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***How to Change Minds***  
***The Art of Influence without Manipulation***

by Rob Jolles

Published by Berrett-Koehler Publishers

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*"This book takes you on a wonderful journey to greater understanding of how to persuade."*

—BRIAN TRACY, author of *Eat That Frog*

# HOW *to* CHANGE MINDS



The Art of Influence without Manipulation

## ROB JOLLES

## More Praise for *How to Change Minds*

“How do we discern whether we are unwittingly manipulating someone when our intention is simply to influence? Enter Rob Jolles. A sought-after speaker with a background in sales and training, Rob is an expert not only in the art of influence but also in human nature. *How to Change Minds* coaches readers on the fine point of *ethical persuasion—the art of influence without manipulation*. If you want to change minds the right way, reading this book is the right thing to do.”

—**Ken Blanchard, coauthor of *The One Minute Manager and Trust Works!***

“This book takes you on a wonderful journey to greater understanding of how to persuade while transcending the boundaries of traditional selling and into the heart and mind of anyone who needs to influence behavior.”

—**Brian Tracy, author of *Eat That Frog!***

“The wisest and most ethical sales trainers share a common goal with psychotherapists—to facilitate their clients’ change in ways that will help them achieve the success they seek. Rob Jolles’s approach will help show you how!”

—**Cliff Ayers, PhD, clinical psychologist**

“Learning to influence behavior is a powerful skill that all members in the law enforcement community should master. It’s a tool used each and every time we get that call for a barricade or hostage situation. This book will assist all in the law enforcement community with their day-to-day operations, and I would encourage all my colleagues to read this book.”

—**Bill Soper, Assistant Commander, Calvert County Sheriff’s Office**

“Rob Jolles once again identifies nuanced elements of the selling process no one else sees and presents specific actions selling professionals can take to grow their business. We will be recommending this book to our members.”

—**Fred Diamond, cofounder, Institute for Excellence in Sales & Business Development**

“As salespeople, we constantly find ourselves walking the fine line between ‘creating urgency’ and ‘being pushy.’ The former is of tremendous importance to any salesperson, while the latter can be disastrous. Rob Jolles examines the nuances of this fine line, offering a unique perspective for anyone to follow. This is truly the microscopic DNA that separates the rock stars from the also-rans in the world of sales.”

—**Jim Wolf, Vice President for Sales, TeleVox Software**

“Persuasion without a moral compass is an altogether too common form of communication in today’s hectic, technology-based world, where the sound bite and the political gotcha dominate over real dialogue. Experience, clarity of expression, and decades’ worth of teaching relationships have given Rob the insight to write such a book, and I recommend it to anyone seeking answers on this important topic.”

—**Robert “Frank” Muller Jr., CEO, Behringer Securities**

“The ideas and lessons taught in this book and what Rob has taught many of us for decades on how to influence change have proven to be endless in application. Whether you are consulting with clients, negotiating a deal, leading a team of people, or dealing with your children, it works!”

—**Glenn M. Cackovic, Managing Partner, GlobalMacro Capital Management, LLC**

“Rob creates entire new systems in the way we think—and if we allow it, it won’t just change our client interactions; it has the power to change our marriage and our friendships for the better. My ability to listen, understand, and influence people for *good* has been revolutionized since being introduced to his concepts.”

—**Nic Heywood, Wealth Management Advisor, TIAA-CREF**

HOW *to*  
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MINDS

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The Art of Influence without Manipulation

ROB JOLLES



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*a BK Business book*

## How to Change Minds

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**T**his book is dedicated to the greatest salesman who ever lived. He was a man who could change a mind in a heartbeat, with the skill of a surgeon. What I learned, I learned from him, and what I write, I write for him. Xerox taught me how, but he taught me why. He was my father. Rest easy, Lion Lee Jolles; your voice and words will never be forgotten.

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# Preface

If I could show you a way, with 100 percent certainty, to maximize the odds of your ability to change another person's mind, would you jump at the opportunity to acquire these skills? Take a deep breath, and consider these words for a moment, because that's exactly what I can do. But there's a catch. Along with the skills you harness when you learn *how to change minds* comes a moral responsibility. In the words of Franklin Delano Roosevelt, Winston Churchill, and even Stan Lee (to mention a few):

*With great power comes great responsibility.*

Within the pages you are about to read, I am confident of two things. First, you will find a process that is repeatable, predictable, and allows you the best opportunity possible to change another person's mind. Second, you will find yourself in a front-row seat peering over a thin line that separates influence from manipulation. At times that line can become so thin that the only thing that distinguishes one from the other is sheer intent.

It will be my job not only to show you how to change minds, but to draw the boundaries between influence and manipulation. To succeed in such lofty goals, this book will have to deliver on four separate fronts: (1) It must

be applicable to all, (2) it must be ethical, (3) it must be measurable, and (4) it must be something *you* believe in.

## IT MUST BE APPLICABLE TO ALL

After nearly three decades of teaching people to sell, and transferring these skills to those who don't necessarily sell for a living, I've learned that the topic of persuasion can create some immediate anxiety. There are two questions that should be on your mind, to address right out of the gate.

The first is, Do you have to be a salesperson to use these skills? It would be trite to repeat the words you've probably heard over and over again: "Everybody sells." However, for many who simply want to apply selling skills to a child being parented, a cherished friend who needs to change his or her ways, or a manager who wants to change the ways of the team, this question can be haunting.

The processes we will explain are demonstrably and effectively used by professional salespeople. However, for decades I have conducted workshops and taught selling skills to NASA engineers, hostage negotiators, artists, parent groups, and many more. Learning how to change minds is not an exclusive skill available only to those who sell for a living. The act of influence has no boundaries.

The second question you should ask is, Do you have to possess certain natural skills to be effective at influencing others? This question can be rephrased many different ways, for example, "Are you born a salesperson?" or "Can anybody do this?" But any way you slice it, the question

remains essentially the same: “Can I learn to do this?” If I had a nickel for every time I have been asked this question, well, let’s just say, I’d have a heck of a lot of nickels!

I didn’t know the answer myself until I was fortunate enough to meet one of the greatest salesman who ever lived. He wasn’t a big-shot author (a fraternity I know all too well). No, he was a rather quiet, unassuming man named Ben Feldman.

### **It’s Just a Question of Style**

You probably haven’t heard of him either, so let me introduce you. In 1979, my first year out of college, and my first year with the New York Life Insurance Company, Ben led the industry in sales. Actually, it is inadequate to say he led the industry. He dominated it, with a lifetime total of \$1.6 billion in sales. Out of a pool of close to a quarter of a million salespeople, the sales numbers of the top nine agents were fairly close to one another. Ben Feldman’s totals were triple those of his next closest competitor.

I had never met Ben, but I imagined him to be outgoing, tall, and aggressive, with a big, booming voice. I guess I saw him as a collection of every stereotype I had been led to believe comprised an effective salesperson. The day I had the rare pleasure of meeting this man, he changed my life.

Ben Feldman stood about five feet three inches, a somewhat large fellow, with hair a little like Larry from *The Three Stooges*, and he spoke with a heavy lisp—not quite what I had expected. Within seconds, however, I was drawn to Ben Feldman’s unique style. He had none of the more conventional strengths that we associate with his

kind of success, yet he remained true to his style, used *his* strengths, and was a giant in his field.

That was the moment I learned the most valuable lesson I would ever receive in my life regarding personal style. I could not *be* Ben Feldman, but I could focus on his technique and continue to ask myself, “How can I do that so it sounds like *me*?” What is my personal style? My strengths aren’t Ben’s strengths, but then again, Ben’s aren’t mine either.

Ben Feldman didn’t just inspire a 21-year-old kid trying to find his way in the world of selling, he inspired the world with one simple message: If you remain true to the unique strengths you possess, and follow sound, proven techniques, there is no style of communication that cannot be successful.

Ben Feldman passed away in the summer of 1994, but not without leaving us a few final gifts. Ironically, he did not leave much in the way of process behaviors (a series of predictable actions), behind. His actual selling techniques were not well documented, and the rare speeches he gave provided more inspiration than instruction. However, in my mind, his greatest gift may have been one he never articulated. He taught us that if you commit to your own personal style, you can become as great as you want to be. “Can anybody do this?” *Absolutely!* The key is to separate style from technique.

## IT MUST BE ETHICAL

There is a lot at stake as we continue to work our way through the act of changing another person’s mind. My



focus will be on the moral tug of war between our desire to influence change and our will to preserve our personal ethics.

*Webster's* defines the word "ethics" this way: "a system of moral values." There isn't a whole lot of gray area here. Either you adhere to a system of moral values, or you don't; it's as simple as that. Or is it? When we are emotionally invested in creating change, even the most well-intentioned individuals can inadvertently struggle with the choices at hand.

Rather than ignore this potential conflict, I want to examine how well-intentioned people can find themselves challenged to do the right thing. By doing so, I believe we can step out of the shadows of feeling that changing someone's mind by applying the skills of influence is somehow a bad thing. It isn't. In fact, it can provide one of the greatest acts of kindness one human being can extend to another. On the other hand, changing someone's mind by applying the skills of manipulation can be a despicable act of selfishness, and that's why we must start here.

You see, most of us don't wake up one day, stretch, grab a cup of coffee, and say to ourselves, "You know, I feel like being unethical today." It's a little more complicated than that. In fact, it begins with another word we'll now introduce. The word is "justification," which *Webster's* defines this way: "a reason, fact, circumstance, or explanation that justifies or defends."

As a professional speaker and author who studies and writes about human behavior, I can tell you that people do not set out to be unethical. However, when you have a lucrative, possibly career-changing sales contest victory

within an inch of your grasp, the line between influence and manipulation stands out in boldface. When you have a companion whose change of behavior would result more in our personal gain than in his or hers, that line appears again. Mix in the word “justification,” and you have a recipe for unethical behavior.

The line is easy for you to distinguish, you say? Well, we all have our ethical thresholds. For instance, if you were in a library and found a beautiful Montblanc pen that had been left behind at the table, would you take it to the Lost and Found? Maybe. Now let’s sprinkle in a little bit of “justification.” What if you had been given a beautiful Montblanc pen as a token of thanks for your participation in a meaningful event, and you had left it behind a month ago, and it had not been returned to you? As you sit in the library and roll this new pen between your fingers, will you still run to the Lost and Found to return it? After all, someone took your beautiful Montblanc pen; shouldn’t you be able to keep this pen, to replace it? It seems only fair. That’s what I mean by justification.

One of my unique clients was a group of more than 650 polygraph examiners. I learned from these fine folks that regardless of the crime, the confessions always contained an almost bizarre sense of justification. “I know I embezzled the money, but I had two tuitions to pay, the owner has more money than he knows what to do with, and he left the safe open!” I know it’s easy for you and me to see this for what it is, which is stealing, but the person who was confessing *justified* this lack of ethics and saw it as a way to survive.

It is clearly the norm, not the exception, to justify any questionable act we may engage in, and this dilemma is by no means new. Case after case throughout history highlight this issue. John Wilkes Booth, who assassinated our beloved President Abraham Lincoln, did not in any way perceive his actions to be unjust. History tells us that Booth felt justified in his horrific act, believing that his actions would not only turn the tide of the Civil War, but would eventually make him a celebrated hero to all humankind.

We all need to be on guard when our inner voice of ethical guidance is countered by another voice that tries to rationalize a set of behaviors that, deep down, we know is not right. So our second hurdle will be to provide a line between when the skills of influence are appropriate, and when we cross that line into manipulation. This is why there will be reminders emphasizing just where lines between influence and manipulation exist, with the intention of protecting and guiding against inadvertently straying over the line.

## **IT MUST BE MEASURABLE**

As you read this book, you'll find out soon enough that I enjoy telling stories, and at times I hope you find this book entertaining. Other times I think you might find what I write can be inspiring, and still other times you might even find it motivational. But if that's all, I've wasted your time. There's simply too much at stake here.

You see the problem at hand: I want you to demand more from me. Entertaining, inspiring, and motivating you are easy. Teaching you exactly *how to change minds* using the skills of influence *without* manipulation is the tough part. But that's exactly what you'll find within this book, and you'll find these tactics defined in an exact process.

*When you have a process, you have a way of measuring what you are doing. When you can measure it, you can fix it.*

### **Finding the Right Measurement**

Selling for the New York Life Insurance Company was my first job out of school, and I think back fondly on those early days. I was young and motivated to succeed. The measurements that were laid out for me were simple ones. "Two sales a week, ten sales a month, and don't let us catch you hanging around the office waiting for the phone to ring!" I guess you could say that's one form of measurement.

Interestingly enough, by that form of measurement, I was a darned good insurance salesman. Some months my numbers were really good, and management would tell me, "Whatever you're doing, just keep doing it." Some months my numbers were not very good, and management's remarks weren't quite as generous. I had a nagging feeling there was something I was missing, but I also almost always hit those numbers by the measurement that was established for me, and I was therefore defined as a good salesman.

I had a good career with New York Life, and I will always be grateful to that company for giving me a chance to sell. However, it was frustrating to chase those numbers without really understanding what I was doing right or wrong, from a process standpoint, and eventually I left the company and joined Xerox.

New York Life taught me to *love* to sell, and then Xerox taught me *how* to sell. At Xerox, it seemed like you didn't tie your shoes without some kind of measurement, but therein lay the genius of Xerox.

Xerox was obsessed with the mechanics behind what we were doing at all times. Initially, they had no interest in how many sales I was making, but rather in the process I was following to make those sales. As a matter of fact, during the initial sales training with Xerox, which was considered some of the finest in the world, we never mentioned a copier. For training purposes, we sold answering machines and airplanes. The theory was, to perfect the process, the product itself was irrelevant.

With a repeatable, predictable, and, above all, measurable process in place, I no longer had the nagging feeling that I was missing something. When I sold well, I could tell you why, and when I didn't, I could tell you why. I have never forgotten the lessons Xerox taught me, and today I base a lot of what I teach on the principles they instilled in me.



The ultimate test of what you will be learning will not be whether you can understand what is being taught. The ultimate test will be whether you can implement what you

have learned, and— with a repeatable, predictable, process that you can measure—that’s exactly what you will be equipped to do.

## IT MUST BE SOMETHING YOU BELIEVE IN

When you stop and think about it, having the ability to change another person’s mind is pretty heady stuff. That’s why the moment we end this preface, we will start a conversation designed to help you understand exactly why it takes courage to use these skills. I suppose it would be easy to step away from the controversy of influence, and let people simply change their minds and behaviors without our help. But doing so leaves people vulnerable to one of the most pervasive fears anyone can face: the fear of change.

Years ago, *The Book of Lists*\* produced a rather famous collection of fears that surprised many of us when the top five turned out to be:

1. Speaking before a group
2. Heights
3. Insects and bugs
4. Financial problems
5. Deep water

Newer lists have come out since, with few changes, other than the fear of flying, making their way into the top

\*David Wallechinsky et al.: *The Book of Lists* (New York: Wm. Morrow & Co., Inc.).

five. However, I maintain there is another fear that doesn't appear on any list and yet is a stumbling block for us all. What's more, it is a far more personally destructive fear. I'm referring to the *fear of change*.

Think back on your life and how often you have been faced with a challenging decision. You no doubt weighed your options, and both logic and instinct presented you with a solution. Then, you did what so many of us are guilty of doing: nothing. The fear of change not only overpowered your reasoning, it left you with a frustrating reminder when you finally did get around to making a decision. Your souvenir was the phrase that came out like a mantra: "I wish I had done it sooner."

*The fear of the unknown often outweighs the pain of the present.*

The solution comes from your ability to stay away from solving others' problems for them, and focusing instead on leading them to solve their own problems. People rarely look down the road at the impact of their problems; if they did, we would not have to engage in these challenging conversations. We would not have to seek someone out, set up a meeting, or plan a phone call, because those you would be aiming to influence would be calling you. There is a solution. If you want to defuse fear of change, it all hinges on your ability to embrace the skills of influence.

You don't need to apologize or excuse yourself for leading someone on a path of change. As you will read in the pages that follow, under the proper circumstances, guiding people past their fear of change can be one of

the most meaningful acts of kindness you could ever offer another individual. Still, some people just don't get it.

Some years ago, minutes before a keynote speech I was to deliver, I had an interesting, perhaps even inspirational, moment. As a creature of habit, before a presentation I typically like to pace around quietly and keep to myself. While outside getting into my speaker zone (if you will), I ran into an interesting individual.

I was alone in the hallway except for a woman who was also pacing around a bit, and she didn't look very happy. I was curious, so I struck up a conversation. I asked her how she was doing, and that's all it took to get her going.

"How am I doing, you ask? I'm miserable. In about five minutes I've got to go into that room, sit for an hour, and listen to some jerk talk to me about selling! Can you believe it?"

Before I could even speak, she just kept going. "I wouldn't be here if my manager wasn't making me attend this fiasco. I've never liked salespeople, and now I've got to sit and listen to someone who actually teaches salespeople. What a colossal waste of time!" At that point an announcement interrupted her diatribe.

No, I did not single this woman out and confront her in front of 500 people in that hotel ballroom. Please, I'm a professional. However, I always speak with a wireless microphone so I can move around the room, and for some reason I not only wandered to exactly where this woman was sitting, but I delivered about 55 minutes of my 60-minute keynote address about a foot and a half from her ear.



Late that night, on a red-eye back to the East Coast, I found myself going back to that moment in the hallway. It bothered me to know that not only did this woman not really understand how vital to society those who know *how to change minds* are, but that she was by no means alone in her misconception.

The tray table came down, the laptop opened up, and the words began to fly as I began to craft my rebuttal. To this day I'm not exactly sure what I created. It's not exactly a story, and not exactly a poem. That's why I've always called it my "sto-em," and you can find it on page 165, where it can serve as a succinct summary of all the guideposts this book is about to describe, for influencing without manipulation.

You've done your job. You took a leap of faith, and you bought this book. Now it's time for me to do my job. Keep going, and you won't just be learning a new set of skills. You will be learning exactly how to assist others who struggle through change. It's time to learn *how to change minds*.

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# 1

## Changing Minds— Changing Lives

*At its core, when you are applying influence and changing another person's mind, you are taking an idea, planting that idea in his brain, and making him feel as if he thought of it.*

Does the quote above disturb you? I'd be surprised if it didn't. Let's not waste any time and get right to the heart of the matter. Does that quote define influence or manipulation? Indiana poet James Whitcomb Riley coined the phrase, "When I see a bird that walks like a duck and swims like a duck and quacks like a duck, I call that bird a duck." I will show you a repeatable, predictable approach to changing another person's mind. It's not always pretty, it's not always safe, and I'm well aware that the use of the word "influence" bothers people. The use of the word "manipulation" sickens people. Worst of all, the line between these two words can be razor thin. In fact, at times the difference may very well come down to intent, and nothing more. But before you shoot the messenger, please consider the following story.

## UNAVOIDABLE CONSEQUENCES

It's Tuesday morning, and Dan is running a little late for his annual physical. He's been seeing his doctor on a yearly basis for over a decade. As he puts the key in the ignition, he smiles and thinks, "I know how this is going to go."

Sitting in the examining room waiting for his doctor gives Dan a little time to reflect on the year since his last visit. He promised to take off some weight. Instead he has put on a few pounds. He promised to exercise more. He has been exercising less. Business is tough, and who has time to exercise? Besides, he's exhausted by the time he gets home from work.

When Dan's doctor finally does appear, the appointment, and the lecture that go with it, don't disappoint. "Dan, you need to make certain lifestyle changes!" Dan nods and promises he will, but deep down both men know that no changes will take place. They are both wrong.

Two months later it starts with a shortness of breath, and some pressure in Dan's chest, which goes away as fast as it started. Then the shortness of breath and pressure recur, escalating rapidly to discomfort in one of his arms, and nausea. His wife rushes him to the hospital where Dan's life is saved.

Of course, the double bypass he must endure is more brutal than he ever could have imagined. The missed work, the rehab, and the financial issues with an operation like this are also part of Dan's story. Today, my friend Dan is doing well. Not surprisingly, he's finally taken the weight off, and he has developed a steady and disciplined exercise routine.

This kind of frank and harsh scenario plays itself out over and over again, every day of the week, every week of the year, and every year of a lifetime. Sometimes it's a different vice, or no vice at all. It can be as simple as a poor study habit, or as complicated as an emotional scar stemming from a dysfunctional childhood. The players change, and certain elements of the plotline change, but the results are the same. And there's often a sense that there's nothing we can do about it. But I believe we *can* do something about it, and I want to show you exactly how.

In the early nineties when I was still with Xerox, my job was to work with outside clients who wanted to learn how to persuade the “Xerox way.” I saw all kinds of clients you would not necessarily connect to selling, who had no difficulty connecting to the message of changing minds. However, a favorite client was one of the nation's largest churches. The story was the same, but substitute someone who has lost herself morally with someone who lost himself to alcohol. I was hearing the same story with a different client:

“We want to help people find their way. Unfortunately, those who really need us don't want our help.” (You probably know the rest of the story.) “It seems that those who do want our help and are seeking us out always seem to be coming as a result of a recent tragedy in their lives.”

What a coincidence. Or is it? The church in question became one of my best clients. Why? Because in less than five minutes I was able to convince the ministry that to save people, they had to stop preaching, and instead learn how to influence behavior and give the plotlines they were describing a good, old-fashioned *push*. When I formally

taught them how to persuade, they succeeded, and are now one of the largest churches in the country.

Now notice, I didn't say "pitch," I said "push." So many people get squeamish when they hear the word "push." It sounds like you are shoving people toward a solution they cannot seem to find on their own. Guilty as charged; that's exactly what I'm proposing. Boiled down, we are often faced with only two choices: Either *pitch* a solution to someone, or *push* someone toward it. The focus of this book is a defense of the latter, because when it comes to changing minds, I'm no fan of the pitch.

## IT'S NOT A "PITCH," IT'S A "PUSH"

I received an email from a good friend who asked me what I thought of the word "pitch." She was relating it to a salesperson she worked with who had an uncanny way of using the word to describe his daily sales activities, reveling in it every time. Never shy, I presented my opinion in three words: "I hate it." I can hear my mother now: "Hate is such a strong word." So, out of respect for my mother, let me put it this way: "I'm offended by it."

Let's do a little test. What is the first thing that comes to your mind when you hear the word "pitch"? Something tells me your first thought is not "ask questions" or "listen." Maybe I'm too emotional here, so let's consult *Webster's*, which defines "pitch" as a high-pressure sales talk.

Imagine setting up a meeting with a client, or phoning a friend to say, "For the record, I intend to have a high-pressure sales talk with you." Sounds like a surefire

approach to getting the click of a hang-up in your ear. I suppose you could just surprise your friend with your pitch, but I think you get the point here. If this is something we have no intention of doing, and it's offensive to anyone you speak with, why is this word still even in use?

I suppose the word “pitch” has its place on QVC or on a good infomercial. The late Billy Mays was one of the best pitchmen who ever lived. I never got the sense that sitting with Billy would provide much back-and-forth banter, nor did I see him as a champion consultant, but, man, that guy could pitch! In fact, he was the perfect pitchman. He could outtalk, outshout, and outlast anyone who stepped up to his booth. I would not recommend stepping in front of another human being you want to persuade and shouting, “HI, ROB JOLLES HERE, AND DO I HAVE A SOLUTION FOR YOU!”

The irony here is that true influence in its purest form could not be further from the concept of a pitch. In fact, it's the complete opposite. Instead of talking, it involves listening. Instead of hammering on a one-idea-fits-all concept, it involves shaping the solution to fit another person's specific needs. Instead of obsessing on a solution, it involves studying another person's potential problems.

Want to know why salespeople get a bad name? It's because clients are afraid they are going to have to talk on the phone, or sit face-to-face with some knucklehead who wants to *pitch* something to them.

Long before my time, door-to-door salespeople (think Fuller Brush, vacuum cleaners, the Bible) roamed the earth, managed to get a foot in the door, and occasionally wowed someone with a well-rehearsed pitch. But the

yellow leisure suits that accompanied that age of selling have gone out of style, and we've moved on. So let me finish this small tirade with a pitch of my own.

Step right up, make a commitment, and join the millions who have said, no to the word "pitch"! Eliminate that word from your vocabulary and you'll not only spare yourself the embarrassment of informing others that you have little to no interest in their needs, you'll demonstrate a true understanding of what your real role is in the first place. (Do it today, and I'll even throw in a spiral slicer . . . but you must act now!)

As a parent, spouse, manager, or friend, our part of the plotline is always the same. We *want* to influence behavior, and we *want* to help, but we just don't know how. It's a fascinating paradox because we know what the solution is! It's so clear to us! We often rehearse what we need to say. Once we say it, we are hurt, if not shocked, that our well-rehearsed words seem to have no effect on the person we are trying to help. The reason for this is that most of us don't know how to give those we are trying to help the *push* they so desperately need. We don't know how to change minds.

Is it because we don't believe we have the right to do so, ethically? There is a moral line between influence and manipulation, but before we discuss it, let me repeat, you must believe that "influence" is not a bad word. It all begins with believing.

*There can be no substitutes, no do-overs, no thinking about it. You must believe in your solution.*



Why do I tell you this? Because, before we can start our journey to influence, we must create a foundation from which to begin. That foundation is based on belief. Ask yourself this simple question: “Do I believe, without a shadow of a doubt, in what I am prepared to influence another person to do?”

Sound corny? I hope not, because it’s one of the most important questions you can ever ask yourself. I’m about to take you on a journey that will unlock doors that have been previously closed to you. My commitment to you is not only to teach you to influence others, but to give you tools that will be repeatable and predictable. But there’s a catch. You must *believe* in what you are influencing others to do.

### **A Crisis in Believing**

I’ll warn you in advance, this is personal. When it comes to examining the art of influencing, we have a crisis, and it’s a crisis in believing. So many struggle with the thought of influencing another person’s actions. We should never, ever avoid the word “influence” again; we should respect it, embrace it, and believe in it.

The thought of using a set of skills to persuade others to do something based on your thoughts and not on theirs seems to make people nervous. I think we need to step up, get past our fears, and believe, because there are scenarios that exist that desperately require the skills of influence.

Left to our own devices, we are a species who instinctively fear change. We are a species who instinctively avoid the thought of long-term ramifications of a

particular problem. We are a species who would rather dabble in the dysfunctional known, than risk venturing into the unknown.

We need to believe. We need to believe that the act of influence is not a skill that should be ridiculed or questioned. It should be inspected, respected, and, dare I say it, admired. But it starts with believing.

Believing there is a desperate need for people who can save us from our inability to question ourselves. Yes, there are scenarios begging for these skills.

There is a murky line between the art of influence and the act of manipulation. When you see the scenarios that demand influence, and the line that exists between that and manipulation, you will no longer fear the act of influence. You will believe.

## ONE MORE SALES STORY

I knew a young man years ago who attended the University of Maryland. He was one heck of a salesman, and he wanted nothing more than to follow in the footsteps of his father, also a great salesman. As a kid, he had sold more light bulbs for his Cub Scouts' fund raiser than anyone else.

When he was old enough, he joined the Boy Scouts. His troop sold first-aid kits for the glove boxes of automobiles. His troop sold fertilizer. His troop even sold doughnuts door to door. No matter what the item was, this kid sold more than anyone else, and there were over 130 scouts in that kid's troop!

In high school he sold toothbrushes, and in college he sold shoes. He always took home the number one prize in sales.

He loved selling so much that when he graduated from the University of Maryland, he went on to work for the top insurance company in the country. Two weeks after turning 22 years old, he started selling insurance. He studied his sales scripts until he knew them cold, and most important of all, he believed in the product (after all, at some point life everyone needs life insurance).

He wanted to sell to older individuals because they were clients with defined needs. Unfortunately, though, his age held him back. He did not have a lot in common with older clients, so, at the suggestion of his managers, he worked diligently at selling to his peer group—other 22-year-olds. He struggled with the concept of selling life insurance to his peer group because there just wasn't a need for his product.

- Would the product protect his clients' families? Sure, but almost all of his friends were single.
- Would the product protect his clients' homes? Sure, but almost all of his friends were too young to own a home.
- Would the rates go up? Sure, but not for another fifteen years.

His manager came up with a great idea. With a clever rider (optional add-on) to the policy, his clients could keep purchasing insurance over a set period of time without

evidence of insurability. In other words, he learned how to insure his clients' insurability.

Did he truly believe this solution was in the best interest of his clients? For some that had a history of family illness, yes; however, for most of his prospective clients, no. Did he sell it? Yes, and a lot of it. Did it bother him to sell it? Not at first.

But then it did bother him. He did not believe in his product, and this ate away at him. His sales numbers were strong, but after a couple of years it ate away at him so much that it cost him his career. I should know, because I was that kid.

I thought I was influencing behaviors, but in reality, I was engaged in *manipulating* behaviors. What's the difference between *influence* and *manipulation*? We'll look at this question from many angles, but for now, let's start here.

*Those who manipulate engage in persuasion regardless of their personal feelings about a solution.*

*Those who influence engage in persuasion only if their personal feelings support their solution.*

In short, I believe manipulation is unethical influence. If you wouldn't buy an insurance policy, don't influence someone else to. If you think the person you are speaking to has needs that an insurance policy addresses, influence her to take action.

If you wouldn't join a gym, don't influence someone else to. On the other hand, if you think the person you are

speaking to has issues that would be properly addressed by joining a gym, influence him to take action.

If you don't believe in what you are influencing others to do, it might not catch up with you today, or tomorrow, but one day you'll look in the mirror as I did, and you will struggle with what you see.

I desperately need you to believe. I need you to believe that your children, your spouse, your boss, your co-workers, your clients, your banker, your accountant, your lawyer, your patient, your peers, and your friends will be better off by being influenced by your words. If you believe that, and I mean *really* believe that, down to your very core, I'll be happy to show you exactly how. If not, you will be building a wall with no foundation, and eventually it will crumble.

### **Dave's Parents**

There are so many beautiful chapters in our lives. We are born, our parents nurture us, and we grow. If we are truly blessed, we get to experience life with our parents as they grow old. But with that blessing comes the challenge that old age brings to life. How many of us have heard scenarios like this?

My parents are now in their mid-80s. Dad has early signs of Alzheimer's, and Mom is becoming too frail to take care of him properly. I've tried to get them to sell their house and move into a more senior living environment, but despite their challenges they'll have none of it. As a matter of fact, they seem to think that I am not being a loyal son by even asking them to talk about it.

Before we get anywhere near a process, let's get a few final things straight. People may not ask others to change their minds, but they often *need* to have their minds changed. In Dave's story, a situation with a sadly predictable ending unfolds. The license will be revoked *after* the accident occurs. The house that his parents are clinging to, which represents their freedom, will be sold *after* an avoidable accident, and the sanctuary they created turns cruelly against them.

We seem to discount rather than respect those who possess the skills necessary to move others to change. As a person who has devoted more than half his life teaching others how to do this, you'll pardon me if I'm a bit offended by those who discount these skills. Someone who possesses these skills may become your most valuable asset someday; he may even save your life.

How do you define a good doctor? As a professional who has a good knowledge of the medical specialty she represents? On the surface I would tend to agree with you, but let's dig a little deeper than the mere medical certification.

What about this doctor's bedside manner? That's important because as patients we need to feel comfortable with someone with whom we are sharing personal, intimate information. Even more than that, I want a doctor who knows how to change minds!

I thought my personal doctor, John Valenti, summed it all up beautifully one day when I saw him for my annual physical. I was asking him about staying healthy, and he said, quite succinctly, "Listen, if you exercise, eat right, and try to reduce the amount of stress in your life, you are

doing all the right things. After that, it's just a question of avoiding bad luck."

Truer words have rarely been spoken. Now you know the secret to a good life. All you need to do is act on the information Dr. Valenti has now given both of us.

We all would like to live a healthy lifestyle. Chances are, we'll feel better and live longer if we do. Sounds like a pretty good plan to me. So why do so many of us struggle with the things we know we need to do to enjoy this healthy lifestyle?

**Exercise?** We'll get around to it, but many of us have a lot on our plate, and we don't have the time to devote to regular exercise. Besides, a hard workout is not the most enjoyable moment of the day. Yes, it feels great when we finish, but so does our head after we stop banging it against a wall!

**Diet?** Most of us know what is good for us to eat and what isn't good for us to eat. Foods that are actually good for us typically don't taste as good as the ones that are not as good for us. Besides, it's more expensive to eat healthy foods.

**Reduce stress?** Maybe that's the grayest of the three criteria here, but by the time we are adults we know what stresses us and what reduces our stress. It's difficult finding a new job, and it's scary starting a new relationship.

The funny thing is that eventually we make some of these changes on our own. Consider these examples.

**Exercise?** When we get embarrassed at the company picnic because we can't make it once around the field, or keep up with our kids in a pickup game, or lose a game of tennis to an inferior athlete, we just might get angry enough to start working out.

**Diet?** When we can no longer fit into a favorite pair of pants, or our blood pressure rises to an unsafe level, we'll begin to watch what we eat.

**Reduce stress?** If we are lucky, and we make it through a medical scare, we'll consider making tough changes in our lifestyle.

But what about the doctor, the one with the good bedside manner? Wouldn't it be nice if she could truly convince us to change our lifestyle? The ones who can convince us to make changes know how to influence our behavior. The ones that cannot convince us to make changes know *what* to tell us we need to do—they have the medical training and the information—but not *how*; they have no influence on our behavior, and get in and out of an examination room in a hurry.

A doctor is only one example of the kind of person I'm talking about. It could also be the lawyer who gets us to see that we would be better off paying to build a better contract as we go into a deal than shirking on this step and end up instead fighting the lawsuit that results from the deal.

It could be the parent who gets his kids to see that putting the Nintendo down and reading a book would have stronger long-term benefits in life than waiting for the U.S.



Army to call looking for someone who can work a joystick under pressure.

It could be the accountant who gets us to see that it would be better to have a professional guiding your business through the whitewater of corporate tax requirements than a tax professional guiding your business through the long and costly ramifications of an audit.

It could be a business, a parent, a manager, a teacher, a friend, a coach, or anyone who needs to change another person's mind. There is no profession or person that cannot benefit from the process about to be revealed.

This process is irrelevant without a foundation. That foundation is the understanding that it's human nature to fear change, and that no change can take place in the absence of believing, *truly* believing, in the necessity of influence.

*When you believe in a thing, believe in it all the way, implicitly and unquestionable.*

—Walt Disney

So, do *you* believe? Do you believe that there are scenarios in life that require the skills of influence? Equally important, do you believe the solution you are drawing someone toward is truly in the best interest of the person whose mind you are changing? Assuming the answer is yes, we now have a foundation for *influence*, while avoiding *manipulation*. So now we can dive right into the steps necessary to create this change of mind. Right? No, first we must understand the process those you want to influence must go through to get to these steps. And that is where we begin.

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