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# How to Win Friends and Influence People

Dale Carnegie • Pocket Books © 1994 • 276 pages

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Social Skills / Persuasion

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## Take-Aways

- Be genuinely interested in other people.
- Don't criticize, condemn or complain about people.
- Encourage others to talk about themselves.
- If you make a mistake, acknowledge it quickly.
- Before criticizing someone else, talk about your own mistakes first.
- Praise all improvements, no matter how slight.
- If you want to change others, start with yourself first.
- To feel important is one of the strongest human desires. Always make others feel important and never undermine anyone's sense of importance.
- Remember people's names. A person's name is the sweetest and most important sound in any language.
- Express your ideas in a dramatic way. Use illustrations and showmanship to get your ideas across.

## Recommendation

In the book that gave birth to the self-help genre, writer and lecturer Dale Carnegie spells out his plan for getting what you want from other people by changing your behavior. He expounds on the fundamentals of dealing with people and becoming a great leader. Carnegie developed these principles by drawing from examples of persuasive people in history, such as Abraham Lincoln, and from his own experiences. Since Carnegie wrote his book in 1935, many of his examples may seem obsolete or outmoded today, but his basic principles are timeless, eminently useable and presented in an easy-to-read and personal style. *getAbstract* recommends this classic to everyone – up to this date, no one has said it better than Carnegie.

## Summary

### “Fundamental Techniques in Handling People”

To master the art of winning friends and influencing people, first learn and practice the three basic principles of dealing with people. Constantly remind yourself of the importance of these tenets. Review them, and consider how to apply them to your life. Employ them whenever you can, and even ask a friend, your partner or a business associate to remind you when you violate one of these precepts. As you practice, you should review your progress and keep notes showing when you have used each of these methods.

### Principle 1: Be Nice

The first and foremost basic principle of handling people is to be nice. To this end, you shouldn't criticize, condemn, or complain about people. Instead of judging people or disparaging them, you should try to understand them and to figure out why they do what they do. This way, you can be supportive, show sympathy, and be tolerant and kind. People like others who treat them in this way. Individuals respond positively to such an approach.

*“Criticisms are like homing pigeons. They always return home.”*

You may need to exercise self-control to refrain from expressing your negative feelings about someone else, but do so. In fact, if you have the desire to change others, it's more profitable to refocus your concentration on yourself.

### Principle 2: Find Out What They Want

A second fundamental technique is recognizing what others want and giving it to them. People have several aspirations. Some of their most common desires include health and the preservation of life, food, sleep, money and the goods and services money can buy, sexual gratification, the well-being of their children, and a feeling of importance.

*“Remember that a person's name is to that person the sweetest and most important sound in any language.”*

Most of these wants are usually fulfilled, except the desire to feel important, though that is a very strong basic desire. It's the yearning that motivates individuals to wear the most fashionable styles, drive the most modern cars and seek success.

The way to understand a person's basic character is to know what triggers his or her feeling of importance. Once you know that information, you can make that person feel important. At the same time, avoid saying or doing anything that undermines an individual's sense of importance.

*"Make the other person feel important, and do it sincerely."*

For example, when offering feedback to an employee, use incentives rather than criticism to motivate him or her. Remember, nothing kills a person's ambitions more effectively than criticism from a superior. Offer praise where you can, and be hesitant to find fault. However, avoid insincere flattery, as this doesn't work well. Generally, people will see it as shallow and selfish. Instead, provide honest and sincere appreciation.

### **Principle 3: Help Them Get What They Want**

The third fundamental principle is to stimulate an eager want in others. This principle works because all individuals are interested in getting what they want. So if you want to increase your influence over other people, find out what they want to accomplish and help them achieve it. To do this, it helps to understand their point of view and examine a situation from their perspective, as well as your own.

### **"Six Ways to Make People Like You"**

To get people to like you, pay attention to others and show you are concerned about their well-being. Follow these six fundamental rules:

#### **The First Rule**

Become genuinely interested in other people. By doing so, you can gain the attention of others and secure their cooperation again and again. By showing a sincere interest in others, you, as a manager, can deepen your employees' loyalty to your company as well, since people see you as a representative of your organization.

#### **The Second Rule**

Make a good first impression by smiling. This is important, since actions speak louder than words, and a smile helps to show people that you like them. It demonstrates that you are glad to see them and that you want to be friendly. Of course, a smile shouldn't be an insincere grin. People resent such false and mechanical expressions. But a heartfelt smile that comes from within will help attract people to you.

#### **The Third Rule**

Learn people's names. You can develop a simple technique to achieve this. When you meet someone for the first time, find out that person's name as well as some facts about his or her family, business, or interests. Visualize this information as a picture in your mind. Then, when you see that person again, you

will remember it. The power of recall is critical because people value their names highly, as reflected in the way many companies are named after their founders or the way donors give large bequests to organizations that name libraries, museums or other buildings after them.

## The Fourth Rule

Be a good listener, and encourage people to talk about themselves. It is especially flattering to pay exclusive attention to the person who is speaking to you, rather than looking around to see who else might be there. Listening is also a very important skill for someone in customer service. For example, if a client comes to complain, just listening attentively can help diffuse that customer's anger. It may even make the person's grievances disappear.

## The Fifth Rule

Talk in a way that interests others. Speak about their hobbies and passions. Theodore Roosevelt mastered this skill. He was well-versed on a wide variety of topics. When he expected to meet with an important dignitary, he would study up on that person's interests. This habit enabled Roosevelt to wow people with his wealth of knowledge. He knew that "the royal road to a person's heart is to talk about the things he or she treasures most."

## The Sixth Rule

Find a sincere way to make others feel important. For example, ask yourself what characteristics about other people you can honestly admire. The psychologist William James said that, "the deepest principle in human nature is the craving to be appreciated."

*"The only way to get the best of an argument is to avoid it."*

By showing your appreciation for others, you help nurture their feelings of self-importance. However, you need to be sincere when you show your gratitude so compliments don't come across as insincere flattery.

## "How to Win People to Your Way of Thinking"

Follow 12 techniques for convincing other people to believe what you are telling them. Consciously try to apply each method in your conversations:

1. **The only way to win an argument is to avoid it** – Generally, disagreements only make others defensive, and a person who feels he or she has lost a dispute loses face. Once you get drawn into an argument, you can't win, because if you lose it, you lose, and even if you win it, you lose. Thus, avoid engaging in a quarrel.
2. **Show respect for other people's opinions** – You don't want to make others think you disagree with them with careless words, looks, intonations or gestures. When you challenge other people's views, you make them want to strike back, not change their mind.
3. **Admit when you are wrong** – If you make a mistake, acknowledge it quickly. Making such an admission is especially helpful when you know that others are thinking that you are wrong and want

to say as much. It is easier to listen to self-criticism than criticism from others, and generally when you admit a mistake, other people are more likely to be forgiving and supportive. When you don't, they are likely to be more critical and frustrated.

4. **Even if you are angry, begin in a friendly way** – Use honey to make the medicine go down. You can't win over someone who feels negativity toward you. But by soothing that feeling, you can start to bring that person around to your point of view.
5. **Get the other person to say "yes" in the beginning** – Begin by discussing issues on which you both agree. Once you receive a "no" response, you will face a hurdle that you need to overcome, since your fellow discussant wants to remain consistent. Thus, it helps to start off with questions that will evoke a "yes" or a statement that will bring about agreement. Once the person is in the habit of saying yes, you can broach the harder questions.
6. **When dealing with complaints, let your clients do the talking** – Allow them to say everything they want to say. As you listen, you will learn more about their business and their problems, and you will be in a better position to help. Listen patiently with an open mind, be sincere, and encourage your clients to express their concerns and ideas fully.
7. **Seek cooperation** – Let the other party feel responsible for generating an idea. People have more faith in the suggestions that they themselves propose.
8. **See things from the other person's point of view** – Put yourself in the other person's place so you can better understand what he or she wants and needs. This can be especially helpful if you are trying to sell someone a product or a course of action. This will help you understand what motivates the other person.
9. **Sympathize with what the other person thinks or wants** – This way, even if you disagree or would do something differently, you show that you understand and empathize. Say something like: "I don't blame you one iota for feeling as you do. If I were you I would undoubtedly feel just as you do."
10. **Appeal to people's higher aspirations and nobler motives** – People usually have two reasons for doing something: the real reason and one that sounds good. Since people are idealists at heart and like to think they act out of good motives, you will have better luck in changing people by appealing to these positive intentions.
11. **Express your ideas in a dramatic way** – By dramatizing your plans, you make them more powerful and persuasive. Use strong illustrations and showmanship to get your ideas across. This approach works well because merely stating a truth isn't enough; the truth has to be vivid.
12. **Use a challenge to motivate others** – This technique works because successful people love the chance to prove their worth. For example, the industrialist Charles Schwab once drew a large figure 6 on the floor of a mill to note how many items the day-shift employees made. The next day, when the night-shift staffers came in, they drew a 7 on the floor to show they had performed even better. That inspired the day-shift workers to toil even harder and place a 10 on the floor when they left. By expressing what he wanted, Schwab encouraged his staff to work more productively and more diligently. This tactic was more effective than if he had just asked his employees for improved work.

## **"Be a Leader"**

If you are in a leadership position, employ nine important principles to motivate people to change without giving offense or arousing resentment:

1. If you have to discuss a fault or a concern with someone, begin with sincere praise and honest appreciation.
2. If someone makes a mistake, raise awareness of his or her mistakes indirectly.
3. Before condemning another person, reveal your own mistakes first.
4. Instead of giving someone a “direct order,” ask questions, such as “What do you think of this?” to let employees propose their own suggestions.
5. Never put someone in a position where they lose face.
6. Give improving employees praise, no matter how slight their progress.
7. “Give the other person a fine reputation to live up to.”
8. Offer employees encouragement, and make their fault seem easy to rectify.
9. Make other people feel happy about trying out your suggestions.

## About the Author

**Dale Carnegie** was a well-known inspirational teacher and author who wrote a series of popular self-help books that sold millions of copies in the 1930s and 1940s. His books became the basis for a series of seminars and training programs and addressed the topics of self-improvement, salesmanship, corporate training, public speaking and interpersonal skills. *How to Make Friends and Influence People* was first published in 1936. It became an instant hit and remains hugely popular today. Carnegie’s other books include *How to Stop Worrying and Start Living*, *How to Develop Self-Confidence and Influence People by Public Speaking*, *How to Enjoy Your Life and Your Job*, and *The Quick and Easy Way to Effective Speaking*. Dale Carnegie died on November 1, 1955.



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