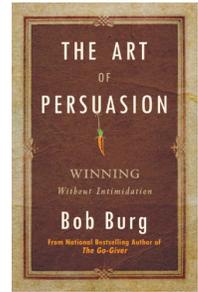


# The Art of Persuasion

Bob Burg (2011)



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Notes by Bob Evely  
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This effort is at times disjointed and could be better organized, but it is an easy read with *many* excellent tidbits that can help us become more effective in persuading others. I've always been intrigued by *persuasion* – the process people use to make decisions – and how they become persuaded. In an age when there are many choices for just about everything in life, how can we more effectively persuade an individual that what we have to offer is the best choice for them to make? How can we persuade them to accept our perspective? Following are the tidbits Burg drops along the way throughout the book; all great things for us to consider as we seek to improve our ability to persuade others.

## **Why do people do things?**

People do things for *their* reasons, not for ours.

## **Be thoughtful**

Show thoughtfulness. Hold a door for someone. Pay a well-deserved compliment. Send a prompt note of congratulations. Give proper credit for an idea.

## **Give respect**

Treat everyone with respect. Some people are *never* given respect.

Treat your suppliers with all the respect most people reserve only for their paying customers.

Strive to treat every person the same way and with the same respect as you would, say, a millionaire CEO of a Fortune 500 company.

## **Say “thank you”**

Say thank you with sincerity and humility. Say thank you in advance, in anticipation of what you've asked the other person to do for you.

Become persuasive long-term through writing personalized, handwritten Thank-You notes. It is suggested these notes be sent immediately after the event that prompts them.

## **Make others feel good**

Always seek to genuinely make the other person feel good about themselves. We like to be around people that makes us feel good. Tell the mechanic working on your car, “John, you're an artist, the way you work on these things.” People love being called artists at jobs not usually associated with art.

Employ “feel-good questions” that are not intrusive or invasive, and simply make the person feel good about being asked. How they got their start in business ... what they enjoy most about it. Then you can ask the “one-key question” – “Joe, how can I know if someone I'm talking to would be a good prospect for you?”

## **Build people up**

Edify others. When you edify a person, you literally build them up in the minds of other people, and in their own mind as well. They'll soon begin to believe what others are saying and start adopting the traits and behaviors for which they are being edified. “Jim sure is precise in the way he fills out his reports.” “Mary, I love how you always handle people with such perfect

tact.” “Dave, you may be direct, but you are always fair.” Even if a person is clearly flawed, find something about them that’s a positive.

### **Build people up in front of others**

Let people live up to your high opinion of them. Tell others in the presence of this person, “I don’t know if this informative can be found or not, but I’ll tell you this – if anyone can find it, she can.”

Edify someone to a third party. Even the most miserable people have something good about them that we can discover and share with others.

### **Make others feel important**

Everyone walks around with an invisible sign around their neck that says, “Make Me Feel Important.”

### **Dealing with rude people**

When a person is rude, *listen* silently to hear them out completely without interrupting. Then let them know you understand. Your calm, understanding response will come as a shock; something the other person is not used to getting from the average person.

### **Ask for advice**

“If you were a salesperson who needed to see Deborah to show her your product, and you just couldn’t get past the receptionist, what would you do? I can’t figure it out.”

### **Give others credit**

Let the other person feel that an idea was *their* idea. “As you were saying earlier ...”

After securing desired results, make the other person feel the ideas were *theirs*, and that they contributed to your success.

### **Conflict and disagreements**

In the case of a disagreement, phrase it in a way the other person can live with and even appreciate. Take the onus off of them and put it on your own “lack of understanding.”

When conflict must be addressed, find something within your challenge upon which you both agree. Be proactive in finding that point of agreement with the other person and express it. “I agree that I said some unkind things.” Identifying a point of agreement will lessen their defense mechanism. Seek to understand the other person’s feelings. And finally, state your views calmly. Start with “I think” or “the way I see it is ...”

### **Correcting others**

If you need to correct someone who is wrong, do so without offending them and their ego.

Begin your criticism with praise. Be genuine and sincere. If a person first hears something nice and positive about themselves, they will be less defensive and feel better about the words of correction that follow. Then after saying what needs to be said, finish with another kind word or positive thought.

### **Catch others doing something right**

Catch others in the act of doing something right. Verbally acknowledge it, and if appropriate make sure everyone else in the office or home or whatever knows about the recognition you’ve given.

### **Smile!**

There is power in a smile. It's the easiest technique to learn as you master the art of persuasion. When you smile you give yourself a distinct advantage over everyone who is not smiling. But be sure your smile is sincere. It never hurts to smile and greet people cheerfully.

### **Find similarities**

People generally respond well to people who are like them. Having similarities with another person increases your chances of persuading them to go along with your ideas. Are you both married? Kids about the same age? Week-end athletes? Sports fans? Similar hobbies, pleasures, recreation? How do you find out? By asking questions.

### **Eight magic words**

There are eight magic words that will prompt another person to pull out all stops to help you. “If you can't do it, I'll definitely understand.” After pausing a few seconds add, “If you can, I'd certainly appreciate it.” If appropriate you could add, “But I don't want you to get yourself in hot water over it.”

### **Share a third-party story**

Tell a third-party story where you are in the role of the other person, with you being corrected by a knowledgeable third-party. “When I first started with this company, I had a real challenge. My boss, who I had a lot of respect for and who I know really appreciated my work, told me; ‘You know, Bob, your value to the company will really increase if you can master this new material.’”

### **Bring up their side of the issue first.**

As an attorney, Abraham Lincoln would often argue his case by highlighting the strong points of the other side's case. He knew these points would be raised by the opposition anyway, but by bringing them up first he had an opportunity to show his sense of fair play, and he softened the natural defense mechanism.

### **Make requests instead of issuing orders**

You'll make the other person feel respected.

### **Encourage**

Always be encouraging, whether it's a request from a vendor or a friend with a new idea. Most people look at the negative. “That will never work.” Even in cases where you feel that nothing can be done, be supportive. Give whatever positive response you can.

### **Greeting people**

Few things come across as less sincere than when someone says, “How ya doin'?” as they continue to walk right past you without waiting for an answer. In *your* greeting, always be sincere. Find a greeting that embodies something that you truly mean. “Good morning!”

### **Apologize when asking for something**

“I'm sorry to bother you, could you please ...” This approach can get someone on your side quickly. You're making the person feel needed and acknowledging that you know they're important enough to have time constraints considered.

### **Opening a phone call**

When making a phone sales call, begin with something like, “Ms. X, this is Bob Burg. Do you have a quick minute, or did I call at a really awful time?” If they answer, yes, I’m in the middle of a conference – then you can safely assume that you wouldn’t have had their full attention anyway, and you would have probably caused them to resent you.

### **Confess ignorance**

Put your fate in the other person’s hands in a way that makes them feel important and good about themselves. You’re paving the way for them to want to take good care of you.

Ask for advice as you confess ignorance. “You know a lot more about this than I do. How would you approach ...?”

### **Admit mistakes**

Apologize, and acknowledge that you were wrong. Apologies are magical. They take the pressure off the situation, and they stop conflict immediately. Apologize when you are wrong and especially when you aren’t.

Admit that you *might* be wrong. “I might be wrong about this – it certainly wouldn’t be the first time. I’m wondering, though ...”

### **Focus on the solution**

Focus on the solution, not the problem.

### **HOW you say things**

The smallest change in phraseology can make a big difference in how your ideas come across to another person.

*How* you ask is often more important than *what* you ask. To phrase a question nicely, with kindness and respect, and saying it with the right intonation, makes a big difference in getting what you want and need from people. I simply call it “the art of persuasion.”

### **Ask if there are questions, not problems**

It’s much more effective to ask if the other person has any questions, not if they have any problems. They may not be willing to acknowledge they have problems, but questions are less threatening. When they say they don’t have any *questions*, you’re in an excellent position to proceed.

### **Give them a good reputation to live up to**

When asking for resolution to a problem you’ve had, begin with: “I know good companies like yours stand behind their merchandise.” You’re giving them something of high value – their excellent reputation – to live up to.

### **Negotiation**

“Mr. Kennedy, if we can’t agree on this particular price, I can’t *justify* making the purchase right now without investigating further.” You’re not saying you can’t move forward, but that you can’t *justify* moving forward without further contemplation, review of options, etc. This could prompt the other party to make a concession to get the deal done.

If you’re negotiating from a position of weakness, let the other person know how much you believe in them. “I know absolutely nothing about this particular situation. But I happen to be an excellent judge of character. If I’m right about you – and I think I am – you’re a successful

businessperson who is honest, ethical, and fair. I’d like to just leave it up to you. I know you’ll give me the lowest possible price, which will be fair to both of us.”

Let the other person save face by winning a couple of unimportant points that really don’t matter much to you.

### **Give compliments**

Compliment the uncomplimented. Go out of your way to compliment those people who serve others but are not usually acknowledged.

### **Host behavior**

Play the host, not the guest. When you’re in a situation where you can introduce people to each other, do so. A person might attend an event and be too bashful to approach others. Go out of your way to do this for them. Tell each person what the other does for a living, and highlight a couple of their interests.

### **Reintroduce yourself**

Reintroduce yourself to people you’ve previously met. We all forget names sometimes, and it’s one of the most uncomfortable feelings. The other person will appreciate your kindness in taking the pressure off them trying to remember. You’ve allowed them to save face.

### **Be a good listener**

Be genuinely curious. When the other person has stopped talking, instead of taking over the conversation ask, “Really; tell me more.”

### **Ask for help**

“If there’s any way you could help me out – this just got dropped on my lap and your help would be greatly appreciated.”

### **Be a giver**

Nurture an inclination to give freely, simply for the sake of adding value to others. Even without asking, the result will be countless referrals and opportunities.

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