



How to Persuade Without Really Trying

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Recently, the owner of a consulting practice contacted me. In the email, she said that she needed an easier, more predictable way to find ideal prospects. She had already tried a lot of different things but nothing worked. So we set up a meeting so I could learn more about her situation and whether I could help. As we spoke during the meeting, it became clear to me that, yes, I could help this business owner. I felt quite certain of this.

But when it was my turn to tell her what I recommended things bogged down. It was very painful because I was doing my best to communicate "Yes, I can help you," and the person looking for help kept asking, "But what exactly are you going to do?" When I was in the middle of this I thought "Please, just tell me how you need me to say what you need to hear so you'll understand that I can give you what you want." I felt like there was some magic word or phrase that if I could just figure out what it was it would be like pressing the "Easy Button," and we'd come to an agreement and be done with it.

What the REAL Problem Was

Luckily I had a wise friend with whom I could talk over this situation. After listening for a few minutes, he said, "You know when you start getting that frantic feeling that you're not in control and you're grasping at what to do? That's because you've lost connection with your heart's guidance." This annoyed me because I was actually enjoying my grievance airing and I was hoping to complain more about how hard some prospects are to convince." But complaining wasn't going to help me help this potential client.

I asked my friend to tell me a little more about what he meant. What he told me was this: When our focus is on looking to others to get what we're needing although it may seem like we're focusing on the other person, it's actually about us getting our own needs met.

Now there's nothing wrong with having needs. I'm human, you're human, we all need encouragement, reassurance, and feedback. The problem occurs when we look to the people who are coming to us for help to meet those needs. We've all been in a situation in which we felt that the person selling was in it for themselves, it was about their

need to make a sale. Whether or not they provided what we, their prospect was needing was almost incidental.

What DOES Work?

So, someone contacts you and they have a problem they're hoping you can help them with. They're frustrated, perhaps feeling a little vulnerable about their situation. And here you are wanting to help but feeling inept because you're not helping them. What do you do with those feelings of insecurity and uncertainty? My friend suggested that I bring those feelings into my heart and listen for an answer. While I was on the phone with a prospective client? Yep, when you're in the middle of a conversation and you're stuck for an answer.

I realized that one reason I had become stuck was I had some questions that I had dismissed as not being important but in fact, these were important questions. I needed the answers to make a recommendation.

I called the client and asked my questions and listened to her answers and when she asked me again, how I could help, I got quiet and listened to what my heart was telling me and when I told her I did from a place of quiet certainty that this was what her practice needed. It was an entirely different call. I felt "complete" when the call ended. That we both knew what the next step was going to be.

Keys to Persuading without Trying

First a small confession: these conversations are not about persuading. When someone calls you about your services, they want you to help them. If you know you can help them, then your job is to listen with empathy. When the other person feels completely heard and understood, they feel safe enough to say "yes" to the next step.

Key #1 Know when you're flailing

The first step to doing anything is to be aware that you're having a problem. It's not fun but you can't take the next step to solving a problem unless you can acknowledge "whoa this isn't working."

Key #2 Pause

It may be enough to say, "Give me a moment here." If you need to you can say, "Hey, something just came up, can I call you back in five minutes." I want to acknowledge that disengaging is probably the hardest part because most of us have learned to "bull through" situations like this. But it's worth learning to pause because it's what

you need to do so you can actually help the person who has come to you.

Key #3 Listen to what your heart is telling you

When I say "heart" I mean heart. My own heart actually does speak to me. And I personally believe that a Divine intelligence speaks through my heart. Some people say they "listen to their gut" or "their intuition." An instructor of mine used to say his "big toe" was the source of his inner wisdom. It doesn't matter what you call what you listen to. What does matter is that you listen to the voice that is clear, calm, and kind.

Key #4 Follow your heart's guidance

This can be hard...especially when what you hear feels irrelevant to the problem-solving track you've been following. In the situation I've been describing, the guidance I got was, "Ask her what prompted her to call you in the first place." This didn't feel like a constructive question to me. I felt our discussion was past that point. But my friend said, "If you believe your heart is giving you wise guidance why would you reject that guidance?" So when I called the prospective client back that was the question I asked and her answer was tremendously helpful. I ended up making an entirely different recommendation than I originally intended.

Bottom Line

It's easy to get hooked into looking to the person we're trying to influence for the "key" to what we need to say and do. The problem is instead of giving them a sense of ease and relief about their problem (why they came to us to begin with), we add to their burden making them feel (subtly) responsible for meeting our needs. The solution is to look into your own heart for guidance around the next step for moving forward in the business relationship. When you look to your heart, you take the focus off your own needs and return your attention to being in service to your customers. Which is why we become business owners in the first place.

Judy Murdoch helps small business owners create low-cost, effective marketing campaigns using word-of-mouth referrals, guerrilla marketing activities and selected strategic alliances. Download a free copy of the workbook, [Where Does it Hurt? Marketing Solutions to the problems that Drive Your Customers Crazy!](#) You can contact Judy at 303-475-2015 or judy@judymurdoch.com