



MICROGUIDES

PERSUASION

Proven methods to take your team's performance to the next level

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INTRODUCTION

The MicroGuides are your shortcut to staying current on the world's top Business, Leadership, and Personal Development books. They are used by individuals looking to better themselves, as well as by teams and organizations looking to create and foster cultures of continuous learning and development.

The MicroGuides are meant to serve as your starting point for identifying your goals and the obstacles that are standing in your way of achieving them. In addition to participation in regular ActionClasses, we urge leaders to use the content in these guides as inspiration for developing your own unique ActionPlan to make your ideal state a reality.



PERSUASION

Many people understand persuasion, but few people are able to effectively utilize the technique to its full capacity. In some roles--like sales, for example--persuasion is more upfront than in others, but that doesn't mean it isn't a universal skill across roles. From convincing management that your department needs more funding, to obliging an unmotivated team member to complete a task, persuasion is involved in more daily activities than you may realize.

Persuasiveness is an innate personality trait in some, but for most people it is a skill that must be learned and continually improved. There's a reason why persuasion is often called an art: it involves carefully assessing your target audience, identifying the limitations of your proposal, and overcoming objections. Keep reading to learn more about how to harness the unique power of persuasion.



01

Made to Stick

by Chip and Dan Heath

01

Made to Stick

Why Some Ideas Survive and Others Die by Chip and Dan Heath

Mark Twain had it right when he said that “A lie can get halfway around the world before the truth can even get its boots on.” Chip and Dan have become the de-facto sticky brothers through their bestselling book *Made To Stick*. As they say on their website “Urban legends, conspiracy theories, and bogus public health scares circulate effortlessly.”

And I think a lot of you have probably seen that. Meanwhile, people with important ideas: businessmen, educators, politicians, journalists, and so on, and so on, really struggle to make their ideas stick. And it’s a fascinating conundrum. The solution say Chip and Dan is their success principle. That’s S-U-C-C-E-S. You can drop the last S and it stands for simple, unexpected, concrete, credible, and emotional stories.

SUCCES = Simple,
Unexpected,
Concrete, Credible,
and Emotional Stories





They're a great starting point for developing and recognizing spreadable, contagious and sticky ideas that will stand the test of time. And I think that's something that we all need a little bit more of these days. What follows is a summary of these principles. And as usual we've humbly added our own thoughts, so we hope you enjoy.

Principle #1: Simple

Success principle number one is simplicity. Sticky needs to be simple. In order to have a memorable idea we have to be masters of exclusion. As a successful defense lawyer once said, and keeping in mind that I used to be a lawyer, "If you make ten arguments, the jury won't remember any of them, even if they're all good points."

But one thing we don't want to do is to confuse simple with simplistic. One of the most memorable examples of a simple idea that says it all comes from Bill Clinton's Presidential campaign in 1992. Trying to get his troops to focus on what was important and to stop trying to sound too smart, James Carville, Clinton's righteous campaign manager, created the slogan IT'S THE ECONOMY, STUPID!

Some say that this simple idea kept Clinton and his campaign focused on important issues and off of the distractions, ultimately winning him the Presidency. And we all know what came next. So focus, is one step closer to sticky.

Principle #2: Unexpected

Success principle number two is unexpectedness. In May 1961, J.F.K gave a speech to a special session of Congress. During the speech he talked about numerous aid programs including expanding their NATO alliance and building television and radio stations in Latin America and South East Asia.

Then, drawing near the end of what might be considered a typical address to Congress he said this, "I believe that this nation should commit itself, to achieving the goal, before this decade is out, of landing a man on the moon and returning him safely to the earth."

How is that for a surprise? Of course you have to back fill some substance to make the surprise stick. People have to believe it can be done. The goal is not only to get people/s attention but it's to keep it as well.

The reason unexpectedness works so well is that our brains are wired to notice things that are different. And for those Congressmen - and for the entire United States of America even - when they're listening to Kennedy give a speech, you're expecting all this stuff about the NATO alliance, and building television and radio stations and so on.

They're not expecting him to say that we're going to fly a guy to the moon. A place no one's ever been before. So remember this when you're building your marketing story, your advertising picture, even just going to give a speech to your employees. Avoid the camouflage of jargon and cliché and you're going to be able to unearth something very unexpected and sticky.



Principle #3: Concrete

Success principle number three is concreteness. Just as our brains are wired to notice differences they're also wired to remember concrete data. Hence, the success of that Guinness book, Letterman's top ten list and even the stickiness of your own phone number. We can recall concrete data better because it is usually associated with other sensory clues.

So what I'm going to do is ask you take this simple test which was done by David Rueben, a cognitive physiologist at Duke University. And it's only going to take about thirty seconds. You ready? Okay, here we go.

Remember the first line of Hey Jude. Now remember the Mona Lisa. Now remember the house where you've spent most of your childhood. Now remember the definition of truth.

Okay. Immediate associations will probably jump into your mind. You know the image of the Mona Lisa, the way she is glancing at you. A memory of the first few bars McCartney's baritone from Hey Jude. Perhaps even the aroma of your childhood home.

Adaptive reflection question: In what situations, at work and in life, do you find the need to be persuasive?



However, the definition of truth exercise probably didn't conjure anything in particular. Why? Because it's an abstract concept - it's not concrete. Now think about this in terms of your last sales pitch or your last marketing piece, whatever. You've only got a few seconds to get your point across to make it stick. What associations are you conjuring?

Principle #4: Credible

Success principle number four is credible. Eighty six percent of all statistics are fiction. Think about that one. Just as we're wired to pay attention to differences, we're also wired to believe facts. There's something about data nuggets that sticks with us. Of course, organizations worldwide have jumped on the bandwagon, spouting numbers and lists and factoids of every type.

Your number one opportunity is to build your credibility by using facts in a meaningful way. Here's a great example from Stephen Covey, he of the Seven Habits. In his book *The 8th Habit* he turned a statistic from something meaningless into meaningful, and here it is.

Here's the meaningless part. "Only 37 percent of people said that they have a clear understanding of what the organization is trying to achieve and why." That probably doesn't say very much to you.

However, he turned this into this wonderfully sticky thought. Try this one on for size. If a soccer team had the same scores, only four of the eleven players on the field would know which goal is theirs. Can you spot the difference?

Principle #5: Emotional

Success principle number five is to make things emotional. Donald Cowan, a Canadian neuropsychologist tells us that, "Logic leads to conclusions and emotion leads to action." Well, as it happens it appears that emotion also leads to more spending.





In a Carnegie Mellon study, people were given five dollars to spend on an African children's charity. One group is given a letter that lists its statistics about problems facing children. Remember the statistics part? Another group was given a story about a specific child, and you want to know the results?

The people who read statistics gave an average of one dollar and fourteen cents. The people who read the story however gave an average of two dollars and forty eight cents, more than double. Why? We're human. We relate to human stories and emotional appeals stick in our minds influencing our behavior. It's an obvious framework applying to marketing but where else can you take it within your organization?

Can you use emotion in storytelling to make even your next PowerPoint stickier? We think you can.

Principle #6: Stories

Success principle number six is stories. Quick, who is that guy and what's with the pants? Now for those of you listening to the audio that's a picture of Jared, that relentless Subway sandwich guy. He lost two hundred and forty five pounds eating only subway sandwiches. Yes that's very sticky. Take all of the principles explored in the past few pages and in the past few minutes and roll them up into one sticky story. Jared's story.

Let's see how it stacks up against the success principles. Number one is simple, guy eats subs, guy loses a lot of weight. Boom! You're done. Two, it's unexpected. This story violates our notions for fast food. I'm sure everybody has seen Supersize me, and the guy who goes to McDonalds and eats there for a month and he almost dies.

That's our notion for fast food - it's going to kill you eventually. Not this time. Number three it's concrete, two hundred and forty-five pounds lost. That's pretty concrete because if you're like me you probably thought "man that's more than most people weigh."

So I have a concept in my mind about what two hundred and forty five pounds means. It's a lot of weight. Number five, it's credible. If the guy who wore size sixty pants can do it and can lose a whole human being off his body, anybody can do it.

And lastly as we know, it's a story. This simple, unexpected, concrete, credible and emotional story turned out to be one of the most successful advertising campaigns the world has ever seen.

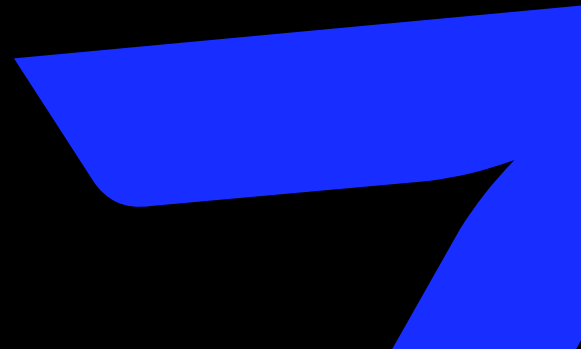
So, where are your organizations stories? Are they simple, are they unexpected, are they concrete, are they credible, are they emotional?

Adaptive reflection question: How can you apply the SUCCES method to a situation in which you need to be persuasive?

02

Influence

by Robert Cialdini



02

Influence

The Psychology of Persuasion

by Robert Cialdini

What are the factors that cause one person to say yes to another person and which techniques are used to bring about such compliance?

Why it is that a request stated in a certain way will be rejected, while a request that asks for the same favor in a slightly different fashion will be successful?

These are questions asked in answered in Robert Cialdini's book "Influence." Spend the next ten minutes with us to learn the secrets of the persuaders and if necessary, how to avoid their spell.





Lesson 1: Contrast

Today's works moves at a fast pace. We need to absorb, process and act on information constantly. When we need to make a decision, we often resort to using shortcuts in the decision making process. One such shortcut is the contrast principle.

The contrast principle affects the way we see the difference between two things that are presented one after another. Simply put, if the second item is fairly different from the first, we will tend to see it as more different than it actually is.

This “weapon of influence” as Cialdini calls them does not go unexploited and its greatest advantage is not only that it works but also that it is virtually undetectable.

Have you ever been shopping for clothes, selected a fairly expensive suit or dress and then been persuaded to accessorize with a shirt, shoes or bag? I have – at least with the suit, shirt and shoes! That's the contrast principle in action.

It is much more profitable for the salesperson to present the expensive item first, not only because to fail to do so will lose the influence of the contrast principle; to fail to do so will also cause the principle to work actively against them. If we the first thing we buy is comparably cheap the more expensive seems – more expensive.

Lesson 2: Reciprocation

The second of Cialdini's weapons of influence is the rule of reciprocation. The rule says that we should try to repay, in kind, what another person has provided us.

A large number if not all of us have been taught to live up to the rule, and know about the social sanctions and derision applied to anyone who violates it - moochers, freeloaders, spongers.

Because there is general distaste for those who take and make no effort to give in return, we will often go to great lengths to avoid being considered one of their number.

Cialdini suggests, one of the reasons reciprocation can be used so effectively as a device for gaining another's compliance is its power. The rule possesses awesome strength, often producing a "yes" response to a request that, except for an existing feeling of indebtedness, would have surely been refused.

As a marketing technique, the free sample engages the reciprocity rule. The promoter who gives free samples can release the natural indebted force inherent in a gift while innocently appearing to have only the intention to inform.

Adaptive reflection question: How can you use the principle of reciprocation to your advantage in your next negotiation?

A person can trigger a feeling of indebtedness by doing an uninvited favor. The rule only states that we should provide to others the kind of actions they have provided us; it does not require us to have asked for what we have received in order to feel obligated to repay.

Most of us find it highly disagreeable to be in a state of obligation. It weighs heavily on us and demands to be removed.

Consequently, we may be willing to agree to perform a larger favor than we received, merely to relieve ourselves of the psychological burden of debt.

There's no such thing as a free lunch.

Lesson 3: Top Lining

Cialdini's third weapon of influence is the top lining technique.

This is easy to state: first make a larger request of me, one that I will most likely turn down. Then, after I have refused, make the smaller request that you were really interested in all along. Most likely I'll oblige.

Here is a commercial example. You go to buy a new Laptop. The sales assistant, Bob, invariably shows you the deluxe model first. If you buy, great for Bob. He's just made a bigger margin. However, you're likely to decline - after all you don't need the bells and whistles. Bob counters with a more reasonably priced model. You're hooked, you buy. Bob wins again, after all a sale is a sale.

This technique happens all the time in retail. Tomorrow, count the rejection and retreat offers you encounter. I expect there are more than a handful.



Lesson 4: Consistency

Cialdini tells us something fascinating about people at the racetrack: Just after placing a bet, they are much more confident of their horse's chances of winning than they are immediately before laying down that bet. Of course, nothing about the horse's chances actually shifts. It's the same horse, on the same track, in the same field. But in the minds of those bettors, its prospects improve significantly once that ticket is purchased.

This is Cialdini's fourth weapon of influence: The force of consistency.

Quite simply, once we have made a choice or taken a stand, we encounter pressures to behave consistently with that commitment. We fool ourselves to keep our thoughts and beliefs consistent with what we have already decided.

But because it is in our best interests to be consistent, such consistency can also be exploited by those who would prefer that we don't think too much in response to their requests for our compliance.

Take toy manufacturers wanting to increase sales in January or February.

They start prior to Christmas with attractive TV ads for certain special toys. The kids, naturally, want what they see and extract Christmas promises for these items from their parents. The manufacturers undersupply the stores with the toys they've gotten the parents to promise. Most are forced to substitute other toys of equal value.

The toy manufacturers, of course, make a point of supplying the stores with plenty of these substitutes. Then, after Christmas, the companies start running the ads again for the other, special toys which are now in great supply and as a parent we need to be consistent to our promise and hey presto. Double toys, double expense.

Adaptive reflection question: How can you implement more consistency in the way you communicate with others?



Lesson 5: Compliance

“How are you doing today?” The caller’s intent seem to be friendly and caring. But it has a cutting edge. There is a sales pitch approaching. The theory behind this tactic is that people who have just asserted that they are doing fine—even as a routine part of a sociable exchange—will consequently find it awkward to appear stingy in the context of their own admittedly favored circumstances.

You’ve fallen into the compliance trap.

Cialdini tells us to be very careful about agreeing to trivial requests. Such agreements not only increase our compliance with similar, larger requests, it can also make us more willing to perform a variety of larger favors that are only remotely connected to the little one we did earlier.

Whenever you take a stand that is visible to others, you are driven to maintain that stand to look like a consistent person. Commitments are most effective when they are active, public, and effortful.

So how are you doin’?

Lesson 6: Social Proof

Like Seinfeld? Ever join in the laughter while on your own? To discover why canned laughter is so effective, we first need to understand the nature of yet another of Cialdini's weapons of influence: the principle of social proof.

The principle applies to the way we decide what constitutes correct behavior. We view a behavior as more correct in a given situation to the extent that we see others performing it.

Advertisers love to inform us when a product is the "fastest-growing" or "largest-selling" because they don't have to convince us directly that the product is good, they need only say that many others think so, which seems proof enough to us.

In general, when we are unsure of ourselves, when the situation is unclear or ambiguous, when uncertainty reigns, we are most likely to look to and accept the actions of others as correct a phenomenon called "pluralistic ignorance."

We will use the actions of others to decide on proper behavior for ourselves, especially when we view those others as similar to ourselves.

We like people who are similar to us. This fact seems to hold true whether the similarity is in the area of opinions, personality traits, background, or life-style. Consequently, those who wish to be liked in order to increase our compliance can accomplish that purpose by appearing similar to us in any of a wide variety of ways. Which leads nicely onto the next lesson.

Lesson 7: Liking

An important fact about human nature: We are phenomenal suckers for flattery. Although there are limits to our gullibility—especially when we can be sure that the flatterer is trying to manipulate us—we tend, as a rule, to believe praise and to like those who provide it, oftentimes when it is clearly false. Liking: Cialdini's next weapon of influence.

A host of examples is possible. Most are familiar, like the new-car salesman who takes our side and “does battle” with his boss to secure us a good deal. In Olympiad years, we are told precisely which is the “official” hair spray and facial tissue of our Olympic teams. The linking of celebrities to products is another way advertisers cash in on the association principle. Professional athletes are paid to connect themselves to things that can be directly relevant to their roles (sport shoes, tennis rackets, golf balls) or wholly irrelevant (soft drinks, popcorn poppers, even after shave).

Lesson 8: Scarcity

The scarcity principle: opportunities seem more valuable to us when their availability is limited.

While in conversation we are routinely interrupted to answer the ring of our cell phone. And we answer rather than continue talking. In such a situation, the caller has a compelling feature that our face-to-face partner does not: potential unavailability. If we don't take the call, we might miss it (and the information it carries) for good.



Cialdini suggests people seem to be more motivated by the thought of losing something than by the thought of gaining something of equal value. For instance, homeowners told how much money they could lose from inadequate insulation are more likely to insulate their homes than those told how much money they could save.

As a rule, if it is rare or becoming rare, it is more valuable.

A variant of the deadline tactic, much favored by some face-to-face, high-pressure sellers, carries the purest form of decision deadline: right now. Customers are often told that unless they make an immediate decision to buy, they will have to purchase the item at a higher price or they will be unable to purchase it at all.

Incidentally, scarcity is also a primary cause of political turmoil and violence.

Revolutionaries are more likely to be those who have been given at least some taste of a better life. When the economic and social improvements they have experienced and come to expect suddenly become less available, they desire them more than ever and often rise up violently to secure them.

When it comes to freedoms, it is more dangerous to have given for a while than never to have given at all. So remember once delivered you can't take it away.

Adaptive reflection question:

How can you implement the scarcity tactic in your negotiations?

03

Instant Influence

by Michael Pantalon



03

Instant Influence

How to Get Anyone to do Anything--Fast
by Michael Pantalon

Would the ability to influence your customers, your work colleagues, your partner or even your children be valuable to you? Michael Pantalon wrote the book *Instant Influence* to do just that. He gives us a scientifically supported method that gets people to take action because they want to. In fact, it's even possible to use the *Instant Influence* methodology on yourself. Spend the next few minutes with us exploring how you can be a master of influence.

Adaptive reflection question: In your experience, what are the most effective motivators?

Can you motivate anyone in 7 minutes?

Have you ever found yourself wondering why the people in your life won't change, despite the numerous logical reasons you've pointed out to them? As it turns out, that type of persuasion rarely - if ever - works.





As Pantalon tells us, people change because of their own reasons. That's the secret sauce of Instant Influence –it helps people discover their own justification for doing something, even something they thought they didn't want to do. When someone genuinely doesn't want to change, change won't happen. But even the most reluctant of us has a tiny spark of desire to change hidden within. Helping us find that spark can literally transform our lives.

How?

People take action when they hear themselves say that they want to. Get someone to tell you why and action to change is almost sure to follow. Pantalon uses this notion at the heart of his Instant Influence method and he extends it with the following four assumptions:

1. We are free to choose how we behave.
2. Other people can threaten that freedom by attempting to impose control.
3. We tend to react very negatively when our freedom is threatened, making us more resistant to the control being applied.
4. Our freedom can be restored by asserting self-determination and taking control ourselves.

The key point is how we frame our attempt to influence. We need to take the frame of our focus not our own. Our influencing conversation must contain statements such as:

- “This is your choice, not mine.”
- “It’s completely your decision.”
- “You’re free to do whatever you want”
- “I can’t make this choice for you - it’s up to you.”

All of these give power back to the influencee, brightens the spark and gives ignition to change.

Pantalon’s Instant Influence method consists of six progressive steps leading to change. In challenging situations we may need to move through each stage. In other cases - having created the spark - the influencee takes control and accelerates the process themselves.

But let’s move step by step.

Step #1: Why might you change?

The first challenge we must meet is how to put the influencee in a position where they are able to visualize themselves in the desired situation. In most cases you will have identified what you want to change and what the desired outcome should look like. It's not news to your family member who doesn't have a healthy diet that continuing down that path might lead to health problems.

So you need to phrase questions in such a way as to challenge the influencee to see themselves in that scene. Instead of focussing on the negative behavior, Pantalon suggests we look for desirable behavior close to where we want to get to.

He suggests asking questions such as: "Why are you doing?" (where the focus is close to the target). For example, “Why did you choose salad today” for someone who wished to lose weight. Follow up with, "Why would you do more?"

Adaptive reflection question:

What tactics do you use to visualize yourself in your ideal state? How does that help you achieve your goals?

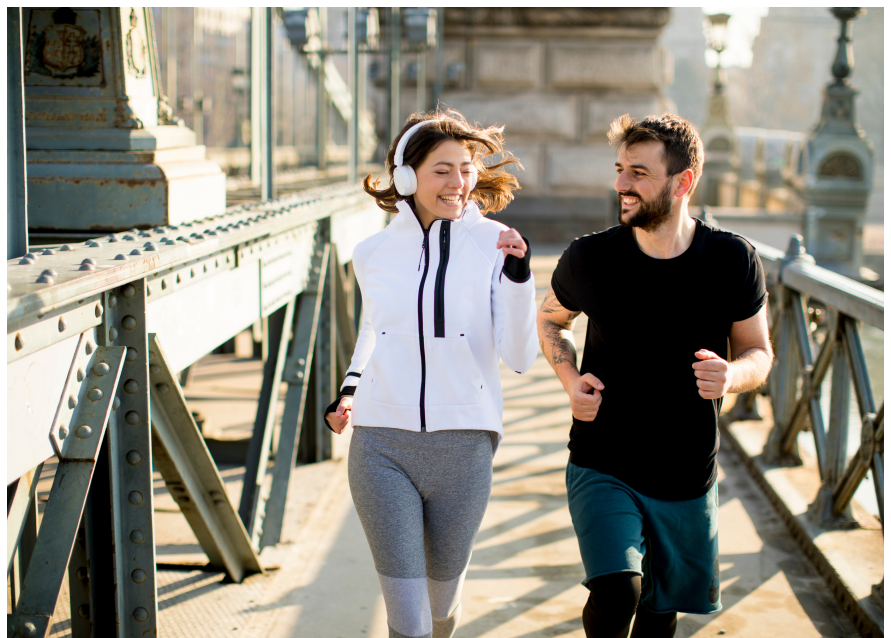
Pantalon suggests we could focus on the past and ask: “Why have you ever [done the thing we’re talking about]?” There are some questions we need to avoid especially as we have identified, those which sound like orders:

- Why don’t you...?
- Why haven’t you...?
- Why wouldn’t you...?

Pantalon then suggests we use a technique psychologists and counselors call reflection. Reflection is the process of repeating back, or echoing, what the other person has just said, as if you are holding up a mirror to his words. We need to reflect back even the tiniest spark of motivation to help the other person see more clearly what it is he already wants. Having kindled the spark we need to give it more oxygen.

Step #2: How ready are you to change?

The next step starts with the deceptively simple question: on a scale from 1 to 10, where 1 means “not ready at all” and 10 means “totally ready”, how ready are you to make that change? The goal of Step 2 is to help you and the other person gauge their motivation.



Pantalon suggests we don't attach too much importance to the numbers. A low number doesn't mean that they're not likely to take action, nor does a high number mean that they are likely to take action. What's important isn't the number but the process of thinking about why they might want to do something.

We then move quickly to...

Step #3: Why didn't you pick a lower number?

This is where the technique gets interesting. Why would someone who they think is trying to encourage them to do more ask why we didn't do less? If somebody picks a low number, this will usually stop them in their tracks. Then they'll start thinking of the reasons why they didn't choose a "1" instead of a "3".

This is where the person starts to uncover some real reasons why they are ready to change. The critical part is that the reasons for change are coming out of their mouth, and not yours. They are no longer being told what to do, and will now feel like they are ready to make a change because they want to. This is incredibly powerful stuff.

Step #4: Imagine you've changed. What would the positive outcomes be?

Here's where we start to crystalize the benefits of change. We can suggest that the change has already happened, and encourage the person to visualize the change in detail. Ask them what would be different in their life. What would they be able to do now that they've changed that they couldn't do before?

If you feel like things are going really well, you can even ask them to give a deadline of when you think the change would be complete. Pantalon's research has shown that people are far more likely to change if they think of the upside of changing, rather than the downside of not changing.



Adaptive reflection question: How often do you take time to reflect on why your goals are important to you?

Step #5: Why are those outcomes important to you

In step 5 we are getting close to visible change itself. But before then we need to once more take the frame of the influencee. Pantalon asks us to ask them to dig deep for reasons to make the change. The familiar Five Whys technique is of value here. Ask, “Why are those outcomes important to you?” and for each answer ask why.

By the time you’ve got to the fifth why, you’ve most likely reached a true personal reason, close to the heart of the influence. Don’t be surprised if they become emotional at this stage. It’s sometime quite a journey. Invariably, the answers move almost magically from the practical and impersonal to the heartfelt and deeply personal.

Again, the technique of reflection is valuable. The influencee needs to hear back how you understand how they’re hopeful, what they want, why they want it, and how they truly believe things could be better.

Step #6: What's the next step, if any?

The final step no longer looks at the whys but turns to the hows. "What's the next step, if any?" Adding those two little words - if any - is another way to reinforce the other person's autonomy: it's still up to her to decide whether there will be a next step. Now you are ready for one final action.

Ask their permission to meet again after an appropriate time has elapsed to review progress and to re-commit to the change. As stated, it's likely that all six steps may not be necessary. Taking a structured approach to encourage change can often be the trigger for the influencee to take control themselves.

Influencing yourself

We've spent a lot of time talking about influencing others but you can also use the Instant Influence technique to influence yourself. Here is Pantaloni's self-influence process:

Identify a change you'd like to make or an action you'd like to take. Formulate it in terms of behavior, not results.

Write down the first Instant Influence question (Why might I change?), and then write down your answer. Move on to the next step, writing down your answers until you reach Step 5.





When you get to Step 5, write “Why?” then answer. Repeat four more times so that you’ve asked and answered the “five whys.”

When you reach Step 6, choose a small, manageable step, and pick a time that you will check back in with yourself to review your progress and choose a next step.

Advice for applying the method

Start small. Keep looking for smaller and smaller beginning steps until you find one that feels safe or that you can at least visualize doing.

Allow for the possibility that any problem might have many different solutions.

Focus on action, not decisions. We often focus too much on the how when we really should be looking at the why. But sometimes the how is the problem, and acquiring skills may be all that’s needed to get the ball rolling.

Don’t judge or self-censor. Just be open to the process.

Prepare to be surprised. You will almost certainly learn something new about your own reasons for wanting something.

Trust the process. You may find yourself taking action almost without realizing it, so don't feel you need to force yourself.

Have you consulted an expert? Experts may be able to identify whether the problem is one of skill or will.

Motivation is like a seed that sprouts and begins to grow while still underground. We may know it's there, but we don't always trust that one day it will break through to the light.

Affirm the influencee's right to say no. Affirm their ownership of the decision.

Adaptive reflection

question: What goal are you currently working towards that you can apply Pantalon's Instant Influence technique to?

ABOUT ACTIONCLASS

ActionClasses are short interactive workshops on the Business and Leadership skill that matter most.

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Our live, interactive workshops host leaders from all around the world, making them a great place to build your network and experience diverse perspectives on your most pressing business and leadership challenges.