

THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



15 Learning Persuasion From a Maid and a Calf

When you want someone to do something you can push them, pull them, or lead them. I'm Jerry Roberts with a brief story on influence, coming right now on The Extra Point.

In the book "How to Win Friends and Influence People," author Dale Carnegie told the story of famous philosopher Ralph Waldo Emerson and his son, trying to get a calf into the barn. They pushed and got nowhere. They pulled, still nowhere. The calf wouldn't budge.

Watching this from a window, their housemaid saw the problem and knew what to do. She approached the calf and put her finger in its mouth. The calf suckled her finger and the maid gently led it into the barn.

Emerson and his son were a bit stunned, to say the least.

The maid knew that the calf's core desire was food and she tapped into that. When she did, offering her finger, the calf willingly followed her, figuring that some warm milk was coming next.

Question. Between the celebrated author Emerson and the maid, who was likely the more intelligent of the two? Clearly, Emerson. Now, who had better intuition? Yes, the maid.

She knew what the calf wanted. Emerson only cared about what he wanted, to get the calf into the barn.

So, why do we try to cram our ideas down someone's throat, whether that someone is on the team and answers to us, or in pitching our products and services to prospects without much consideration for their circumstances or motivations to buy?

When I talk with managers about how to reach their team members or salespeople on how to lead their prospects to happily buying what they're selling, we talk about influence.

Whether it's an idea or a tangible product, do you think people would rather be sold, or prefer to buy?

It's not the same thing. Generally, people love to buy and hate to be sold. So, if you're a salesperson who can make buyers feel like they're totally in control, and that you understand how they feel and what they want, success will follow you.

Influence is not about exercising power but there's nothing more powerful.

It's not about pushing or pulling someone in a direction they don't want to go, because you're smarter than they are, or you outrank them in the organization. Emerson had all that and still was helpless.

It's about empathy, knowing what the other person is after and helping them to get it. The maid held the real power. Starting today, show people that what they want and what you want can go together.

That's The Extra Point. Get out there and make something good happen today. For 93.3, I'm Jerry Roberts.

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