



The Five A's of Influence

Use these strategies to win others to your side and hone your leadership skills.

By Randy Siegel

is. “Sarah, you’re a good worker” lacks the impact of “Sarah, your report on the ABC project was excellent.”

Years ago, a Carnegie Institute of Technology study of 10,000 people concluded that while 15% of success is due to training, intelligence, and skill, 85% of success is based on the ability to influence people. Despite what some may tell you, there’s no secret to influencing others. The key is to tap into people’s need to feed their egos.

All of us—regardless of how accomplished we are—want approval and to feel important. We’re all “ego hungry.” It’s only when our egos are somewhat satiated that we can take our attention off ourselves and give it to someone else.

Les Giblin in his little book *How to Have Confidence and Power in Dealing with People* notes, “People act—or fail to act—largely to enhance their own egos.” When you’re trying to persuade people to act in a certain way and logic fails, give them a “reason” that will nourish their egos.

Here are five strategies to bolster the ego and ultimately influence people:

1. Attention

Do you remember the story about Queen Victoria, Benjamin Disraeli,

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and William Gladstone? Someone once asked the queen whether she preferred the company of Disraeli or Gladstone. She answered that when she broke bread with Gladstone she felt *he* was the most interesting man in England, but when she dined with Disraeli she felt *she* was England’s most interesting person. Disraeli understood what every person of influence knows: Influence begins with attention.

There are hundreds of ways of showing attention. Two simple but powerful ones are to be a good listener and not to keep people waiting.

2. Acceptance

When you listen without judging, you offer the gift of acceptance—a safe place where people can risk being themselves, knowing you’ll be supportive. When you listen, people will want to spend time with you, and your influence will grow.

3. Appreciation

Study after study shows that workers respond more positively to recognition than to almost any other incentive, including money and titles. In giving praise, Giblin recommends that you be:

Sincere. You must mean it. All of us have highly sensitive “BS meters” that will sound as soon as someone tries to manipulate us.

Specific. Praise a specific thing someone does, not who the person

4. Assumptions

People with the power to influence know the importance of getting in the right frame of mind. A positive attitude is based on three critical assumptions:

“**I believe in myself.**” The world forms its opinion of us largely from the opinion we have of ourselves.

“**I believe in you.**” We must believe the other person likes us. Why? When we feel others like us, we act differently. We’re warmer, more open, and much more likely to win them over.

“**I believe in what I’m selling.**” Les Giblin reminds us, “You never sell anything to anyone until you yourself are sold on it.”

5. Acquiescence

To win people to your side, you must be willing to acquiesce to some degree. When an argument becomes an ego battle, nobody wins. We all know from experience that the biggest mistake we can make is to attack another person’s ego. But when we’re willing to place our ego aside and not feel we have to win one hundred percent, our ability to influence increases. ■

Whether training, coaching, speaking, or writing, Randy Siegel helps people become the full expression of all they are. Power up and subscribe to his complimentary monthly e-newsletter “Stand in Your Power!” at <http://www.powerhousecommunications.com>.

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