careful, if he is used to getting what he wants in this way, and he is not used to being confronted, you will impose respect by facing up.

And this respect does not depend on your status in the company, your social status, your age, or whatever.

Any embarrassment you might have felt is transferred directly to his shoulders, or at least shared between you.

Very often, this is enough to discourage this person from doing it again.

And I would even say that after that, that person will respect you more.

## 3 - Take people to task

One of the conditions of success of an intimidation attempt is to isolate the victim. Moreover, it is not by chance that the Internet is the place where intimidation or harassment attempts are most numerous.

This is because the victims are often isolated and the aggressors anonymous, unlike in a public place.

Therefore, in a real bullying situation, you should take someone around you to task, when the environment allows it.

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You should not isolate yourself. You can pretend to ask for someone's opinion and bring them into the conversation, for example.

Someone you trust, or someone you feel is fairly neutral about the situation.

"Look, so-and-so asked me this, what do you think? It seems strange/indecent to me".

In this way you are no longer face to face, your detractor has to weigh up what he is saying, or even back down, because bullies hate it when their little schemes are revealed and for this reason they will prefer abandonment to confrontation.

### 4 - Controlling your reaction

When you feel pressure, your body will send out a range of cues that betray your intimidation.

You must make an active effort to control these parameters.

- The first thing is your posture: You should automatically put yourself at the same level as the aggressor.

If you are sitting, he is standing, stand up.

This is already a first indication that you are not prepared to let the attacker do anything to you.

There is also a tendency to stiffen or even freeze and become immobilized. To avoid this, take some space.

Try to imagine an area around you that corresponds to your span with your arms open.

This area is yours. Occupy it and try not to be too anchored to the ground.

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- The second thing is your voice: When you are in an unfair situation, such as being bullied, you may feel scared or angry and this manifests itself in your voice.

We rush, it's jerky and our emotions get mixed up in our diction and do us a total disservice.

This is why you need to make an effort to control your speech rate.

To summarise: Focus on your breathing, your voice should come from your rib cage.

Use a descending intonation.

A declarative sentence should always end with a falling intonation otherwise it sounds like a question.

This would put you in a demanding situation.

This is something to be avoided in general, but not to pay attention to it in such a situation is to make yourself even more vulnerable and to give yourself a beating.

Because every little signal of distress from you will galvanise your abuser and strengthen him or her in their approach.

## 18. How to make People Uncomfortable

You're going to speak in front of your local city council to convince them to convert a particular street into a pedestrian mall.

You have lots of data about why this is a good idea, and how doing this in other nearby towns has resulted in more business for the local merchants, and so on.

But you also know that you have an uphill battle. Others have tried talking to the city council about this before and gotten nowhere.

How can you get through?

It's likely that the city council members have a "confirmation bias."

People tend to pay attention to what they already believe, and filter out information that doesn't fit with their opinions and beliefs.

If you present your data to the council about the benefits of pedestrian malls, they probably won't

listen.

They'll filter it out because it doesn't fit the conclusion they've already come to, which is that they don't like or want a pedestrian mall.

You can break through these biases, however. Here's what you need to do:

1. Start by bringing up, and agreeing with, what your audience already believes.

For example, you might start with the council's concerns that a pedestrian mall will make it hard for people to find parking spots close to their favorite merchants.

Instead of launching into the solution for this problem, start with exactly what they believe: "Pedestrian malls take away

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critical parking spots.”

“Yes!” your audience will be thinking, “That’s right! Pedestrian malls make parking impossible.”

Now that you’ve agreed with them on this point, they’ll be more likely to listen to you.

## 2. Introduce cognitive dissonance.

Cognitive dissonance refers to the idea that people are uncomfortable holding views,

opinions, or beliefs that contradict each other.

In this example, your audience believes that pedestrian malls take away parking spots, that parking spots are important for business, and that if you take away parking you reduce business.

Your audience doesn’t think that these ideas conflict, so they don’t have any cognitive dissonance.

But next you present them with research from a reputable source showing that towns that implement pedestrian malls have a 30 % increase in local business sales.

Now the city council has cognitive dissonance.

They want the increase in sales, but that doesn’t agree with their opinion about the parking problems that they believe go hand in hand with pedestrian malls.

Cognitive dissonance is uncomfortable.

The city council is now uncomfortable.

People will take action to get rid of cognitive dissonance.

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### 3. Reduce the cognitive dissonance.

You started by agreeing with the city council and then you introduced the research data that

resulted in cognitive dissonance.

Now you must immediately say something that rids them of their uncomfortable cognitive dissonance.

For example, you could now make the point that a pedestrian mall is needed to relieve the current traffic and parking congestion.

Shoppers in the current business area sometimes have to park three blocks away and then try to cross very busy intersections with a lot of traffic.

Traffic congestion is an impediment to shoppers. So the pedestrian mall will actually solve the congestion problem and increase sales.

You need to provide a quick solution to ease the pain of their cognitive dissonance.

They'll be so relieved that they'll be more likely to agree with your proposal.

## 19. How to lie (without getting caught)

If you ever want to lie, you need to make sure that nothing you are saying can be verified.

If one or more parameters can reasonably be doubted, then you already got caught.

It is important to keep in mind that lying is a tool and should not shape the way you see reality.

With that in mind, if you need to lie and want to get away with it,

Make sure no one else knows the truth.

Relying on people backing your fictive story will not sooner or later fire back on you.

Don't make anyone else part of your lie

Don't give anyone the power to expose you

Now, how can a lie be believable?

Use someone else's real-life story.

Instead of making it up all from scratch, tell a real scenario with real details, which comes from your memories rather than your imagination

Why?

So that you do not contradict yourself.

The more often you lie, the less likely you are to remember all the lies you said.

Keep that to a minimum.



# Powerful Communication

Better, tell many people the same lie so you:

- Practice your fictive story
- Get backed without exposing your secret

Disclaimer:

This is to use when you NEED to lie about a specific situation

If you NEED to lie just to get validation and impress someone... sorry, but you need a doctor.

## 20. Emotions Are Contagious

Emotions can spread through a group the same way a cold or the flu can, and a lot faster.

Earlier in this chapter we talked about social validation—the idea that people look to others to decide what to do—and imitation and mimicry.

If you combine social validation, imitation, and mimicry, you start to understand how emotions can be noticed, identified, and reproduced in other people.

People imitate what they see. If you're smiling, those around you will tend to smile.

If you're energetic, they'll be energetic too.

This means that when you make your pitch to get someone to do something, you need to pay attention to your body language, your voice, and your passion for the topic.

Whatever your thoughts and feelings are, they're communicated through your words, tone of voice, and body language, and picked up and felt by the person you're talking to.

### 21. Clothes Do Make You

You've probably heard the phrases "clothes make the man" or "dress for success." Research actually backs up these two sayings.

Monroe Lefkowitz, Robert Blake, and Jane Mouton (1955) had an experimenter cross the street against the traffic light in a city. When he was dressed in a suit, three and a half times as many people followed him as when he wore a work shirt and trousers.

Business suits convey authority.

In a study by Leonard Bickman (Bickman 1974) the experimenter stopped a person on the street, pointed to an accomplice 50 feet away, and said, "You see that guy over there by the meter?

He's overparked but doesn't have any change.

Give him a dime!" and then would leave.

The "guy over there" was part of the experiment. If the person giving the command had a uniform on, for example, a guard uniform, then most people complied with the instruction to give money for the parking meter.

If he was dressed in regular street clothes, then the compliance was less than half.

You'll have to decide whether you're dressing for authority or similarity. The guideline for how to dress in a position of authority is to dress at least one notch above the people you're talking to. If it's more important to be seen as "one of the group," then dress similarly to those you're talking to.

To get people to do stuff, you must either dress like them to make use of similarity or dress a notch above them to make use of authority.

## Note from Authors:

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Every day, our members and contributors publish for you new techniques to improve your interpersonal skills, whether at work or in your personal life.

The idea is not to drown you in endless articles to make you feel good.

The goal is to equip you with more options.

Because everyone is different and everyone lives a unique life, what may work for one may not work for another.

So we make sure through this continuous and efficient production to find what will work for you specifically.

You don't have to read and consume everything, it would take you more than a year if you were to read two articles a day, and let's be honest:

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## Powerful Communication

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