

# Exploring Leadership

## COMMUNICATION: PERSUASIVENESS

The skill of Persuasion has a bad reputation. Modern media and society often portray persuasive people as villains, when in reality Persuasion is a very useful tool. "Persuasion isn't about manipulation; it's about influence." (Blaschka, *Forbes Magazine*)

### CONVERSATION STARTERS:

- How many of your parents had to persuade you to eat broccoli when you were younger? What were their intentions?
- When has persuasion worked to get you to do something?

Persuasion can be used to promote ideas, bring a team together, and improve self-esteem. When used in a positive way, Persuasion can be a powerful tool in everyday communication.

### KEY OBJECTIVES:

- Identify situations in which to use persuasive techniques.
- Understand persuasion can be used in positive ways.

### WHAT YOU'LL NEED:

- A copy of the powerful words list (See Appendix) for each participant

## EXPLORATION ACTIVITY:

Split into groups of 3-5 people for Elevator Speeches. The goal is to persuade peers that their point of view is valid. Instruct participants to decide on a topic that they personally identify with. Keep topics light; encourage them to pick something silly, like why chocolate is better than vanilla, or why they should be elected CEO of a multimillion-dollar company.

### FACILITATION TIPS:

- If you feel that your group is capable of healthy competition, have each group vote for the most persuasive elevator speech.
- Encourage positive discussion, facilitating healthy debates by avoiding negative/degrading arguments.
- Pass out the list of powerful words for them to study and prepare an "elevator speech" to present to their peers.
- Presentations should be 30 seconds to 1 minute long.
- Allow 2-3 minutes to prepare an effective message.
- Each participant in the group will present their own speech when they are ready.
- After each presentation, allow time for team members to ask the presenter questions, or provide quick counterpoints. Encourage them to keep the discussions amiable.



## REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

Open the discussion by encouraging participants to express their feelings.

- Ask the following questions:
  - What were some of the similarities you saw between speeches? Why do you think these were common?
  - What did you like most about a partner's speech? What persuasive statements were most effective?
  - What was something you would have done differently?
  - What were the most effective techniques? (If no answer, give examples like eye contact, body language and power words).

## APPLICATION DISCUSSION:

Spark a discussion about the good and bad of persuasion. What are ways you already use persuasion on a regular basis? What are appropriate conversations and situations to use persuasion.

- Open discussions about their views on persuasive techniques. Share possible personal experiences. Allow this discussion to continue for a couple of minutes before bringing the group back together.
- Prompt the participants to identify a specific time or event in the future in which they could/will use persuasive techniques. Write down or make mental notes and set these possible opportunities as goals.



## CONCLUSION:

Persuasion can be a valuable tool when having important conversations with peers, leaders, and bosses. When used effectively, your skills to persuade others will give you the power to alter the course of your life and those around you.

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## REFERENCES

<https://www.scholastic.com/teachers/lesson-plans/teaching-content/game-persuasion/>



## APPENDIX:

- unquestionable
- incredible
- tremendous
- gorgeous
- outrageous
- abundant
- dazzling
- gigantic
- splendid
- comfortable
- magnificent
- marvelous
- petite
- generous
- ample
- tantalizing
- fascinating
- exuberant
- eccentric
- memorable
- phenomenal
- vivid
- lively
- quaint
- tempting
- stunning
- dazzling
- first class
- brilliant
- exceptional
- tranquil
- breathtaking
- appealing
- quintessential
- worthwhile
- glorious
- spectacular
- amazing
- superb

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