

But wait, there's more

Skill #20: Supercharge your message with persuasion

More persuasive than a plate full of cookies

Sandra Dale loves sugar in all shapes and forms. She loves soft drinks, she loves ice cream and she loves the cookies by the registration desk at the Hampton Inn. One bite of sugar propels her into a binge that leaves her nursing a sugar-swollen belly and a deflated sense of self.

Sandra Dale and her friend Katy have a pact to persuade each other to resist the first seductive bite. They call each other whenever the allure of sugar beckons.

That's why Sandra Dale was on the phone to Katy as she entered Carbondale, IL where she would be staying at a sugar-providing Hampton Inn.

"I'm almost at the Hampton Inn and they're going to have cookies out and I'm going to want to eat them all," Sandra Dale confessed.

"You can eat them all if you want to," Katy wisely conceded. Katy knew better than to resist Sandra Dale's craving. She aligned herself with Sandra Dale's inclination and continued with a question that had a carefully chosen verb.

"How will you feel if the cookies defeat your resolve?"

"I'll feel horrible," Sandra Dale said.

"Will it be worth it?" Katy queried. Sandra Dale admitted it wouldn't. Then Katy went in for the close. She asked Sandra Dale for a commitment.

"What are you going to do?" she asked.

"I'm going to check in and go right to my room without eating any cookies," Sandra Dale replied.

Katy kept Sandra Dale focused on a successful outcome with follow-up instructions. "Great," she confirmed. "Call me when you get there, and we'll celebrate your win." Sandra Dale's vision of being successfully on the other side of temptation was now stronger than her image of indulging her sugar lust. She did exactly as she and Katy agreed.

How hard was that?

If Katy's techniques can get Sandra Dale to walk right past a plate of cookies, they can get meeting planners to hire me to speak, your boss to promote you, and your credit card vendor to waive your late payment fees. That's why I listened to Sandra Dale's story with pen and paper in hand. I develop my Speak Strong techniques by studying the masters. Katy is a persuasion master and a role model for the rest of us. Read on for seven techniques to Speak Strong persuasively.

“ *Any point
worth making is
worth making well.* ”

MERYL RUNION

Dos, Don'ts and Tips, Skill # 20:

Supercharge your message with persuasion

Whether you're persuading someone to change a habit, invest in your services or provide a favor; the techniques below will help you make your point effectively.

1. Ignite your verbs

Don't: use bland verbs that lack content and energy.

Why not? Verbs are your greatest source of action.

Do: illuminate your sentences with verbs that sizzle.

Why? Colorful verbs have persuasive muscle.

PowerPhrase/What to say: Provoke thought with stimulating verbs.

Poison Phrase/What NOT to say: Utilize verbs to make people think.

Example: Terri promotes a keynote she gives that "electrifies" audiences.

2. Employ imperatives

Don't: use imperatives if the conversation is adversarial.

Why not? When you're in an adversarial stance, your listener doesn't want you to tell them what to do. When you're aligned with each other, they're more open to it.

Do: embed and directly express positive imperatives once you have rapport.

Why? When there's trust, people are open to suggestion.

PowerPhrase/What to say: Call me when you get to your room.

Poison Phrase/What NOT to say: Don't eat cookies.

3. Show, don't tell

Don't: describe something when you can illustrate it.

Why not? Illustrations bring your points to life.

Do: use examples, stories, illustrations, props, and word pictures.

Why? It makes your point concrete and communicates with the mammalian and reptilian brain.

PowerPhrase/What to say: Do you walk into the next room and forget why you went there?

Poison Phrase/What NOT to say: Have you been distracted lately?

4. Call to action

Don't: make your case without indicating what you want them to do with the information.

Why not? Knowledge isn't power. Action based on knowledge is.

Do: sum up your points with clear action steps.

Why? So people know how to implement your suggestions.

PowerPhrase/What to say: My newsletter reinforces the information in this book. Register now at www.speakstrong.com.

Poison Phrase/What NOT to say: You'll like my newsletter.

5. Focus on them

Don't: focus on what you need and expect people to care.

Why not? Your listener wants to know how things affect them.

Do: reframe your points in terms of what it means to them.

Why? To clarify self-interest.

PowerPhrase/What to say: How would you feel if you ate the cookies?

Poison Phrase/What NOT to say: Don't eat those cookies because as your Overeating Anonymous sponsor I want you to be one of my successes.

6. Lead with questions

Don't: make statements when questions will serve you better.

Why not? Questions draw your listener out.

Do: translate some of your statements into questions.

Why? Questions get people thinking...and considering your ideas.

PowerPhrase/What to say: What are you going to do?

Poison Phrase/What NOT to say: Here's what you should do.

7. Tease to tantalize

Don't: answer every question immediately.

Why not? I'll tell you later. (Wink)

Do: use intrigue, foreshadowing and curiosity to hook your listener's interest.

Why? I'll tell you that later too.

PowerPhrase/What to say: Survey assessments were never like this before. We were stunned when we started our totals. What we found was...

Poison Phrase/What NOT to say: This survey assessment has more interaction than most.

Any point worth making is worth making well

Are you suspicious of persuasion techniques? Take another look. Any point worth making is worth making well. Take the time to learn the Speak Strong points of persuasion and make your point so your listener gets your point. It's just good communication. So say what you mean persuasively. Then, it's time to be sure you mean what you say.