



CHANGE THEIR MIND



**6
Steps
to persuade
anyone anytime**

SIMON HORTON

Aim high

1.1 Aim high

Ok, put the book down and go off and find a paperclip. That paperclip is the key to your future riches.

Great. Found one? Your instruction is to now trade that paperclip for a house. Reckon you can do it?

Kyle MacDonald of Vancouver did. It took him 14 trades over the period of one year but he got there. And managed to write a book, *One Red Paperclip*,¹ about it as he went.

He traded:

1. The paperclip for a fish pen
2. The fish pen for a doorknob
3. A doorknob for a stove
4. A stove for a generator
5. A generator for an instant party
6. An instant party for a snowmobile
7. The snowmobile for a trip to Yahk, British Columbia
8. A trip to Yahk for a van

9. The van for a recording contract
10. The recording contract for one-year free accommodation in Phoenix
11. The year in Phoenix for an afternoon with Alice Cooper
12. An afternoon with Alice Cooper for a motorised KISS snow globe
13. The snow globe for a movie role
14. The movie role for a house.

This man aimed high and well done to him for doing so.

1.2 Know what you want, what you really really want

If you want to change someone's mind, it's important to know what you want to change it to.

- If you ask your teenage son to tidy the lounge, don't be surprised if they do *their* version of tidy which might be very different to yours. You have to be specific about what exactly you mean by tidy.
- If you ask for a pay-rise, don't be surprised if they give much less than you had in mind. You have to communicate clearly how much you want.
- If you pay your artistic friend to create a sculpture for your hallway, don't be surprised if their vision of beauty is different to yours and you let out an involuntary yelp when it's unveiled.

So, the first step of the process is to be very clear about the outcome you want. The more you have thought that through, the more accurately you can communicate it and the more likely you will get it.

Why do we want it?

Knowing why we want it is important too. As Mick Jagger once told us, we can't always get we want – hey, that's the world we live in – but if we know why it is we want it, we might be able to find another way to achieve it.

My mother is 90 years old and she lives in a care home. During the coronavirus pandemic, I tried to visit her but the nursing staff wouldn't let me. Why? Because they didn't want to risk me introducing the virus into the home and causing a devastating outbreak. Why did I want to see my mum? Well, *she's my mum!* I wanted to see if she was ok. I wanted to check if she needed anything. I wanted to show her we

hadn't forgotten about her. I wanted to hug her, of course, but I knew that wouldn't be possible.

So the solution? They brought her out to the reception and sat her down by the window and I was able to talk to her from outside. No chance of transmitting the virus through glass and me and Mum could chat.

Asking the question 'Why?' gets around the roadblocks.

Why? Why? Why? Why? Why?

In strategy, they recommend asking the question 'Why?' five times because this gets you in touch with what's really important to you.

Kyle MacDonald wanted the fish pen because he knew it would help him get something else which would help him get something else. . . which would help him get a house.

Let's take another example. You are trying to persuade yourself to go to the gym but you've had a long day at work and the sofa is calling. Why do you want to go to the gym? Clearly to get fitter. So why do you want to get fitter? Well, you say, to get more energy in your life. And why more energy in your life? So you can play with the kids more. Why do you want to play with the kids more? Well, this is what you love doing most of all, the kids *are* your life.

Brilliant, now you've reconnected with your most powerful motivation and now you'll find it so much easier to say sayonara sofa as you run off to the gym.

Why is where it's at

When you think about what you want and then ask why you want that, it puts you in touch with an even more important goal than your first answer and this kind of thinking will bring you greater success. People who get fixated on that

first-level goal are not always successful; people who focus on the reasons behind the goal are.

This is because the question why gives much more flexibility. Often there are very good reasons why your request cannot be met, so focusing on those reasons and the reasons behind your own request will allow a lot more room for a solution.

If you see a lovely jacket in a shop and you find out it costs £200 but you only have £100, you are unlikely to get it and no amount of negotiation or pleading or bursting into tears will change that. If you are stuck on that jacket at that price, you're going to be disappointed.

But why do you want it so much? Well, you need something to keep you warm as winter is coming, and the styling is beautiful, you will look so nice in it and it is a really funky shop. Fine, if that's what you're really after, you can probably find a nice jumper in the same shop that you can wear with your existing jacket – the jumper ticks all the boxes and is within your budget. We got our result.

TOP TIP

Whenever you have a choice between the easy option and the 'right' one (e.g., sofa or gym), remind yourself why the right one is right. Ask that question 'Why?' as many times as you need to make the right choice.

Lining up your goals

Human beings have evolved a lot of goal-seeking neurology – whether it's to produce food and shelter or to get the latest Porsche. Our ancestors who were best able to get what was needed for survival were clearly more likely to survive. So, defining our goals in this manner triggers that wiring, which

helps us achieve them – noticing opportunities, solving problems, identifying routes, energising and so on.

And it can be really powerful to line up your outcomes so that achieving one takes you nearer to getting the next, bigger one.

Kyle MacDonald's Why Five Times answer was he wanted a house. If he had entered an estate agency and tried to buy one with his paperclip, they would have laughed him straight back on to the street. But he was able to be flexible and each trade took him closer to that house.

John D. Rockefeller was the world's richest man at the turn of the twentieth century and one of the richest ever in inflation-adjusted figures. Hardly surprising given his company, Standard Oil, largely monopolised the oil sector.

But he didn't build the monopoly directly, he always knew that if he took the direct approach there would be too much resistance. So he took a different route. He secretly bought all the freight companies that transported the oil and this gave him a stranglehold on the industry. This was a much better strategy.

Now I think about it I'm disappointed MacDonald stopped at the house. He should have aimed to corner the oil market.

TOP TIP

Work backwards from the long-term goal. Let's say the goal is world domination in five years, ask where will you need to be in four years' time in order to achieve it. And therefore where will you need to be in three years' time, and so on, until you get to the present.

What's your favourite birthmark?

Anne Nusselder, Opfrisdame – Freshen-Up Girl! The Opfrisdamen bring improvised theatre to festivals, corporate functions and care homes for the elderly. Anne teaches (visual) storytelling and presentation at the University of Arts, Utrecht.

'I do what I call intimate acting, 1-to-1 acting. No, it's not what you're thinking. I'm paid to interact with people at an event of some kind and freshen up their minds. And I do this mostly by really paying them attention. I ask a lot of questions, we get close, they get moved or they get surprised, but they definitely get Freshened Up.

Now I do like to bring a bit of fun to it and a few years back, I happened to be using the children's game with the folded paper – the one you move with your fingers and thumbs and fold back the paper and there's a question written underneath. I approached a woman who was about 60 years old and who looked a little quiet but she was up for the game and the question she got was: "What's your favourite birthmark?"

Interesting question and I got an interesting response: "One on the right cheek of a man's backside!" Who would have expected that from this demure little lady?

I pressed: Was it a specific backside that she knew or one she was looking for? One she was looking for. Wow, she was looking for something special!

I put her on the spot: Have you ever asked anyone if they had such a birthmark? No, of course not, she was mortified at the thought.

Now this was a crowded event and I looked around and saw a lot of men and one great big opportunity. I stood on a chair and asked very loudly if there were any guys in the vicinity with a birthmark on their right cheek.

Lo and behold, someone stepped forward, indeed a good-looking man about the same age as the woman, as



it happened. I did the only thing I could do – I made the introduction then left them to themselves.

The happy ending? I received an email from the lady a few months later to say she had found the birthmark she was looking for and the two of them were now a couple.'

1.3 You have to ask

What a lovely story. But, of course, the sad implication is that the woman took 60 years before she found her birthmark. All because she was too shy to ask. And what if she had never met a Freshen-Up girl who had the guts to make the request for her?

And how many people live their lives without getting what they want because they don't think or are too frightened to ask? Each one a tragedy.

You have to ask.

That seems so elementary and yet so frequently people forget or are afraid. Of course, asking does not mean you will receive. But you can be quite sure that not asking means you will not receive.

Your life or your parking spot

And it's the big things like love and it's the small things too. Many years ago, another friend of mine, Diana, moved into a beautiful flat in central London. We're talking really central, a lane off a lane that ran between Leicester Square and Trafalgar Square.

Beautiful flat, fantastic location, one problem: there was no parking and she had a gorgeous pink convertible Peugeot 504 that was the love of her life. What to do?

Well, she had a brainwave. There was a hotel on the same street that had underground parking and she thought she could only ask. As it happened, her grandfather had been the agent who brokered selling the plot of land on which the hotel was built. Doesn't have the same pulling power as being the owner's daughter (if you're reading, Ms Hilton) but it was worth a try.

Unfortunately, the try didn't work. She told her story and made her request but the management weren't able to help. Oh well.

Except, about two months later she received an email from the hotel to say that one of the staff parking spots had become vacant and if she was still interested. . .

She was still interested.

4 WAYS TO GET THAT CHEEKY ASK

1. Be friendly first, show interest in them.
2. Ask with a smile.
3. Give them a (vaguely) plausible reason to say 'yes'.
4. Thank them even if they say no.

1.4 Don't discount yourself

Far too often we aim low instead of high. Here's a typical scene:

- {Night before}* Tomorrow I'm going to walk into my boss's office and demand a pay-rise. I've done my market research and I know I deserve at least 10 per cent, probably a lot more but I'll settle for absolutely nothing less.
- {Next morning}* Well, they'll get angry if I ask for 10 per cent, I'll ask for 9 per cent. Well, 8 per cent, just in case.
- {In boss's office}* Hi boss, I've done some market research and I can prove that I deserve a 7 per cent pay-rise. But, er, I'd be happy to accept 6 per cent. *{Boss scowls}* Ok, I'd be happy to accept 5 per cent.
- {Boss replies}* We could give you 2 per cent.
- {You}* 4?
- {Boss}* 2.5.
- {You}* Ok.

You negotiated a quarter of what you were worth, of what you could have got had you taken a different approach.

But it's worse than this because if that's how you negotiated this time, you'll do the same the next. And the next. And the next. If you only ever negotiate a quarter of the annual pay-rise you deserve, at the end of a 40-year career you will be earning only slightly more than one-fifteenth of what you should have been.

And that will apply to everything else in your life too. Sounds pretty depressing, doesn't it! Now are you going to ask for what you deserve?

And don't forget, psychologically speaking, if you discount yourself, you are telling the other person you are worth less. If you need a brain surgeon, you don't go to the cheapest, you go to the best. But you can't do sufficiently rigorous comparisons to evaluate who's best, and price is actually a reasonable indicator, so there is a tendency to choose the one that is, as Stella Artois claim, reassuringly expensive.

In a world where value is difficult to calculate, people take their cue from the figure you give them. We often assess the value of a product or service by its price. So, charge low and they won't think you're any good; charge high and they will.

TOP TIP

Write down your figure and you will discount yourself less. If the meeting is on the phone, have it on a big piece of paper on your desk so you can always see it; if it is face-to-face, write it in your notebook and have the notebook open.

I stopped being afraid they'd say 'no'

Vitas Poshkus, founder of PVA Developments, a design-orientated construction company specialising in bespoke residential projects for private clients.

'When I started my business as a builder, I priced myself really low because I was desperate to get every single job that I could.

I wasted so much time putting energy into dealing with difficult clients - they were always complaining, always asking for discounts, always asking for extra things. It was a nightmare and I could never grow the business like that.

But with time I began to believe in myself that the value I brought the clients was worth what I was charging. I stopped seeing myself as a muddy-boots labourer but rather as a company director; I started wearing a shirt and jacket and I bought a Lexus instead of my old van, and the clients began to have more confidence in me.

I bought a really nice watch for my birthday once and shortly after I went to see a client and he made a nice comment on it. After the job, he told me he knew I was going to do the work for him as soon as he saw the watch. It was an indicator of quality for him.

I stopped stressing about losing the work. Now I love those first meetings. I enjoy bringing my expertise and showing how I can help them. I look around and I find something I can connect to and start a conversation about, maybe they have a cat and I'll tell them about my own cat. Now I have much better relationships with my clients, it's much more human.

And with all of this I stopped giving a muddy-boots price and instead I gave a company director price. Sure, it meant I lost some work, clients who wanted a muddy-boots labourer, and that was the hardest thing for me to do.

But mostly they were happy to pay because they knew they were going to get a Lexus job on their house rather than an old van job. Plus it meant I could give more time to my existing clients and do a better job for them and that was a much better strategy.

In 2012, I employed 10 people and was pricing £20–30,000 for a job. A year later it was 40 and I was pricing at £80–100,000 and clients were happy. By 2018, I had 140 staff on my books and I was working on jobs worth well over a million. I learnt to stop being afraid clients would say “no”.

1.5 Aim high, aim really high

I'm just saying, don't undersell yourself. Kyle MacDonald achieved an extraordinary outcome but maybe those extraordinary outcomes are out there more than we imagine.

Back in the late 2000s, I ran a strategy workshop for one of the large consultancy firms, working at global 'Head of' level. I set them a brainstorming task and gave them an instruction to generate as many ideas as they could, including at least two 'impossible' ones.

Now, these were very pragmatic people and they didn't really like the brainstorming exercise but they joined in the spirit and they came back with a couple of ideas that made them laugh with how ridiculous they were.

The first was: 'We're going to get rid of all our staff and then we won't have to pay any salaries and our margins will go through the roof'. They giggled as they said it. Until I pointed out that Wikipedia, one of the largest brands in the world had about 30 employees at the time. A few years later, when Instagram were bought by Facebook for \$1 billion in 2012, they had just 13 employees. The impossible idea had already been done.

'Ok', they said, 'our second idea is really impossible. We're going to invent a mind-reading machine that will read the minds of our clients and so we can give them what they want before they even ask for it'. Hilarious, they thought. Until I pointed out that Google Ads effectively did exactly this and their impossible idea had turned Google from loss-making to one of the largest and most profitable companies in the world.

Two impossible ideas that had not only already been done but had made their organisation incredibly successful.

We need ambitious thinking. We are an amazing species and we can create many amazing things but there is still a huge amount of poverty in the world, there are still

huge disparities in power, there are huge inequalities in education, the potential catastrophes of global warming and environmental destruction loom large and wars and famines still destroy the lives of millions.

Nelson Mandela didn't compromise his thinking when he changed the minds of the apartheid regime in South Africa. Those behind the Good Friday Agreement didn't hold back when they brought an end to the Troubles in Northern Ireland.

We need ambitious thinking more than ever.

TOP TIP

Always think of at least one impossible idea; it just might lead to a possible one.

1.6 And in the kitchen?

Ok, ok, I understand, many of you are thinking you don't want to become a tech billionaire and you don't want world peace (well, you do but that isn't why you bought this book), you just want your husband to get off the sofa and do the washing up.

I get it. Family database Uinvue found that an average family spends 91 hours a year arguing – that's nearly four full days – and the most common reason is who's doing the household chores.² Personally, I think we should argue for the whole of the first four days of January and then we've got it over and done with for the year.

But the same principle applies, you see. Why limit your thinking to something simple like that when, if you go about it the right way, you may get so much more? You may even be able to get your husband to clean the whole house; maybe even get him to *like* doing it so you never have to ask again.

So, after deciding what you want and then asking why (five times, of course), ask another question: what would be an amazing outcome?

It is just worth considering.

On a recent workshop, a delegate mentioned they had a meeting the next day with their landlord who wanted to increase the rent. The delegate's outcome from the meeting was for the rent to stay the same. But when we asked what would be an amazing outcome, it occurred that they might even be able to *decrease* the rent.

They knew the landlord was very busy and didn't like the hassle of the role – fixing things around the house, organising new tenants and so on – so if they offered to take on some of these jobs, that would surely be worth a rent reduction. After all, agent's charge 15–20 per cent. A good friend of mine

lived for decades in the same luxury apartment with next to no rent rise on exactly this basis.

Extra-ordinary outcomes are out there, even in the kitchen, think extra-ordinarily and you can achieve them. I'm not promising you will always get them. But you just might and you certainly wouldn't if you didn't do the thinking.

Now it's worth remembering that family harmony probably sits somewhere among your Why Five Times answers, so while you might be very keen to change your uncle's crazy political views, is it really worth ruining the Christmas dinner over? Or causing a huge family rift? Probably not. Beyond a certain point, a live and let live approach is often wise if you value a happy family or you want to keep your friends as friends.

I had a choice: succeed or die

Igor Rybakov, serial entrepreneur, venture capitalist, philanthropist, on the list of the world's richest people according to Forbes. He is co-founder of the Technonikol corporation, and founder of the Rybakov Foundation and the Rybakov Prize (called by Forbes the 'Nobel Prize in Education') and the X10 Academy, a school for entrepreneurs.

When I interviewed Mr Rybakov he told me that in 2003, his company Technonikol, the largest roofing company in Russia, the company he had spent years building up, faced an existential challenge. The market was changing and customers were demanding more modern insulating materials, and unless he could offer them this they would simply go elsewhere.

So he approached Rockwool, the global leader in mineral insulation, and made an offer to buy 15% of all the global



capacity of new factories they built from that time onwards, which he felt was a generous offer.

But Rockwell would have none of it and laughed when he suggested he would build his own factories. They said it was impossible, that he may be an expert in roofing but he knew nothing about mineral insulation, they were totally different technologies.

This was like a red flag to a bull for Mr Rybakov so he decided to burn his bridges with Rockwool and he went to the market. But there simply wasn't anything there of the same quality which meant he now faced a stark choice between building high-quality factories himself or watch Technonikol die.

There was one tiny possibility: to find a producer of the previous generation technology and convince them to make latest generation machines, developing the technology as they went, but no one was willing to take such a huge risk.

But eventually he found one person, Mirko, a Slovenian engineer with a background from a German engineering school, but even Mirko thought it impossible. They spent a long time discussing it, how they might create 'the new Russian Rockwool' and finally Rybakov asked, 'If you don't believe in the idea, could you believe in me?' There was a moment, then Mirko said 'Igor, I will support you.'

They signed the first contract on a napkin.

They made the announcement to Mirko's team (who also thought it impossible) and they got down to work. A year later, the production line produced its first mineral insulation, in one-third of the time normally required to build such a plant. They all celebrated that they had managed to achieve so quickly something that all the experts had said was impossible.

Within four years, they built seven more production lines, with Rockwool looking on, not believing what they were

seeing. Rybakov admitted Rockwool had been right, it was a massively complicated technology, but they went from zero competence to market leaders within the space of a year.

As of today, Technonikol is the market leader by a long way in the ex-Soviet territories and they are number two in the world. They matched Rockwool in their own field. And Mirko has become one of the strongest and most successful suppliers of technology in this market.

These days, Mr Rybakov runs the X10 Academy, where he helps entrepreneurs achieve goals many times bigger than they thought possible. 'I teach people', he says, 'to create teams where there is no need to persuade. For me persuading or convincing someone is almost a form of force.'

With Mirko and everyone else who thought it impossible, 'I didn't persuade them; instead, and much better, I inspired them and they trusted me.' He calls it a 'social blockchain of trust' - where people trust each other so much that there is no longer a need to convince or persuade.

'If you can find "your people", everything will succeed. Not just for you but for all of them too.' If you can do this, he believes, 'you becomes us, yourself becomes ourself' and this is when the magic starts.

He says it creates an excitement and it's the excitement you need to build roads, bridges, hospitals, ships, it's the excitement that transforms people and brings about extraordinary results.

With Mirko and with his other projects and with the X10 Academy, Rybakov has a community of people who are sure they will succeed. They are attuned to a great future, they are convinced that something good will happen.

'And', he says, 'it *does* happen.'

1.7 Aim high for both parties

I appreciate that up to this point I've been exhorting you to aim high, but you're probably thinking 'All well and good, Simon, but when I ask for my 10,000,000 per cent pay-rise, my boss is going to tell me to go back to my desk and carry on with my work and be thankful for what I get'. Having the ambitious outcome is one thing, but persuading someone to give me it is another.

And, to be fair, so far I have only given you a few ideas that can help in that persuasion process. Don't worry, by the time you've finished the book you will have dozens more, but here is one that will go a long way: aim high for them too.

This is counter to the old-school negotiation approach which deems it best to haggle them down as far as you can. But nothing is going to lose their sympathy quicker than being greedy and nothing is going to trigger their defensiveness quicker than taking something at their expense.

Let's go back to the pay-rise. Often our justification is to do with our new house/child/lifestyle/addiction, and this just won't cut it. If we're a little smarter, we give a *business* case: how we consistently went beyond our objectives and exceeded our targets. But, usually, the boss knows they have already banked this and so they don't care. But if, instead, you connect your rise with something they do care about, perhaps something that will help them achieve *their* targets or earn *them* a pay-rise, well now they're listening.

If I'm a lawyer and I give an estimate to my client for £10,000, they might say it is beyond their budget and no amount of haggling will change their mind. But if I show how my advice will save them £20,000, they will find that budget.

Igor Rybakov got a 'no' everywhere he looked. But when he was able to show how much success he would create for everybody else, people came on board.

So, don't be like the Neanderthal negotiator who tries to win at the other person's expense. I say the opposite, aim high for them as well as yourself.

Help them get *more than they thought possible themselves*.

1.8 Aim for the moon and hit the sun

In 1992, Alex Ferguson, the manager of Manchester United FC, set his sights on buying Alan Shearer to help the team win the English league for the first time since 1967. Shearer was the best centre-forward in the country and consequently the most expensive and he sold for a record £3.6 million – to Blackburn Rovers.

Ferguson aimed high; he tried to get the best, but it didn't work out. A few months later, though, he received a phone call from Leeds United managing director Bill Fotherby. While they were talking, Ferguson asked if Eric Cantona would be available. Fotherby said he would get back.

An hour later, Cantona was sold to Manchester United for £1.2 million. Cantona brought the skill but, more importantly, the mentality that the team needed and they went on to win the league four out of the next five years.

Ferguson didn't get Shearer but he did get Cantona and it kick-started his incredible run when he won 13 out of the next 21 Premier League titles.

So even if you don't get your aim-high outcome, you might get something else that you would not have got otherwise. And that something may even be better than you had originally wished.

When do-do happens, what do you do-do?

Of course, sometimes things go wrong, sometimes really wrong; it is part of the journey.

In June 2014, Amazon launched to great acclaim a huge new product, the Fire Phone, that was going to be their route into dominating the mobile phone market.

It sold well for two weeks and then figures dropped rapidly. Four months later, Jeff Bezos announced they had lost \$170 million on the project and sales had trickled almost to a halt.

Unmitigated disaster. Except. . .

. . . Bezos had seen an early prototype and was knocked back by its speech-recognition capabilities. Within days he had set up a whole new department to focus on this and, exactly as the Fire Phone died, Alexa was born from its very ashes.

Alexa has been sold on well over 100 million devices.

So things can appear to go wrong, but that is not the end of the game.

TOP TIP

If you have a big setback, just re-calibrate. Where is it you want to get to? Where are you now? Right, what do you need to do? Then get on and do it. Pretty soon you'll be back in the groove and you'll achieve your goal.

Life isn't a one-shot game

Your request might get a 'no', but don't give up.

In 1997, in Santa Cruz, a small company was launched with a big idea of delivering movies to every house in the world. There was a problem: a typical film took months to download with the technology of the day so their first model was to send DVDs in the post. Not really the great solution they were looking for.

But they knew it wouldn't always be this way and they held on to their vision. The company was Netflix and their

founder Reed Hastings said, 'When we first started raising money, we thought we'd be mostly streaming in 5 years. In 2002, we had no streaming'.

Hmm, this plan is not going well, let's tweak it a little. 'So we thought that by 2007, it would be half our business. In 2007, we were still nowhere'. Where's that plan?!

As of 2021, it is streaming to over 200 million households.

Just because you don't reach your goal at first request, doesn't mean you will never get it. These things aren't one shot and one shot only. As Geoff Mulgan said about his time in the Blair government, 'We always over-estimated what we could do in the short-term, but we always under-estimated what we could do in the long-term'.

Failure isn't final. Life isn't a one-shot game.

I like to imagine the first attempts at space flight by billionaires Bezos, Musk and Branson involved jumping.

3 QUESTIONS TO ACHIEVE MASTERY

After each attempt at your goal or each try to change someone's mind, whether you were successful or not, ask yourself these three questions:

1. What worked?
2. What didn't work?
3. What could you do differently next time?

This is the process of continuous improvement; this is the process of mastery. Do it every time and you will achieve great goals and become a master at changing people's minds!

In summary

When we try to change someone's mind, we typically dive straight in with our suggestions without thinking it through. This is a formula for failure.

Instead:

■ Know what it is you want

If you think it through and be very clear about your outcome, it will be easier for you to communicate and the more likely you will achieve it.

■ Know why it is you want it

This will give you much more flexibility in terms of achieving your goal. Sometimes we can't get exactly what we want, but if we know why we want it, we can find the way to achieve that bigger picture objective.

■ You have to ask

Don't ask, don't get; ask, and you just might. Don't waste your life wishing for something when you may have got it had you just asked.

■ Don't undersell yourself

Too often we discount ourselves even before we ask. We have to value ourselves because if we don't, how can we expect the other person to?

■ Aim high, for you *and* the other person

Be ambitious, go on! Successful people don't spend their life wondering if they could have got a better outcome – they give it a try. And be ambitious *for them too*. Help them get more than they thought possible themselves. If you can do this, they will now be helping you achieve your ambitious goal and so you will be more likely to get it.

■ Life is not a one-shot game

What if you don't get your outcome? Don't worry, keep trying until you do. And maybe your efforts will get you something different, maybe something better.

Great, now we know what we want, but we're still not ready to persuade. All it means is we have persuaded ourself. If we want to change someone else's mind, we need to do a bit of research into how we might best go about it.