

Are you still using arguments or already convincing successfully?

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You are working in a logically thinking industry. But you are not a logical human being. Most of us think they are. However, we are not. We are impulsive, sensitive and emotional. How do we know? Try to convince someone with arguments. It won't work. It won't work because we do not believe in arguments, we believe in people.

Arguments cause a reaction

If someone tries to convince you, there are three possible situations.

You might fully agree to the opinion of the person you are speaking to. Then it is not about convincing at all. You are exchanging statements to strengthen each others opinion and the relationship.

You might be open minded, because you do not have an opinion yet. However, sooner or later you will have an opinion and that leads to situation one or three.

You have an opposite opinion. In this case you won't just believe the other person's arguments but will look for a counter-argument.

We react emotionally

Looking for a counter-argument has very emotional reasons. When feeling pressured, we usually react with counter pressure. Let me give you a short example: Ask someone to hold one hand up and then press towards this hand with your hand. He or she will press back. Wouldn't it be easier for him or her to just let the hand go in whichever direction it is being pressed to? And secondly we do not like to change our mind as this might make us look like insecure. So, knowing this, the question might arise, if there actually is a way to convince our audiences? Certainly! But not by arguments only. If

arguments were sufficient, no personal conversations or presentations would be necessary. Everything could be solved by simply sending e-mails with all pre-phrased details. It is however, not that easy. The most important thing is how authentic, competent and trustworthy the person appears to the listener or audience. Yes, you read correctly. Appears is the keyword here. We cannot really know. We cannot know how competent somebody really is. We just have a first impression. That's all. But in our heads we make a connection between the appearance, nonverbal communication and authentic impact of a person and the possible competence of the person. This is called the halo effect: we perceive a certain behavior and link this instantly with character and personal attributes.

Therefore it seems that the logical (!) conclusion must be that your personal impact, your body language or voice, decide about how easy you can convince others. If you want to convince somebody about your design ideas, make sure that your body speaks the equally convincing language. Whether you give a presentation, say something in a meeting or call a colleague—your nonverbal language is much more important than the arguments. Train it and you will always convince.

Persuade with nonverbal signals

There are facial micro expressions that we cannot control. If we are watching someone exactly, we will see how he feels. If he is insecure, shy, angry or morose, this will influence his arguments negatively. Same with gestures. We do a lot of unconscious gestures that betray our feelings and give away what we really think. Let me give you some examples: when you lose eye-contact in the wrong moment—and if it is only for a short second—you won't be trustworthy any longer. At least concerning the sentence you were saying the moment the eye contact broke. If you step back while saying something positive, your counterpart won't think any longer that you really believe what you are pointing out. If you scratch your nose or run your hand through your hair, it might be that you feel like you have to. But it is your subconscious mind only that tells you that it feels itchy exactly in this moment. And there is the bad „trigger finger“, that some people are so fond of using ... They are not aware that this gesture simply shows that they are acting too doggedly in presenting their opinion.

It is not only done with avoiding bad expressions and gestures. It is also about learning how to show passion, engagement and certainty in your talk. The more you show, the more people will like and believe you.

We cannot control everything. But there are facial expressions, gestures and accidental movements that we can learn to avoid. The result will be an appearance that sends out certainty, self-assuredness and passion. By learning how to speak with your body you will grow in the perception of your personality. This is how you will always convince others. Your arguments are just the foundation. It is your personal impact which will always persuade others.



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