



# Summary of How to Win Friends and Influence People

## Original book by Dale Carnegie

*How to Win Friends and Influence People* is one of the best-selling books of all time. It contains universal principles of interacting with other people to get them to like you and have them see your way of thinking. This isn't about manipulation - it's about sincerely approaching people, believing they're important, and treating them likewise. Learn how to become a great conversationalist without saying anything, how to make other people feel important, and how to change other people's minds without offending them.

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# 1-Page Summary

*How to Win Friends and Influence People* covers a lot of ideas. A good way to understand the book is to learn the general principles underlying the book. Then we'll cover a checklist for two common situations: 1) how to approach arguments, 2) how to give feedback and change someone else's behavior.

## Principles

- People crave the feeling of importance. Make someone feel important and they will think well of you. Diminish someone's importance and they will resent you.
- Appeal to the other person's interests. Virtually all people care more about what they want than what you want.
  - You wouldn't go fishing with cheesecake as a lure, since fish don't like cheesecake. Go fishing with worms.
  - Keep asking yourself - "what is it that this person wants?"
- Everyone has something they can teach you, and you benefit by figuring out what that is. This belief leads to a genuine interest and appreciation for other people.
- Angry people are often angry because they feel unheard. Once you sympathize with them, they will soften their anger substantially.
- Approach people with a positive demeanor. Smile and be happy.
- A person's name is the most important word in any language to them. Use it often and respect it.
- Be a good listener. Encourage others to talk about themselves. Ask questions that they'll enjoy answering.
- To influence people to do things, praise and appreciation are more effective than orders.
  - Don't start by criticizing or complaining. This makes them act defensively and rationalize their actions. Instead, praising them lowers their defenses, and they'll be more receptive to your feedback.

## How to Approach Arguments

- **Control your temper.** You can measure a person by what makes her angry. Little people get angry over little things. Big people are undisturbed and keep cool.
- Instead, approach with an open-minded view: "**I may be wrong. I often am. And if I'm wrong, I want to change and be right.** Let's discuss the facts."
- Praise the other person for a trait that will help resolve the argument - like their patience, open-mindedness, fairness, and receptivity to new facts.
- Understand that the other person has a valid view of the situation. If you were born as them with their brain and undergoing their experiences, **you would by definition feel the same way they do.** Your job is to understand what led them to believe what they believe.
- **Express sympathy for their situation.** "You have the absolute right to be upset. If I were in your shoes, I would be too."
- Listen first. Give your opponents a chance to talk through. Do NOT interrupt as they're speaking.
- Ask people where they feel the problems are. Ask for their opinions on how best to proceed. **Ask lots of questions instead of stating commands.**
- Look for areas of agreement. Try to build bridges of understanding. **Talk about common goals, and**

**what you agree on.**

- When ready, ask a series of questions that will lead them to your conclusion. Start with undeniable areas of agreement, then approach your ultimate point in terms they will agree with. This will make them feel they independently changed their mind.
- **Emphasize how your position serves the other person's interests and incentives.**
- Volunteer the downsides of your approach, and ask how they feel about it. They will tend to moderate your position ("oh, I don't think that's as much a problem as you say"), and talk themselves out of it.
- Thank your opponents sincerely for their interest. Anyone who takes time to disagree with you is interested in the same things you are. Think of them as people who really want to help you.

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**How to Give Feedback**

- Even before you need to give feedback, praise and appreciate the other person constantly without asking for anything. This neutralizes the sting of future feedback.
- When introducing a point of feedback, start by praising other **specific things** that were done well.
- Introduce the point of improvement.
- Talk about your own related mistakes, suggesting you know how difficult the task can be.
  - "When I was in your position, I did the same thing."
- **Ask questions instead of giving orders.** What do you think about this? Do you think that would work? Ask for suggestions on how to improve things, to get them to have a personal stake in their own ideas.
- Give the person a fine reputation to live up to. **Act as though the trait were already one of her outstanding characteristics.**
  - "You've always been a hard worker and I believe you'll continue showing this in the next month."
- Make the fault seem easy to correct. Make clear it is not a matter of ability or talent.
  - "You already have the underlying skills, you just need a bit of practice."
  - Connect the improvement to something else she has already done. "If you can do this task, then you're more than equipped to do this next one."
- Message the improvement in terms of the person's own interests. Target what they care about (doing better work; getting off of work earlier; ascending in her career).

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## Shortform Introduction

For each chapter, we'll follow a standard format:

- Principles: The main ideas
- Tactics: How to implement the principles
- Examples: Concrete examples to show the principles and tactics in action

If you're reading this book, you probably want to change your behavior. But changing your behavior is hard. Despite reading these principles, when you're in the thick of an argument, it's easy to totally forget that you're supposed to see the other person's viewpoint.

Here's advice from the author Dale Carnegie on how to get the most out of the ideas in this book, and really change your behavior permanently:

- The principles are best applied with **sincerity**. Be *genuinely interested* in other people and believe they have something to teach you. Be *genuinely interested* in helping others achieve their interests. Without this sincerity, you will feel disingenuous to others.
- Keep remembering how important these principles are to you. "My success depends on how I interact with people."
- Changing your behavior is hard. You have to review your notes and keep practicing these principles over and over until it becomes second nature.
- Like a swear jar, have other people monitor you and require you to pay up whenever you violate a principle.
- Reflect on your worst personal interactions and think about what you could have done better.

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# Fundamental 1: Don't Criticize or Complain

The book starts with three general principles that underlie the other chapters. The idea that “people crave importance” is repeated the most often throughout the book, so it’s worth paying special attention to.

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## Principles

- People don't criticize themselves for anything, no matter how wrong they may be.
  - Remember that people are “creatures of emotion,” with their own biases and motivated by ego and pride.
- Criticizing people nearly always puts them on the defensive. They dig in their heels, rationalizing their actions as just.
  - Even Al Capone lamented that he was just helping others have a good time during Prohibition, and all he got was abuse.
  - Family members of criminals frequently go into denial, blaming the system instead of the person for the crimes.
- **Criticism hurts a person's pride and sense of importance.**
- It may feel good to tell someone off, but this is usually harmful in the long term. People continue to justify their actions and condemn you for the criticism. People can harbor resentments for insults that last a literal lifetime.
- Any weak person can criticize or complain. It takes real character to understand and forgive.

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## Tactics

- Consider the information that you don't have about the situation. Consider the most favorable scenario in which the situation happened, and whether you should think more kindly of the mistake.
  - Most likely, you would have acted similarly if you were in the same circumstances.
  - During the Civil War, as Lee retreated, Lincoln ordered General Meade to cross a river and engage. Meade refused. Lincoln thought to excoriate Meade on how he had single-handedly lost the Union the war, but he instead imagined being on the frontlines of battle - seeing the deaths of thousands of your men, hearing the screams of the injured.
  - It's common for parents to criticize their children for failing to meet the yardstick of adults. Remember they're just children, and that you once took your parents' criticism the same way.
- Even when someone commits the gravest mistake, consider not lambasting her, but rather encouraging her to rise to her otherwise high standards of excellence.
  - Bob Hoover's plane crashed when the mechanic inserted jet fuel instead of gasoline. Instead of lashing out, he threw his arm around the guy and said, “To show you I'm sure that you'll never do this again, I want you to service my plane tomorrow.”
- Before you send an angry message to someone, wait overnight. More often than not you'll dial back the anger.

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## Examples

- A wife asked a husband for 6 ways she could improve herself. Instead of listing a hundred, he waited a day to think, then bought her 6 roses and said "I wouldn't change anything about you - I like you the way you are."
- A safety coordinator found employees not wearing hard hats. Instead of rebuking them for violating safety code, he reminded the men that the hat was designed to protect them from injury and that if they cared about their safety, it should be worn on the job. (As we'll discuss later, this also conveys the message in terms of the employees' interests.)

## Fundamental 2: Appreciate People Sincerely

### Principles

- People crave importance almost as much as they do food and air.
  - This spurs people to boast about their children, attract attention through their appearances, signal wealth by buying cars and houses, donate money to help others, have mountains and stars named after them.
  - Unhealthily, it spurs criminals to achieve notoriety, getting a place in the news alongside sports stars and presidents. It pushes people to become invalids, attracting help and pity when they don't need it.
  - It'd be a crime to deprive people of six days of food. Yet we withhold praise for six months at a time.
- Think that every person you meet is superior to you in some way. Try to find what that is and learn it from him or her.
- Appreciation arouses enthusiasm. Criticism kills ambitions.
  - Schwab: "I have yet to find the person, however great or exalted his station, who did not do better work and put forth greater effort under a spirit of approval than he would ever do under a spirit of criticism."

### Tactics

- **When someone makes a mistake, praise them for the silver lining.**
  - When Rockefeller's partner lost a large sum overseas, the boss didn't chastise, but rather praised him for saving 60% of the money invested, better than what they sometimes retained from errors.
- Leave little signs of appreciation throughout your daily life.
  - Let a tired serviceperson know she had an exemplary attitude.
  - Every public speaker knows the crushing feeling of not receiving any praise for their sermon.
- Do not stray into flattery, which is insincere. You should only praise what you genuinely appreciate.
  - Commonly, flattery is praising others for things only you value yourself.
- **"Be hearty in your approbation and lavish in your praise."** -Schwab
- Praise people publicly to make them feel important.

### Examples

- Stevie Wonder, blind from childhood, had never been appreciated for blindness. One day his teacher asked him to help her find a lost mouse in the classroom, as he alone had the hearing to do it. He said this set off a new life.

## Fundamental 3: Appeal to the Other Person's Interests

### Principles

- Say you like cheesecake. **When you go fishing, you don't string cheesecake at the end of your line. You attach what the fish wants, which is a worm.**
  - Why do you treat people any differently?
  - Of course you're interested in what *you* want. But no one else is. Everyone else is just like you - we all want what *we* want.
- The only way to influence other people is to talk about what they want and show them how to get it. Every person in the world knows what they want, and cares about what they get. Approach them from this direction. Appeal to their self-interest for doing anything. Arouse in them a hunger for what they want.
- **The only way to get anyone to do anything is to make the other person *want* to do it.**
- Henry Ford: "If there is any one secret of success, it lies in the ability to get the other person's point of view and see things from that person's angle as well as from your own."

### Tactics

- Before you speak, pause and ask, "what can the other person get out of this?"
- Even challenge yourself to not say anything about what *you* want.
- **Show other people relentlessly that you want to help them.**
  - The world is full of people who are self-seeking. So the rare person who unselfishly serves others has an enormous advantage.
  - Go out of your way to do things unrelated to your ask.
    - Like a real estate agent who learns about a client's personal problem and suggests a solution after a meeting.
- When trying to get the other person to do something, don't talk about how great you or your company is, then ask other people to help you get greater. Instead, start with what the other person is missing out on by not doing something, and the benefits they gain by following your suggested action.
  - A freight terminal wanted a supplier to send its trucks earlier to avoid the afternoon congestion, which slowed down the whole system. The natural way is to start with the terminal's own problems and requesting that the supplier conform to its expectations. Instead, the better way is to frame it in the supplier's interests - delayed trucks cause congestion, which causes delays from getting the supplier's goods delivered on time.
- If the other person disagrees with your course of action, make clear what the advantages and disadvantages of their alternative is. Get them to see the benefits of your suggestion.
- When applying to jobs, tell them how you can meet the company's goals.
- Salespeople don't sell products. They show how products solve problems, and people want to buy them. Customers like to feel they are buying - and not being sold.



- When getting people to participate in a social event, don't talk about what you want and how lonely you are. Excite them about the possibility of the fun event.
- If words don't work, sometimes showing works better.
  - A Shell territory manager was having trouble with one underperforming store and motivating the manager to do better. Instead, he invited the store's manager to a brand-new, top of the line, top-selling station. Seeing the new store aroused a visceral want in the manager to do better.

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## Examples

- Andrew Carnegie had a sister-in-law whose kids never wrote letters back. He bet someone he could get a reply without asking for one. He wrote letters, at the end mentioning that he was sending a five-dollar-bill (but omitting it). Sure enough, they replied, thanking him for writing and asking where the money was.
- A child didn't want to go kindergarten. The parents made a list of all the reasons the child should be excited to go to kindergarten, like finger painting. They then excitedly finger painted, and as the child begged to participate, said, "oh no! You have to go to kindergarten first to learn how to finger paint."
- Don't tell your kid to stop smoking. Show them how it'll make them look at age 40.
- A child may be a stubborn eater. Connect successful eating with success in another problem in her life. Maybe she's being bullied, and growing stronger faster will get her to whip the bully quickly.

## Likability 1: Show a genuine interest in the other person.

With the 3 major principles in place, *How to Win Friends and Influence People* then describes how to get people to like you.

In summary, make people feel important by being happy to see them, encouraging them to discuss their interests and passions at length, calling them by their name, and giving genuine praise for things they pride themselves on.

### Principles

- Who is universally loved as friendly and approachable? A dog. They're *always* excited to see you and seem like you're the most important thing in their world.
- **Showing interest in other people makes them feel important** (Fundamental 2).
  - All of us like people who admire us. If we think highly of ourselves, then we appreciate people who have good taste and judgment.
- **People aren't interested in you or me. They're interested in themselves, every day, for their entire life.**
  - When you see a group photo, whose face do you look for first?
- It must be sincere.
- You make friends much more easily by being interested in them, than by trying to get them interested in you.

### Tactics

- Ask people about their background and their goals.
- **Remember problems people are having.** When you come across a solution, share it with the person.
- Go out of your way to talk to people who are "beneath your level" - employees who don't report to you, servicepeople.
- For people "above your level," express a genuine interest in them, their work, their advice. **They feel important when they can pass on secrets of their success.**
- When traveling, attempt to speak their language. Try to understand their world instead of being a tourist.
- Remember birthdays and act on them.
- Greet people with animation and enthusiasm. On the phone if you know who's calling, greet them warmly, not with a cold "hello?"

### Examples

- An editor said that he could tell after a few paragraphs if the author liked people. If the author

doesn't like people, people won't like her stories.

- A famous magician didn't see his audience as suckers. He was grateful they came to see him and endeavored to give them the very best he could. Before each show he repeated to himself, "I love my audience. I love my audience"
- It's a common strategy for employers to ask front desk staff what they thought of applicants. Rude people are rejected.
- A banker interviewing a company president learned that the president's grandson was collecting stamps. He dug up stamps his bank owned and offered them to the president, who was now much friendlier.
- A fuel vendor had tried to sell to a large chain store without success. Carnegie arranged a debate where they had to argue whether the chain store was better or worse for the country, and the vendor took the positive side. He approached the large chain manager asking for his help. The manager talked for two hours, proud of his company's contributions to the world and even changed the vendor's attitude. At the end, the chain store placed an order with the vendor.

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## Likability 2: Smile

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### Principles

- A smile says, "I like you. You make me happy. I am glad to see you." It's a message of good will. This is why dogs and smiling babies are so beloved. A smile makes people feel important and appreciated.
- You must have fun meeting other people if you expect them to have fun meeting you.

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### Tactics

- **Talk on the phone with a smile** - your intonation changes completely.
- Greet people with animation and enthusiasm. On the phone, if you know who's calling, greet them warmly, not with a cold "hello?"
- Smile especially at people who are not used to being smiled at and just see frowns all day, like servicepeople.
- If you don't feel like smiling, force yourself to smile. Hum a tune or sing. Act as if you were happy, and that will tend to make you happy.
  - Picture the type of person you want to be. This will make you seize the opportunities to fulfill that desire.

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## Likability 3: Say the Person's Name

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### Principles

- **A name is a person's identity. It makes her unique among all others.** Remembering it and calling a person by it makes her feel important.
- A name is one of the most important words in a person's entire vocabulary. A person's name to her is far more important than all the other names in the rest of the world combined.
- Saying the name is a subtle and welcome compliment. Forgetting it or misspelling it is a crippling mistake that suggests you didn't care enough to get it right.
  - Politician maxim: "To recall a voter's name is statesmanship. To forget it is oblivion."
  - A businessperson who can't remember names is saying she can't remember a big piece of her business.
- People pay loads of money to have their names remembered after they die (naming buildings, having park bench plaques dedicated to them).

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### Tactics

- Use it multiple times in conversation. This will help you remember it and also sweeten what you have to say to the listener.
- Try to tie together the name and details about a person to form a longer-lasting image.
- If it's an unusual name, ask how it's spelled.
- Bother to get difficult to pronounce names correct, eg names from foreign languages.
- Address emails or letters warmly.
- Get to know your customers' names, especially if you operate a retail store.
- Get to know servicepeople's names when you interact with them frequently.

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### Examples

- As a child, Carnegie had a large litter of rabbits. He promised that anyone who helped him pick clovers and feed would get a rabbit named after her.
- Later, Carnegie wanted the business of the Pennsylvania Railroad, run by Edgar Thomson, so he named the local steel mill "Edgar Thomson Steel Works."
- He wanted to merge with the sleeping car company Pullman. When Carnegie mentioned the new company would be called Pullman still, Pullman became far more eager.

## Likability 4: Listen Well - Encourage Others to Talk

### Principles

- **You can be a good conversationalist merely by 1) showing *genuine*, undivided interest, 2) getting the other person to talk.**
  - You don't even need to talk yourself, if the other person doesn't invite you to.
- A person's life is the most important life to that person. A person's headache means more to her than a famine that kills a million people. Allowing someone to talk makes that person feel important and flattered.
- If you want enemies, keep trying to one-up your friends. If you want friends, let your friends one-up you. Talking about your own accomplishments makes people feel inferior and envious.
- Often angry people just want to be heard. Customers get progressively tired of being rejected without having their voice heard. If you listen to them with quiet patience, then graciously acknowledge your mistake, they'll often be pleasantly surprised and dial back their demands.
  - "Thanks for sharing this with me. You've done me a favor, since other customers must feel this way. So please share what you've suffered through."
  - The other person might consider themselves a crusader with a cause, but once they feel important and heard, they get all the venom out of their system.
- **Bad conversationalists talk without concern about the other person.** They're so focused on what they're going to say that they don't listen to the other person.

### Tactics

- To be interesting, be interested. Ask questions that other people will enjoy answering.
- Encourage them to talk about themselves and their accomplishments.
- Ask people you respect questions about their backgrounds. They may invite you to get to know them better.
- Everyone has gone through what they feel to be tough times, and they like to reminisce about them if they've overcome them. Ask about this.
- Even better, combine this with another tip: give sincere appreciation and praise. Tell them how fascinating the stories are, how you wished you had their knowledge of their experiences, how you must get together again.

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## Likability 5: Discuss the Other Person's Interests

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### Principles

- Using an earlier analogy, why fish with cheesecake? Fish with the bait that the partner wants. People are usually far more enthusiastic about topics they care about than ones only you care about.

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### Tactics

- **Before meeting someone, research their interests thoroughly** so you have a working knowledge of the field.
- Look around for clues of their interest - keepsakes, news articles. Then have a genuine interest and ask them about it.
- **Identify someone's major goals, then talk about how you'll help them get closer to their goals.** Especially useful for job applications.
- Note what people spend a lot of time on, what they are clearly proud of. Point it out, show appreciation for that.

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### Examples

- A boy scout troop manager looking for funding approached a president of a corporation. Before his meeting, he read that the president had a million-dollar check bounce. At first meeting, he asked to see the check, saying he'd never seen such a check before and wanting to boast to his friends that he had seen such a check. The president gladly agreed, then also agreed to the boy scout manager's request for funding. Note how the scout did this instead of phrasing his own interests first.
- If you're applying to a job where the founder has a drive for power or money, then talk about how you'll help them gain more money. If they're more of a missionary, then talk about how you will achieve their mission.
- When visiting an elderly aunt-in-law, a man admired the house and its craftsmanship, when otherwise most relatives left her alone. The aunt showed him around and explained all the memories, then desired to leave her deceased husband's car with the man because of his appreciation of fine things.

## Likability 6: Make the Other Person Feel Important

This is really a repetition and recap of the other principles.

### Principles

- Almost all people you meet feel superior to you in some way. Let them realize in some subtle way that you realize their importance.
- Inversely, **avoid doing things that demean the other person and make them feel small or unimportant.**
- For people who think highly of themselves, showing that you think they're important suggests good taste and sense on your side.

### Tactics

- Give a genuine compliment when the cost is low. "I wish I had your head of hair."
- Give praise without wanting anything from them, merely to radiate happiness and lift them up. It helps both people for a long time.
- Phrases: "I'm sorry to trouble you." "Would you mind-" "I know you're busy-" "Thank you."
- Pay special attention to people who are often treated as unimportant - the elderly, poor, servicepeople, front desk staff.
- Everyone has gone through tough periods. Ask about a person's unique struggles and appreciate them.
- Give public approval of someone's work.

### Example

- A salesperson visiting Eastman (of Kodak) was told he had strictly 5 minutes of time. The salesman walked in and admired his office, and Eastman talked about the woods selected. They then passed through the window, Eastman pointing out the way he was using his fortune to help humanity. The salesman asked about his early struggles, and Eastman talked about the poverty of his childhood. They talked for far longer than the appointment was scheduled for, and he got the sale.
  - (Shortform note: Even people of high stature need genuine appreciation, since they so frequently get barraged with people who want things from them.)

## Exercise: Get Other People to Like You

Become a more likable person by changing how you approach people.

Are you the type to want to dominate the conversation, or to ask other people to talk? If you're the former, what could you say in your next conversation to show you're interested in them? What could you ask to hear their point of view?



Are you the type to remember people's names, or to forget them instantly? Do you believe remembering people's names is important to reaching your goals? What could you do to remember names better?

Think of a recent time when you made someone feel small and unimportant. What happened? How would you reapproach this situation to make them feel important?

## Part 3: How to Win People to Your Way of Thinking

Praise is well and good, but what do you do when someone disagrees with you? That's the next subject of *How to Win Friends and Influence People*. In summary:

**Put aside your instinct to fight fire with fire.** People don't like to be proven wrong. They don't like to admit they have to change their mind, no matter how right you supposedly are. They crave importance, and correcting them insults their pride. You think it's important that you're seen as the smartest person in the room, but you'll be resented for this.

**So take the reverse approach.** Admit that you don't know everything they do, and if you were in their shoes, you would certainly see things the way they do. Articulate your common high-level goals, and say you merely want to explore your differences in thinking. Let them speak their mind first, completely, without interruption.

If you still want to push your point, work them there through Socratic reasoning, getting them to answer "yes." Get them to see your idea as theirs.

We've reordered the chapters to better reflect what you should do chronologically in a disagreement.

# Arguments 1: Avoid a Heated Argument

## Principles

- What use is telling someone she's wrong if she didn't invite your opinion? Is that going to make her like you? Why not let her save face?
- **Telling someone that she's wrong will make her feel inferior and hurt her pride.** She will resent your triumph, no matter how factually correct you are.
- Poetic ways to put it:
  - "Here lies the body of William Jay, who died maintaining his right of way - He was right, dead right, as he sped along. But he's just as dead as if he were wrong."
  - Ben Franklin's friend: "You are impossible...your friends find they enjoy themselves better when you are not around. You know so much that no man can tell you anything...for the effort would lead only to discomfort and hard work. So you are not likely ever to know any more than you do now, which is very little."

## Tactics

- Distrust your first instinctive impression. Be calm and watch out for your angry first reaction. **Control your temper.** You can measure the size of a person by what makes her angry.
- If someone keeps going on about something you believe is wrong but you want to move on, simply agree and they will run out of steam.
- Thank your opponents sincerely for their interest. Anyone who takes time to disagree with you is interested in the same things you are. Think of them as people who really want to help you.
- Welcome the disagreement. Be thankful for a point that is brought to your attention, as it's an opportunity to preempt a mistake.
  - "When two partners always agree, one of them is not necessary."
- Promise to think over your opponents' ideas and study them carefully.
- Postpone action to give both sides time to think through the problem.

## Examples

- A tax consultant was audited and felt the tax inspector had made a mistake. They were at a stalemate until the consultant admitted, "I've just had my training in theory and books. You have real experience in taxes. If I had your job, I would learn a lot." The inspector then talked for a long time about his work, and eventually cleared the consultant's case.

## Arguments 2: Have a Friendly Approach

### Principles

- **Don't go in guns blazing. A hostile attitude just invites reciprocal hostility.** People don't want to change their minds. They can't be forced to agree with you. But they may be led to.
- Acknowledge the merits of the other side, and the humility of your approach.
  - "Let's sit down and take counsel together, understanding why it is that we differ, and what the points at issue are."
  - Convince the person that you are her sincere friend.
- Think about how to make an animal come to you. Do you chase after it, snarling? Or do you offer food?
- "A drop of honey catches more flies than a gallon of gall."

### Tactics

- When you feel you have the superiority to command someone, instead approach as though the person were *permitting* you to give feedback.
- When asking for something, don't complain about how unreasonable the situation is. Talk about what you appreciate so much and how the current situation will prevent you from enjoying the appreciation further.
- When complaining to a company, start by offering that you really enjoyed the service. Then that you're explaining a problem to make the manager aware of a situation that might tarnish their reputation.
- When hearing a complaint, say that you are not there to change their mind. The company makes mistakes. You are there only to learn about their situation.

### Examples

- Rockefeller had to deal with strikers who hated him. He started by spending weeks with the strikers and their families. Then he gave a speech that glowed with friendliness:
  - **"This is a red-letter day in my life.** It is the first time I have ever had the good fortune to meet the representatives of the employees of this great company...**I am proud to be here,** and I shall remember this gathering as long as I live. Had this meeting been held two weeks ago, I should have stood here a stranger to most of you, recognizing a few faces. Having had the opportunity last week of visiting all the camps in the southern coalfield and of talking individually with practically all of the representatives; **having visited in your homes,** met many of your wives and children, **we meet here not as strangers, but as friends,** and it is in that spirit of mutual friendship that I am glad to have this opportunity to discuss with you our common interests...**It is only by your courtesy that I am here.**"
- The president of a motor company was friendly to strikers - publishing an ad complimenting the strikers on their peacefulness. He bought them baseball bats and gloves and invited them to play on lots. This begot friendliness - the strikers in turn cleaned up the factory of their own will.

- Someone had a tough landlord who increased his rent. Instead of complaining about how this was unfair, he talked about how much he appreciated the house and the way the landlord ran the building, and how he would like to stay another year but couldn't afford it.

## Arguments 3: Respect the Other's Opinions

### Principles

- **When attacked for being wrong, people will turtle up and defend their opinion to the death.**  
They will lose sight of the main point, hoping to find small exceptions when their assertion is true.
  - We form beliefs carelessly, but then develop an irrational passion when anyone threatens to divorce us from them.
- Instead, approach with an open-minded view: **"I may be wrong. I often am. And if I'm wrong, I want to be corrected.** Let's review the situation."
  - **Permit yourself** to understand the other person. Your first reaction is to judge. Instead, allow yourself to understand what the other person believes.
- This lowers defenses and opens the bridge to letting your partner consider how she may be wrong.
  - Strategically, this might actually switch the person's desire from being right to who can be most humble, gracious, and open-minded. No one wants to be outdone, so you change the rules of the game.

### Tactics

- Respect the other person's opinions. Never say, "you're wrong."
- Admit that you might be the one who's wrong.
- For an angry customer, let them know that your company sometimes makes mistakes and you want to hear more about their situation.
- Remove these dogmatic words from your vocabulary: "Certainly," "of course," "undoubtedly."
  - Instead, say "I imagine," "It appears to me."
- Ask people where they feel the problems are. Ask for their opinions on how best to proceed. They may naturally convince themselves of your solution.

### Examples

- An engineering supervisor presented to management her new system of running yarn, highlighting how it was superior and how she had all the answers they needed. It failed - management wasn't given a way to admit their current system's failures and they became defensive. In the next session, she changed her approach - she asked what their problems were and for their opinions on how to fix it. This paved the way for her solution.
- A lumber salesman was having his company's pieces rejected by the buyer's quality inspector, who was unfamiliar with the white pine under concern. Instead of castigating the inspector for ignoring standard guidelines, the salesman asked questions about why each rejected piece was unsatisfactory, under the guise of figuring out how to deliver better shipments in the future. The inspector's attitude changed, now being forced to consider the rejection criteria and realizing he didn't have the full expertise to judge the white pine pieces.
  - The salesman then graciously insisted that while the pieces might be within standard code, if

the inspector felt it was unsuitable, they would gladly have it rejected. The inspector began feeling guilty about rejecting any piece, and ultimately realized their company was at fault for not having specified the correct quality grade.

## Arguments 4: If You're Wrong, Admit It

### Principles

- So many people instinctively fight for their right of way that admitting your error is disarming. Few people want to kick someone who's already down - they may in fact jump to your defense and build you back up.
  - **When a person's importance is acknowledged, she can build her ego further only by showing mercy.**
- (Shortform note: much of an argument is about making sure the other person realizes she's wrong. This is why being defensive makes the other person angrier. If you admit you're wrong, then the other person will start repairing.)

### Tactics

- If making a mistake at work, admit it quickly without making excuses. Your colleagues may jump to your defense, minimizing the impact of your mistake.
- Get over the pride that the other person should yield first and admit her mistake. The other person is feeling the same way. If you care about results, then admit your mistake first.
- If someone criticizes your work, be gracious. "To be honest, I don't entirely agree with it myself. Not everything I write yesterday appeals to me today. I'm glad to learn what you think about this."
- **Say about yourself all the derogatory things the other person is thinking.** A forgiving attitude will come and your mistakes will be minimized.

### Examples

- Dale Carnegie was reprimanded by a policeman for not having his dog on a leash, and while Dale demurred about what the harm would be, the policeman became more aggressive. The next time he saw the policeman and still didn't have his dog on a leash, he admitted, "I'm guilty. I have no excuses. You warned me that if I did this again you would fine me." The policeman softened - already having his importance acknowledged, he could show his importance further only by showing mercy.



## Arguments 5: Let the Other Person Talk

### Principles

- **Someone who disagrees with you will not pay attention to you while they are crying for their own expression.** So encourage them to express their ideas fully.
  - (Shortform note: If you've had an argument where each person seemed to be repeating the same points over and over, it might be because she didn't feel acknowledged.)
- **Resist the temptation to interrupt the person.** This is costly every time you do it. The more you let the other person talk, the more receptive they'll be to what you have to say.
- For many, conversation is a way of organizing their thoughts. While a person may disagree with you at first, when reasoning through it herself, she may arrive at your conclusion independently.
  - People don't want to be told what to believe. But if they work through their own logic to arrive at the same conclusion, they may ultimately agree with you.
- This is especially important for people to whom you feel tempted to lecture unilaterally: your subordinates at work, your children, your students, even your parents.

### Tactics

- Ask someone to tell their story, completely.
- Make the other person feel like the expert. "You know your life/car/child far more than I do. You are the world's expert on this. So I want to hear you out."
- Volunteer your solution's weaknesses, then ask how the other person feels about it. They will usually react in the other direction, downplaying the weaknesses.
  - (Shortform examples - when recruiting an employee:
    - Approach 1: "You're required to move across the country. Everyone does it, and it turns out not to be a big deal." "But my kids go to a great school, they have friends there. It IS a big deal."
    - Approach 2: "It sounds like moving across the country is going to be a big bother for you. What do you think?" "My kids have a lot of friends locally, but they've moved before, they adjust pretty quickly."
  - When discussing a project you don't approve of.
    - Approach 1: "I don't see a way this project is going to work. It's going to be a waste of time and money." "You're missing the potential for a big success."
    - Approach 2: "The downside of shutting this down right now is we'll lose a chance at a big success. What do you think?" "I agree, but the chances of that success are pretty low, so we'll try to reduce the risk."

### Examples

- A salesperson was scheduled to pitch to his customer, but he lost his voice. He wrote it down on a piece of paper. The president of the customer's company volunteered to talk for the salesperson,

praising their work and taking on the salesperson's position.

- A mother had a child who repeatedly disobeyed her instructions on chores and when she could see friends. The mother typically only lectured, and the child would leave in a huff. One time, the mother asked why the child behaved that way and listened. The child confided her troubles, and the mother became more of a confidante than a lecturer.

## Arguments 6: See Things from the Other Point of View

### Principles

- Always begin from this standpoint: **if you were born in the same body as your partner, had her experiences, and saw the world through the same lens, you would by definition arrive at the same conclusions.** Your challenge is thus to explore how this differs from you, not to reject her conclusion as invalid.
  - In the extreme, if you were born as Al Capone and had the same brain and experiences as Al Capone, you would also by definition do the same things as Al Capone.
  - (Shortform note: Avoid thinking, “no rational person could possibly think what my opponent is thinking.” This is the source of many irreconcilable arguments.)
- **There is a reason the other person thinks and acts as she does. Discover that reason, and you have the key to influencing this person.**
- Consider the other person’s ideas and feelings as important as your own.
- Adopting this attitude is actually productive - it will help you discover your partner’s interests. This will then help you articulate your argument to appeal to their interests.

### Tactics

- Any upset person feels completely justified in their anger, no matter what you believe. It helps nothing to believe that they’re being illogical and to point this out.
- Before trying to change someone’s mind, pause and think through the whole situation: “why would he or she want to do it?” This will make you focus on their interests so you don’t fish with cheesecake.

### Examples

- A husband continuously criticized his wife for spending time gardening, saying the house looked no better than when they moved in years ago. Of course, they bickered. One day he saw things from her perspective, realizing that she enjoyed the work and was proud of it. He joined her in weeding, then complimented her on how things looked.
- Dale Carnegie was trying to advise teens not to burn down the forest: “Are you boys enjoying yourselves? What are you having for dinner? When I was a boy, I loved to build fires here myself. I know you guys don’t mean any harm, but other folks aren’t as careful. They see your fire, then they do it themselves, then they don’t put it out and it kills the trees. I don’t want to be bossy and ruin your fun. Could you rake the dry leaves away in case they catch an ember, and when you leave, cover the fire with a lot of dirt? This will make sure the forest is around for you to enjoy later. And if you see other boys doing this, pass it along.”

## Arguments 7: Sympathize with the Other Person

### Principles

- **Any upset person feels completely justified in their anger, no matter what *you* believe.** Few people are in the state of mind to think, "I know I'm being irrational, and my anger doesn't make sense, but I'm going to be angry anyway."
  - Instead, they have built it up in their mind beyond what you have assumed: "this company is a soulsucking leach and I've been taken advantage of. We've all been taken advantage of."
- **The majority of people are hungering for sympathy.** Being pitied makes someone feel important, since other people are paying attention to them. Give it to them, and they will love you.
- Begin with: **"I don't blame you at all for feeling what you've felt. If I were in your shoes, I'd definitely feel the same way."**

### Tactics

- Find the reason that they are upset, and articulate it. Hearing their discontent verbalized by you makes them feel heard. In the best case, they can even start imagining the reasons they should feel differently.
  - "Let me make sure I understand what you're saying. What I'm hearing is \_\_\_\_."
- Even as they apologize for losing their temper, don't lose the perspective. Keep insisting that you are the one to apologize for the original error.
- Resist one-upping anyone else's tails of misfortune with your own. It makes them feel completely unimportant and their troubles are trivialized.

### Examples

- A hotel elevator broke down, and the repairman cited 8 hours shutdown. The hotel refused, saying they didn't want more than 2 hours of shutdown. The repairman could say:
  - Bad Approach: "I'm not sure what to tell you. There's no possible way that I can fix this in 2 hours. Let me go through the repairs I need to explain why it'll take so long."
  - Good Approach: "I know you have your reputation to uphold, and an elevator being down for 8 hours is definitely going to look bad to your guests. But imagine that we don't shut down for 8 hours to put in this fix. The problem will continue getting worse. The cable will continue fraying, and when it fails, it'll require a fix that will take 3 days to finish. Even worse, an accident might happen and injure your guests. I know this would be even worse for your reputation."
- An artist manager had to deal with temperamental divas. One needed sympathy to get him on stage and frequently pretended to feel sick.
  - Response: "What a pity! Of course you can't sing. I'll cancel this engagement at once. It'll cost you thousands of dollars and your reputation with your fans, but it's no comparison to preserving your vocal cords."

## Arguments 8: Start With What You Agree On

### Principles

- Every time someone says “no,” they get locked into defensiveness and the desire to be consistent. Inertia builds. It becomes harder to dislodge them. Even if they later realize they need to change their mind, their precious pride gets in the way. Admitting fault is hard for most people
- **So don’t start by talking about the areas in which you differ. Start with what you agree on.** Get the person saying “yes.”
- Instead of pushing your conclusion on the person, **guide her toward your conclusion through a series of logical questions.**
  - Start with areas of common agreement - common goals, standards of measurement. Then build on layers of understanding by asking more detailed questions.
  - This also lets the other person feel the idea is theirs, since you’re not pushing the idea on them.
  - (Shortform note: This can sound pedantic to people who realize what you’re doing. It’s better to do this in a genuine, patient tone, instead of in the tone of already knowing the answers. Ask difficult questions with unclear answers so it doesn’t feel like you’re trapping the person in a corner.)

### Tactics

- Emphasize that you’re both reaching for the same goals, and that your difference is one of method and not of purpose.
- Combine this with talking in terms of the other person’s interests. “I understand that X is annoying to do. But wouldn’t you want to enjoy benefit Y?”
- Ask high-level questions they’re likely to agree to. “Are you someone who likes to save money?” “Are you someone who cares about performance at all costs?” “It sounds like you need to balance a lot of considerations here, is that right?”

### Examples

- A bank customer came in to open a bank account but refused to answer a few questions about next of kin. The teller agreed: “You’re right. This information isn’t totally necessary. But imagine this - you pass away, and you have money in the bank. Wouldn’t you rather have the bank transfer it to the right person?”
- A customer of a motor company complained to a salesman about the temperature of the motors. It was burning his hand but the actual temperature was well under regulation.
  - Approach 1: “You’re wrong. Measure the temperature. The guidelines say it cannot be more than 72 degrees above room temperature. Let me know what you find.”
  - Approach 2: “I agree with you 100% - if these motors are running too hot, it’s our mistake and you shouldn’t buy any more. Now let me make sure I understand. You can’t have motors running hotter than the national guidelines - is that right?”
    - “Yes.”
    - “The guidelines say the motor can’t exceed 72 degrees above room temp. Is that right?”

- "Yes, but your motors are much hotter."
- (Don't disagree.) "How hot is this room?"
- "About 75F."
- "That makes 147F. If you put your hand in 147F water, wouldn't you scald your hand?"
- "Yes."
- "It seems that our hands will always hurt above a certain temperature."

## Arguments 9: Let Them Own Your Idea

### Principles

- **People like their own ideas better than other people's.** Coming up with their own ideas makes them feel smart and important. Executing their own ideas, instead of someone else's, gives them agency.
  - Isn't it a bad idea, then, to ram your ideas down someone else's throat? **Isn't it better to let people think through to your conclusion?**
- Let people take credit for your ideas. If you truly care about the **outcomes**, and not credit, then you will be fine with other people executing your ideas.
- Chinese philosopher Lao Tze: "Rivers receive the homage of a hundred mountain streams by staying below them. Thus they are able to reign over all mountain streams. So a wise man who wants to be above men would put himself below them. Thus, even though he is above men, they don't feel his weight."

### Tactics

- Give people a framework for making a decision, then let them do the work to come to their own conclusion.
  - Example: When selling products, give a worksheet for customers to compare features and pricing. As they fill it out, they may naturally conclude that your product is better.
  - Give them previous customers to call about their experiences.
- If pitching your ideas/projects doesn't work, ask the customer what they would like to see. Say you know the product is not perfect and can benefit from their advice.
- Ask your employees for ideas on how to solve a hairy problem.
- Ask your employees: "What are the qualities you expect from me? Now, what are the qualities that I have a right to expect from you?"
- Ask about the pros and cons of what you are trying to sell. A person volunteering why they like a product may end up liking it much more.
- Plant an idea in the person's mind without a strong suggestion for action. It may work its way independently.
- Give references to your target customer to talk to. Through their conversations, she will come to her own conclusions.

### Examples

- A designer sent hundreds of sketches for textiles to a manufacturer, having all of them rejected over years. He changed his approach - he sent unfinished sketches to the buyer, asking for a favor to propose changes that would turn into usable designs. The manufacturer obliged, and ultimately accepted the designer's new designs.
- A medical equipment manufacturer wanted to sell a hospital its equipment. Instead of sending sales reps, they sent a sample unit to the doctor in charge, with a letter requesting the doctor contribute

his expertise to improve the imperfect design. This made the doctor feel important. He studied the machine, discovering that he liked a lot about it, and. He had come to his own conclusion, instead of having it pressed on him by a salesperson.



## Arguments 10: Appeal to the Best Self

### Principles

- All people think of themselves as fine and unselfish. They think of themselves as saviors, martyrs, missionaries. They are generally honest and want to honor their obligations. If they are not, they generally have a good reason for it.
- A person usually has two reasons for doing a thing: one that sounds good, and a real one. (quote from JP Morgan)
  - You do not need to articulate the real one. You don't need to back someone into a corner and make them admit they are doing things for selfish reasons.
  - **Instead, emphasize the nobler motives.** Let the person save face by acting for the better motive.
- Take the high road. Rise above the squabble and appeal to the grander mission. If the other person returns to the squabble, she'll look small.

### Tactics

- Appeal to their highest moral principles.
  - To an angry customer: "I'm impressed by your fairness and your patience, given the horrid treatment you suffered through. And now I ask for your fairness as we consider our next action."
- When someone is breaking a prior agreement, say that you see them as a person of high integrity, and that you're confident they'll live up to their word.
- Talk about situations most people can relate to. Humanize yourself and have them relate to your situation (as a parent, as someone with too much on their plate, as someone who's afraid of growing old, etc.)
- **If you can't pay someone enough, offer to contribute pay to their favorite charity.** Thus, their total payment (the emotional reward) is far beyond the cash amount.

### Examples

- A tenant wanted to break a lease early. Instead of reminding him of the legal consequences, the landlord gave the person a fine reputation to live up to.
  - "I've been a landlord for years, and I've come to know people. When I first met you, I saw you as a person of your word. I'm so confident of this that I'm willing to take a risk. Think it over. If you still want to break your lease, I'll accept it as final and learn that I was wrong in my judgment. But I still believe you're a man of your word and will do the honorable thing."
- A customer was upset about a bill and refused to pay. The collector explained that the company had failed to service the customer, and the collector was there only to listen and not offer an opinion. After the customer finished his story, the collector said, "We clearly mishandled this situation. That shouldn't have happened. You were very fair and patient. So now I'll ask you to do something special

that no one else can do. I will ask you to adjust your bill, as though you were president of the company. We are going to accept your judgment no matter what you do." The customer paid the full bill.

- When a celebrity wanted a picture to stop from being published, he didn't say, "Don't print this. I don't like this picture." He said, "My mother doesn't like it." All people have a mother they want to keep happy, and they understood.
- Rockefeller wanted to stop photographers from taking photos of their kids. "You know how it is. You've got children yourselves. You know it's not good for youngsters to get too much publicity."
- (Shortform example: When the iPhone 4 had issues with call reception when part of the antenna was covered, people wanted Apple to kowtow. Instead, Steve Jobs said, "We're not perfect. **Phones aren't perfect. We want to make all our users happy.** Let's start with the data about what problems there are and what we're going to do about it." "It's been 22 days since we launched. We've been working our butts off to figure out what the problem was." He then showed how other phones would also show similar antenna problems when gripped at specific places.)

## Arguments 11: Make Your Ideas Vivid

### Principles

- Most people are not as rational and data-driven as they may think. They are swayed by emotions and by heuristics that allow fast decision making. They make decisions by gut.
- Simply stating the truth isn't enough. You have to use showmanship. Make the truth vivid and dramatic.
- Attention is scarcer than ever before. Find ways to capture it, without being gimmicky.

### Tactics

- Find a way to visually, viscerally represent the stakes.
- (Shortform note: The book doesn't give clear rules on how to do this, but some suggestions:
  - Provide a visual analogy. Show objects for size, speed, cost.
  - Equate the opportunity to dollars, or dollars per second. Then analogize this further (eg a Mercedes-Benz a day)
  - Put physical objects in the person's face.
  - Show the extremes of performance with memorable imagery. These should be applications that are far outside normal usage, that then make it obvious the product can be used in normal circumstances.)

### Examples

- A cash register salesman observed a slow-moving checkout line. He told the owner he was losing pennies with every customer. He threw pennies on the floor to make the point. [I imagine he could keep doing this repeatedly to illustrate the money lost the entire day.]
- A consultant hired to study facial creams for a manufacturer got nowhere with charts and reports. So the next time he dumped dozens of facial creams with annotations on the president's desk.
- A disgruntled employee who wasn't getting on his boss's schedule wrote a letter with a self-addressed envelope, asking him to fill it out and return. It had a Mad-Libs style note, "I will be able to see you on **at** AM/PM for \_\_ minutes."
- (Shortform example: Infomercials have iconic demonstrations of the product - a vacuum lifting a bowling bowl, waterproof tape sealing a boat back together.)
- (Shortform example: Steve Jobs famously introduced the iPod as 1000 songs in your pocket, rather than droning about how it had 10 GB of storage. He also pulled the Macbook Air out of a manila envelope.)
- (Shortform note: Dale Carnegie himself uses this technique in the book, using examples of larger-than-life figures like Lincoln, Rockefeller, and Charles Schwab. The idea is, "if these techniques worked for these people, surely they'll work for me.")

## Arguments 12: Issue a Challenge

### Principles

- **When motivation doesn't work, organize a competition.** This gets people going because they don't want to be second to anyone else (lest they lose self-importance). This is what makes pie-eating contests and sports enjoyable.
- Furthermore, the desire for mastery and to excel is a fundamental driver of behavior. People love the game, the chance for self-expression, the chance to prove their worth.
- "All men have fears, but the brave put down their fears and go forward, sometimes to death, but always to victory." - King's Guard in ancient Greece.

### Tactics

- If a person is unsure, subtly question their strength or resolve. "I don't blame you for being scared. It's a tough spot. It'll take a big person to take the job."
- Show a public scoreboard around the metrics you care about.
- (Shortform note: a suggestion for managers is to imagine a hypothetical big scary competitor that is about to destroy your company. How would they attack you? What makes their product ingenious? This gives ideas on what to do yourselves)

### Examples

- Charles Schwab was having trouble with an underperforming mill that didn't respond to the manager's motivation. He asked for a piece of chalk, turned to a worker, and asked how many heats the shift finished. He wrote a big 6 on the floor. The night shift came by and asked what the 6 was about. By morning, the 6 had been rubbed out and replaced with a 7.
- Carnegie himself uses this in the book to convince the reader to accept his advice. "If you're completely satisfied with your current position, why change? If you're not satisfied, why not try what I'm saying?"

## Exercise: Reapproach Your Argument

Revisit a recent argument to reach a better resolution.

Think about a recent argument where you felt you were both talking over each other. What was it about? How did it begin? How did it escalate?

Try to approach the argument in a new way. (Remember: have a friendly approach; respect the other's opinions; if you're wrong, admit it; see things from the other point of view; sympathize with the other person.) What would you say?

Now that the other person feels heard, you can speak. (Remember: start with where you agree; appeal to their interests; lead them to your idea; appeal to their best self and give them a good reputation to live up to; make your idea vivid.) What would you say?

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## Feedback 1: Start with Praise

The final part of the book deals with giving feedback to people. You don't begin in an argument like Part 3 teaches, but you notice something that needs improving and need to communicate it.

This advice applies in relationships of all directions - your superiors, equals, and subordinates. Even your bosses appreciate praise for what they do and sympathy for the difficulties of their role!

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### Principles

- **It's always easier to listen to unpleasant things after hearing praise about our good points.** Without praise, it just sounds completely critical without any appreciation of the hard work done.
- This is even more effective when the person knows you are upset with the work and have come to complain - **sincere appreciation is a surprise** and makes the person receptive to your feedback. They feel they have your confidence, and they're open to improving rather than defending their competency.

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### Tactics

- Be sincere with your praise. You have to *actually* appreciate the work to sound genuine.
- Give specific praise about specific items well done, rather than generalities.
- Avoid being formulaic with the praise. Don't say something that doesn't really apply, or can apply to nearly anyone else.

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### Examples

- A subcontractor was delaying on parts. A manager from the construction company visited the president. First the manager pointed out that he had a distinctive name, the only one in Brooklyn. Then he commended him on the cleanliness of the factory. On a tour, he complimented the president on specific machines the president had designed. At the end of lunch, the president said he knew why the manager was here and said the parts would be shipped on time, even if they had to delay the other parts.

## Feedback 2: Point Out Problems Indirectly

### Principles

- Avoid the direct surgical attack. People typically know what they've done wrong, and calling explicit attention to it feels like issuing an order, which invites resistance.
- **With an oblique approach, you allow the person to come to her own conclusion more.** It also allows them to save face, thinking something like, "I had a good reason for the last mistake, but no longer! I am resolved to right the ship."

### Tactics

- **Follow your sincere praise NOT with "but" but rather with "and."** Contrast:
  - "You've done an excellent job working hard, but you could have prevented these careless mistakes." vs
  - "You've done an excellent job working hard, and if you focus next on building a checklist, you'll improve your accuracy rate."
  - This avoids the negative detraction of feeling failure.
- If a task is slipping, do it yourself, then show the work to the person. This sets a proper example of diligence.

### Examples

- McKinley to his speechwriter, when displeased with a speech: "That's a splendid speech. No one could have prepared a better one. There are many occasions in which this would be precisely the right thing to say. But is it the right one for this occasion?"
- Charles Schwab saw workers in a mill smoking under a "No Smoking" sign. Instead of chastising them, he handed each of them a cigar, asking "I'll appreciate it, boys, if you will smoke these on the outside."
- John Wanamaker saw a customer being ignored at the sales counter while the salespeople were chatting in the corner. He serviced the woman himself, then handed the purchase to the salespeople to be wrapped. This pointed out the error clearly but indirectly.
- A eulogy writer passed the sermon by his wife. Finding it dull, she said, "that would make an excellent article for the *North American Review*."
- A dentist noticed his cleaner wasn't cleaning a metal cup holder. He wrote a note: "Thank you for your fine job of cleaning. Two hours twice a week is a limited amount of time, even for someone of your abilities. Please work an extra half an hour from time to time if you need to do those 'once in a while' tasks, like polishing the cup holders. Of course, I'll pay you for the time." He returned to find the office spotless.

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## Feedback 3: Point Out Your Own Mistakes

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### Principles

- Giving one-sided feedback gives the impression of an overbearing, perfect overlord chastising a flawed underling. It diminishes the person's importance.
- **Admitting your own mistakes shows that you recognize the task is difficult and the person's mistakes are understandable.** It encourages the person to rise to your level, and it lowers your own importance to match that of your partner.
- Adopt the genuine attitude that you are doing better primarily because you have considerably more experience, leading to high personal standards that are currently above others' capabilities.
  - This includes your relationship with entry-level employees and children. How can you expect a 10-year-old to make the same decisions you do at age 40? Did you do the same when you were 10?

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### Tactics

- Talk about similar mistakes you made earlier in your career, or when you were in the person's situation.
- "You've made a mistake, but it's no worse than many I've made."
- To children: "You weren't born with judgment. That comes only with experience, and you're better than I was at your age."

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### Examples

- A secretary was making regular spelling mistakes. The engineer she was working for had made a list of words he had trouble spelling. He went to her and said, "this word doesn't look quite right. I always have trouble with this word. That's why I keep this list of words I misspell frequently. (flips to page) Yes, here it is. I'm careful with my spelling because people judge us by our letters."
- A father wanted his son to stop smoking, despite being a smoker himself. He explained how he started smoking at his son's age, how nicotine had gotten the best of him, and it was now impossible for him to stop. His cough was irritating and his health had deteriorated.



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## Feedback 4: Ask Questions Instead of Giving Orders

Now that the problem is known, present how to fix the problem.

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### Principles

- **Instead of issuing orders, ask questions.**
- It allows your partner to come to her own conclusions independently. People like their own ideas better.
- It preserves agency, importance, and pride. Instead of following someone else's orders, the person is now following her own. They have ownership in the path forward.
- It stimulates the creativity of your partner. New better ideas might actually surface.

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### Tactics

- "You might consider this." "Do you think that would work?" "What do you think of this?"
- When the solution is unclear to you, ask your staff on what to do.

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### Examples

- A manager of a manufacturing plant wanted to take a large order but wasn't convinced they could service it in time. He asked his staff questions. "Is there anything we can do to handle this order? Can we think of different ways to process it?"

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## Feedback 5: Preserve the Person's Pride

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### Principles

- People crave importance. If you bulldoze this importance away, the person will resent you and become more difficult to influence later. Let them preserve their pride even when receiving feedback or being punished.

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### Tactics

- (Shortform suggestions: The book doesn't give clear directives on a general way of how to do this, but it centers around **preserving the person's pride and what they care about**.
- Acknowledge that mistakes are done out of momentary carelessness or inexperience, and not lack of ability.
- If there is a misfit with a role, focus on the person's other strengths and lift those up.
- Express confidence publicly in the person who made the mistake, to preserve the person's social bonds (and avoid making her toxic for other people to be around). Avoid embarrassing her publicly.
- If letting people go, express that it was not due to the quality of their work, but the changing needs of the business. The business is rooting for them and believes in their potential.)

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### Examples

- When a key employee was demoted from department head, instead of returning his original title, they gave him a new title: "Consulting Engineer."
- An employee made a mistake on a project that required redoing it. She apologized to her manager for the error and said she would have the report before the next meeting. She expected the manager to explode in anger.
  - Instead of criticizing her carelessness, the manager thanked her for her work; said it wasn't an unusual error for a new project; expressed his faith in her and knew she had done her best; it was lack of experience and not ability that made up for the failure.
  - Because of this human treatment, the employee resolved to never let him down again.

## Feedback 6: Create a Reputation to Live Up To

### Principles

- **If you want to improve something about a person, act as though that trait were already one of her outstanding characteristics.** They will try to live up to that reputation, rather than disappoint you and betray their image.
- People want to feel important. Being valued for certain traits or their reputation makes them feel important, and they will work to continue feeling important.
- Shakespeare: "Assume a virtue, if you have it not."
- (Shortform note: This is similar to the Arguments chapter "Appeal to the Best Self.")

### Tactics

- If an excellent worker is falling short in performance, praise the person's previous work and reputation for quality. Note that you're giving feedback since you're sure they'd want to know if they were falling short.
- To an angry customer: "I've always admired you for your patience and fairness. Please forgive us for our mistake."
- To someone who's rejected your ideas: "I've always respected your open-mindedness. I have faith that you're big enough to change your mind if you receive new information."
- Try this for people who are historically underappreciated and lacking in positive feedback - find a trait of theirs you want to emphasize.

### Examples

- A writer was staying in a hotel and served by a homely, dispirited servant girl. The writer pulled her aside and said, "Marie, you do not know what treasures are within you." Unaccustomed to receiving any recognition, the girl changed her attitude and began to take better care of her face and body.
- A teacher had a child known to other teachers as a bad apple. Instead of treating the boy accordingly and causing a self-fulfilling prophecy, she reversed course: "Tommy, I hear you're a born leader. I'm going to need your help to make this the best class in the school this year." Then she praised his every positive action in the first few days. He quickly revised his behavior.
- A store manager had inaccurate price tags on the shelves, confusing customers. He appointed an employee Supervisor of Price Tags. This responsibility changed her attitude completely.

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## Feedback 7: Make the Improvement Look Easy

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### Principles

- If you tell someone they lack the talent and will never be good at something, you have removed interest and hope for improvement.
- Instead, **tell them they have the right talent and fundamentals, but just need to practice to get better**. Make the steps easy to do.

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### Tactics

- Connect it to something they've mastered in the past. "There's nothing to it other than . **You've done** before. X will be a cinch for you."
- Take one piece of the task that the person is doing well, and praise that. Then show how if the person can do that, then she can do the entire task.

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### Examples

- Dance instructor to a poor dancer: "you have a natural sense of rhythm. You are a natural-born dancer."
- Dale Carnegie was apprehensive about learning the card game of bridge, which he knew nothing about. His teacher said, "there's nothing to bridge except memory and judgment. You've published tomes on memory. Bridge is right up your alley."

## Feedback 8: Keep the Person's Interests in Mind

### Principles

- Always keep the other person's interests and incentives in mind. Link your suggestion with meeting their interests.
- **Ask yourself what it is the other person really wants. Then consider the benefits that person will receive from doing what you suggest.**

### Tactics

- When rejecting someone for a responsibility, intimate that they're too important for the role.
- If turning down a social event or invitation to speak, offer up an alternative - a substitute speaker, another time to meet. The rejected party won't have any time to feel disappointed.
- Make people feel important with new responsibilities, job titles.

### Examples

- When President Wilson appointed one diplomat over another to Europe to discuss WWI, the appointed diplomat broke the news to the rejected one: "It would be unwise for anyone to do this officially, and your going would attract a great deal of attention and people would wonder why you were there." He appealed to the rejected diplomat's importance, suggesting the rejected diplomat was more important than he was.
- A father assigned his son the chore of picking up fruit under a tree, which the son didn't like. He made an offer: "for every bushel you gather, I'll give you a dollar. But for every fruit I find not picked up, I'll take away a dollar. How does that sound?"
- Napoleon created the Legion of Honour and gave 15,000 crosses to his soldiers, named his generals "Marshals of France," and called his army "The Grand Army." When criticized for giving toys to veterans, he said, "Men are ruled by toys."
- A store manager had to clean the stockroom. He approached the employee:
  - Bad approach: "We need the stock room cleaned out for our visitors. Please put the room in order and polish the counter."
  - Good approach: "We have a job that needs to be done right away. If we do it now, we won't need to do it later. We have customers coming in, and I'd like to show them the room, but it's in disarray. If you put it in order and polish the counter, it'll make us look professional, and you'll have done your part to show our company well."
  - The latter approach appeals to the person's pride in managing the stockroom appearance, and it points out the benefit of not having to do it later.

## Feedback 9: Praise Every Improvement

### Principles

- Praising every improvement inspires the other person to keep on improving.
- When training a puppy, you praise every improvement with a small reward, and this locks in the good behavior. Why don't we do the same with other people?
- Look back on your life and remember moments where just a few words of praise sharply turned your entire future. You can have this impact on others.

### Tactics

- Give *specific* praise. Single out a specific accomplishment, instead of general flattering remarks. This makes your praise sound more sincere, and also forces you to find genuine points of appreciation.
- Some relationships, especially between parents and children and between employer and employee, have evolved into a vicious cycle of yelling. The parent gives no praise, the child resists, the parent yells at the child, the child resists further, the parent yells more loudly to get any result. You must break out of this vicious cycle to build a virtuous cycle.

### Examples

- As a young boy, Charles Dickens aspired to be a writer. He lived in poverty and labored as a child, and he kept sending out manuscripts that were routinely rejected. One day, an editor accepted his work and praised him. This praise changed his life, since this encouragement proved that he could be a writer.
- An owner of a printing business had a new employee who had difficulty getting up to speed. The immediate supervisor thought the employee had a bad attitude, but the owner visited and talked with the new employee. The owner pointed out that the new employee's work was some of the best work he'd seen produced for some time, and he pointed out exactly why it was superior. Of course, the young printer's attitude improved dramatically, and he became a loyal worker.
- A father had a son who had suffered a brain injury and was a slow learner. The son didn't know his multiplication tables by 7th grade and was downtrodden. The father created flashcards of arithmetic operations, and worked with his son to answer them correctly. Then he started timing his son, saying that when they could finish in 8 minutes, they'd stop. They started at 52 minutes, then the next night reached 48, then the next 45. They celebrated each little improvement. By the end of the month, he was down to 8 minutes.

## Exercise: Give Awesome Feedback

Revisit a recent time you gave feedback to someone, and improve your approach.

Think about a recent time you gave feedback that didn't get the results you wanted. What was it about? How

did you present it? How did the other person respond?

Try to start your approach by pointing out the problem in a new way. (Remember: start with praise; point out problems indirectly; point out your own mistakes; preserve the person's pride.) What would you say?

Now that the problem is understood, present the solution in a new way. (Remember: ask questions instead of giving orders; create a reputation to live up to; make the improvement seem easy; appeal to the person's interests.) What would you say?

People thrive on positive feedback and praise for improvements. How could you give praise to someone for their improvements right now?