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How to Have the Access, Impact, and Influence You Deserve

Stop being boring, dull, unimportant, and irrelevant

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Introduction

What sets an advisor apart so that they're listened to more than you are, they have better access than you do, and they clearly have more impact than you do?

The answer is powerful communication, word power, idea power, powerful language choices, and avoiding negativity, especially through language choice.

Can it really be this simple? The answer is powerful communication techniques, word power, idea power, powerful language choices, and avoiding negativity especially through language choice. Absolutely yes. But, you have to work at it and develop and practice your impact, influence, and access techniques.

Power Word and Phrasing techniques have the magical ability to get or keep you out of trouble and to move you and others in positive, constructive directions. These words counteract and detoxify the sticky, corrosive, destructive power of negative words and concepts.

The need for Power Words is essential, especially when we find ourselves in difficult, challenging and often murky, negative situations. The tendency upon hearing negative, emotional or accusatory language is to repeat and then respond. Power Words enable you to avoid repeating negative words and inflammable phrases, and to move in very constructive directions from the beginning. Some examples:

Technique 1 – Contrast Analysis

Negative, Emotional, Accusatory Language	Power Word Responses
1. So you admit you bungled the chance to do this properly...	1. What we did was essential and important to resolving the issues these individuals faced.
2. Many thought your behavior was simply weird and uncalled for.	2. We first identified the crucial issues we felt needed discussion and proceeded to empathetically and powerfully work to resolve the questions.
3. How do you respond to this aggravating and unfortunate situation?	3. Three actions: detect the issues; deter future negative actions; and provide essential and critical advice to move beyond the existing problem and situation.
4. Even some Wall Street analysts say your company should be ashamed	4. The significant facts are these: first, we always acted with empathy and

<p>of what it did. How humiliating is this for your company?</p>	<p>responsibility; second, our culture has a strong sense of what is right and what to avoid. Our actions, as well as our words, demonstrate our commitment to these concepts. Finally, the most crucial information is that provided by victims and survivors. They uniformly praise our simple, sincere, sensible and responsible approach to their problems.</p>
<p>5. You stand accused of being callous, careless, arrogant, and insensitive. How many of these allegations are true?</p>	<p>5. Three things about our behavior and intentions are true: Everything we've been doing has been preauthorized by those most directly affected; our actions and intentions have been clear, we have been candid, and we have been truthful in every instance; lastly, as events unfold, responsible and knowledgeable commentary will prevail, but there will always be a handful of critics who remain to be convinced. We are being as direct and forceful with these individuals and organizations as we can be, telling our story and listening carefully for the views and comments they're expressing.</p>

Technique 2 – Power Words

Power Words are the words of tomorrow and have the energy and the punch to get attention and help surge beyond the negative and the emotional. Power Words provide a sense of constructive positivity that can move your conversation, issues and ideas to much more constructive, helpful and successful territory. Power Words add the simple, sensible, positive, constructive and forceful ingredients to power up your language and intentions. Words like:

1. Aggressive
2. Attack
3. Authorize
4. Avoid
5. Candid
6. Clear
7. Crucial
8. Critical
9. Defend
10. Detect
11. Deter
12. Different
13. Direct
14. Emphasize
15. Empathize
16. Energize
17. Essential
18. Exciting
19. Fascinating
20. Forceful
21. Important
22. Intentional
23. Legitimize
24. Necessary
25. Needed
26. New
27. Powerful
28. Prevent
29. Prioritize
30. Protect
31. Purposeful
32. Responsible
33. Seasoned
34. Sensible
35. Significant
36. Simple
37. Sincere
38. Steady
39. Strip
40. Strong
41. Surge
42. Surprised
43. Tender
44. Tough
45. Truthful
46. Unique
47. Unusual
48. Urgent
49. Valuable

Technique 3 – Power Phrases

Power Phrases consist mainly of numbered bundles of adjectives. The use of this technique in speaking and writing is extremely powerful. In both of these instances, speaking and writing, if you use the technique you will literally force people to write things down or take better notes than they might have otherwise.

Rule 1 for Power Packages:

Keep the number of ingredients or components low, generally four or fewer. Three seems to be an optimal number. We're talking about:

- Three Angles
- Three Attempts
- Three Decisions

- Three Elements
- Three Increments
- Three Ingredients
- Three Opinions
- Three Options
- Three Parts
- Three Perspectives
- Three Phases
- Three Stages
- Three Steps
- Three Units

Some other examples could include the use of a single, powerful circumstance, such as, “The single, most important ingredient in this formula is...” or, “The most urgent issue we currently face is...”

The smaller the number, the more powerful the statement.

Some examples of two component phrases include,

- “Your choice is between action and inaction.”
- “Let’s just start with the two worst circumstances you face and see what we can generate from there.”
- “A couple of things are on my mind.”

These power phrases make you more important, more influential, more memorable, and share those enhanced attributes and skills with those around you. Most of all, this technique forces people to write down what you’re talking about, which is one of the most important actions you can create in someone you’re trying to help, guide, direct, coach or counsel.

Technique 4 – Avoiding Color Words

These words always create bad news. Avoid them. Power your way past them with Power Words and Power Phrases.

Crucial negative attributes of color words that make them toxic to your communications:

1. Always emotional. Just seeing these words on the list can grab your guts and make them feel bad. This is why reporters, opponents and angry people use

them.

2. In many cultures we are taught that failing to answer directly the question asked damages our credibility. Forget that rule and always counter color words with power words.
3. Review the previous section on contrast analysis to see how power words can be used to diffuse color words.

Afraid	Delinquent	Harmful	Sad
Agitated	Demean	Hateful	Sarcastic
Aggravate	Deny	Hopeless	Scared
Alarmed	Despair	Hostile	Scum
Alleged	Desperation	Humiliated	Self-pity
Anger	Despicable	Hurt	Selfish
Angry	Destroy	Icky	Sellout
Anguish	Destructive	Idiot	Sham
Antagonize	Deteriorate	Ignorant	Shame
Anxious	Disappointed	Immature	Shameful
Apathetic	Disarray	Incompetent	Shatter
Appalled	Discontented	Inept	Sick
Apprehensive	Discouraged	Inappropriate	Silly
Argue	Discriminate	Irritated	Sissy
Arrogant	Disdain	Lies	Skunk
Ashamed	Disgusted	Litigate	Slander
Assassinate	Dismiss	Lousy	Slash
Attack	Disrespect	Mad	Sloppy
Awful	Distorted	Mangled	Stinky
Bad	Distraught	Mangy	Struggle
Betrayed	Disturbed	Manipulate	Stupid
Blame	Dopey	Mean	Surrender
Blasted	Doubtful	Meek	Tampering
Bombs	Dumb	Messy	Tarnish
Bored	Duplicity	Minimize	Tense
Botched	Ecotage	Miserable	Terrible
Brainwashed	Embarrassed	Monopoly	Terrified
Bungled	Embattled	Nag	Terror-stricken
Buried	Endanger	Negligent	Terrorized
Capitulate	Enraged	Out-of-touch	Threatened
Catastrophic	Evil	Overwhelmed	Toxic
Collusion	Eviscerate	Overzealous	Tragic
Conceal	Excessive	Outrageous	Traitor
Confused	Exaggerate	Painful	Tumultuous
Conspire	Exposed	Panicky	Ugly
Contempt	Face-saving	Petrified	Unbelievable

Corrosive	Fat	Pitiful	Uncomfortable
Cover-up	Fearful	Poisonous	Underhanded
Cringe	Fight	Profiteering	Undermine
Critical	Foolish	Questionable	Uneasy
Crooked	Frightened	Racist	Unhappy
Curious	Frustrating	Regret	Unimportant
Damaging	Furious	Repudiate	Unlucky
Danger	Goofy	Resentful	Unnecessary
Deadly	Gratuitous	Resigned	Unreal
Deceitful	Greedy	Rip-off	Unsure
Defeated	Guilty	Rotten	Weird
Defective	Harassed	Sabotage	Worried
Defensive			

Technique 5 – Love Working on This Stuff!

Getting good at contrast analysis and using power words makes you a better more persuasive and memorable spokesperson, speaker or representative. These are really cool problems to resolve. If you’ve got a particularly sticky circumstance or troublesome set of colorful accusations, send them to me and we can quickly detoxify them together.

A note about the concept of packaging and numbering adjectives. This is the most powerful verbal tool you can use. It works on happy people, sad people, angry people, agitated people, confused people and people you need to convince. Some simple examples:

Bland Generalities	Meaningfully Specific Translation
1. “We’re a great company.”	1. “We are a powerful company, leading three important business sectors, digitalization, transmission efficiency and end user acceptance.”
2. “Everybody loves our company.”	2. “We use three techniques every month to test our customer acceptance: direct contact with key users; short, direct questionnaires; and seeking testimonials.”
3. “We’ve successfully dealt with this problem in the past.”	3. “We made three crucial improvements in this process four years ago: first, we significantly reduced defects, second, we began more careful education of our customers, and third, we introduced a monitoring program to catch defects earlier.”

Technique 6 – Your Most Crucial Goal: Be Intentionally Memorable

What's the point of having a good set of slides and sensible word choices, yet you fail to pass the memorability and relevance test? Here are the elements of memorability. These need to be practiced as well. Although, I think you'll notice almost immediately positive reactions to these techniques. They're simple and you can do them while standing on your feet. I recommend a constant regimen of rehearsal for any kind of presentation, even informal ones. Here are the elements of memorability, alphabetized:

1. **Alphabetize:** lists of names, ideas, concepts should have an immediate sense of organization to the observer or participant. So often we seem to list ideas at random, which seems to raise all kinds of questions in the audience rather than paying attention to what you're talking about. Simple technique: alphabetize everything. Especially names. The way names are displayed has lots of different messages. Most of these messages are distractions and will go away if you simply put them in alphabetical order, even the president of the company or organization.
2. **Chronology:** complicated ideas are more easily explained if the events or ideas are presented in some kind of chronological order or sequence of events. These are self-evidently helpful to the audience and you don't necessarily have to explain using them. Dramatic examples tell brief but powerful stories, have punchlines or lessons. If you're just wandering through an example and there's no purpose for it, it's going to be boring.
3. **Packaging and Bundling:** this is the idea of using small numbers which I explained earlier in this document. This is one of the most powerful attention-getting strategies you can use: using small numbers that are relevant to each other.
4. **Repetition:** when communicating important ideas you need to forget your 8th grade English teacher's rule of not repeating anything or saying or only indicating something once. Studies show that the most powerful teaching factor in learning materials is repetition. Generally, try saying things three times.
5. **Tell Them What's Important:** rather than let them try to figure it out themselves. Say something like, "this is a very important concept," or "this is the most important concept," or "this is the most powerful concept."
6. **Use Power Words:** as I described earlier in this paper; positive language and power words are what help you get attention, even for the most boring material.
7. **Verbal Cueing:** is something you're about to say more important than the last thing you said? Give them a warning by saying, "what I am about to tell you is much more important than all the things we've been talking about," or something similar. The more

clues and cues you can an audience in writing and in speaking, but especially in presenting, make you a more important speaker, more important to be understood, and this sense of urgency that the cuing technique builds gives you that feeling of relevance which is so often missing from what's being talked about, reported on, or discussed.

Technique 7 – Giving Powerful Advice: The Three Minute Drill

One crucial reality of being a trusted advisor is that the best and most useful advice is often needed in a brief period of time (on-the-spot) under the pressure of events. The Three Minute Drill is a compact, direct process for giving those you help focused, accurate, and complete information – framed in a strategic way – from which they can choose (through the options process, step 4) a course of action.

The discipline is to use this highly focused, structured, time-sensitive approach to get your recommendations promptly put forward. This allows the balance of discussion time, meeting time, or face time with those you advise to be productive and directed toward helping them make better decisions promptly. The six elements of the process are described below.

Step 1: Situation description (60 words): Briefly describe the nature of the issue, problem, or situation. This is the factual basis for “what we know now,” “why we need to take your time, now, to discuss this,” or “This is a new and important topic we need to talk about, now.”

Step 2. Analysis (60 words): Briefly describe what the situation means, its implications, and perhaps, how it threatens or presents opportunities. Include one or two key assumptions that validate the analysis. Managers always need to know why, but not in great detail. They're also interested in the intelligence you've gathered or know about that supports your analysis, assumptions, and recommendations.

Step 3: The goal (60 words): The clear, concise statement of the task to be accomplished. Goals keep everyone focused forward. The goal should be stated as the behavioral, emotional, or intellectual change in your target constituencies. Useful goals are understandable, brief, achievable, positive, and time/deadline sensitive.

Step 4. Options (150 words): Always present at least three options for action. You can suggest more, but three is optimal for management to choose from. The goals you suggest are to “do something” (100% response), “do something more” (125% response), or “do nothing” (0% response). Having multiple options keeps you at the table and avoids the “death by question” syndrome that often strikes should you have only one recommendation. Lose that single recommendation through a crucial unanticipated question, and you'll be out of the discussion for the duration. Keep the three option approach and you give the manager or leader what they want, making the decision themselves and owning the solution.

Step 5. Recommendation (60 words): Be ready to say what you would do if you were in your boss' shoes, and why. You'll always get one or both of two questions at this stage: 1. “Which option would you choose if you were me?” or 2. “What's the first thing we have to do?” The recommendation is usually selected on the basis of which option will cause the least number

of negative unintended consequences. Many advisors stumble at this point, having failed to prepare for these two very logical questions.

This is where you earn your paycheck and keep your place at the table. The boss always wants to know what you would do if you were in his/her shoes. Be ready to walk through a similar sort of analysis for each of the options proposed.

Step 6. Justification (60 words): Identify the negative unintended – but fully predictable – consequences of each option, including the option to do nothing. These are the reactions or circumstances that could arise resulting from the options you suggest (including to do nothing). Every management decision or action has consequences that can be forecast. Each also has unintended consequences that can also be forecast. Inadequate provision for consequences is what can sabotage an otherwise useful strategy.

Striving to provide advice in this 450-word format (three minutes, 150 words per minute) is powerful, conserves management time, and coupled with the discipline of suggesting three action options every time, will get you invited back to the table earlier, again and again.

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