



TRANSCRIPT

Episode # 24: 3 Tips For Becoming More Influential And Persuasive This Year

You are listening to episode 24 of Mastering The Power Skills. So guess what? This is the year that you're going to become even more influential and persuasive than you already are. Not bad, right? And you know what would be even better? Having a three tip playbook that makes it easy to grow those skills. Come join me in today's episode and set yourself up for a year of increasing power and impact.

How much more could you accomplish if you were 25% or even 50% more influential and persuasive? Welcome to *Mastering The Power Skills*, the podcast that provides you with the tips, strategies, and the inspiration to grow your own power and win support for your ideas. And now here's your host, C-suite leadership coach Kathy Dockry.

Well, welcome to 2023 everyone. I hope you all had a wonderful holiday break, in whatever way that's meaningful for you. For me, that meant traveling across the country to see friends and family. And somehow, amazingly, dodging all that weather and travel chaos. How the heck did that happen? I don't know, but I'm not going to look a gift horse in the mouth.

And I'm now back home safe and sound on the East Coast and starting off the new year all energized and talking with you. And while my itinerary was pretty active, I also was lucky enough to have the space on all those long cross country flights to do some deep thinking about the year to come and what goals I'm setting for myself.

If you are already a listener to this podcast, you know that I'm on a mission to unleash the untapped potential in our workplaces. There are so many important ideas and voices that don't get heard. Not because they're necessarily being intentionally suppressed, it's more likely that it's just the nature of large complex organizations not to make the free flow of information and ideas easy.

So when people like you and me have good ideas and proposals, ideas that can make things better and make a difference, it can be awfully hard just to get heard.

Now, one way of turning that situation around is to help create leaders who remove those obstacles and make it easier for ideas to bubble up from the ranks.

That's one of the things that I focus on in the one on one coaching that I do with senior leaders. It's truly an awesome opportunity. Well, really, it's a privilege to support such leaders as they tap into the hidden potential of individuals at every level of the organization.

But another way to turn the situation around, is to help empower all the rest of us. Because when we're able to grow our own power through the skills of influence, persuasion and presence, we ourselves can navigate the complexities of our workplaces much more skillfully. We ourselves are much more likely to get our ideas heard and accepted by others, no matter what our level or position in the corporate hierarchy.

And I'm equally committed to that part of the mission as well. I obviously don't have the bandwidth to do one on one coaching on influence, persuasion and presence with everyone in the corporate world, of course. But I can offer tips, techniques, strategies to all of you through this podcast, which is the reason why I launched it last summer. And I have more plans to get this valuable information out there in 2023 and beyond.

So all that downtime I had on the cross country flights was a really great time to start mapping out in detail what that's going to look like in 2023. So do stay tuned, because as the year unfolds I'm going to tell you more about what new resources, new programs, and new support we'll be offering you. Honestly, I'm really excited and energized by this.

We're going to launch a few resources and programs that I think have never been offered before in the corporate world. And if they happen to be a good fit for who you are and where you want to go, they'll make an amazing difference. Not only in your current work life, but also in your lifelong career. You'll start to have greater and greater impact and the ability to make a difference in the world. You'll be tapping into energy that you didn't even know that you had, and things are going to start feeling easier and easier.

So you can see why I'm so excited about the year ahead, because if your talent and capabilities get unleashed, what a great way to make a positive difference in the world of work and beyond. Well, enough about what we have in store for all of you in 2023, we'll get to that in later episodes. Now let's turn our attention to you at this particular moment in time.

Wouldn't you like to be more influential and persuasive in the workplace at the end of the year? Wouldn't you like to be more powerful? I assume the answer to that question is a big yes, right? So if that's the case, how do you get there? A simple answer to that question is to tell you to keep listening to this podcast, of course.

And definitely, I want you to do that. You will get a ton of tips, tactics and strategies that you can apply in your day to day life to get the results you want to see. And we really work hard here to keep the focus on tips that are, number one, highly effective. And number two, easy to execute.

Now, no disrespect intended, but I'm sure we've all seen a lot of workplace advice from well known experts that sound great in theory, but somehow never really work for us. Sometimes the advice is too theoretical or impractical to work with all the personalities and politics of our specific workplaces. Other times, the advice is just too complicated to apply with all the demands and time constraints of our normal work life.

So in this podcast we do take seriously our commitment to tips that are really going to make a difference to you, and that anyone can easily do, even if they're already juggling many commitments. But listening to this podcast alone won't

make you more powerful by the end of 2023. You're also going to have to select a few tactics and actually apply them. You have to have what we call a regular practice. One where you're steadily practicing the new skill until it becomes second nature to you.

Now, if you're thinking as you hear me talk about this, "No, no, no, I don't have enough time and bandwidth to do that," let me stop right here and tell you that you're wrong. I mean, you're having a very human thought, of course. And I too have that thought sometimes. But when it comes to learning the skills that we're exploring in this podcast, that thought is wrong. Practicing these skills never has to be time consuming.

There really is no need to make life more complicated and demanding for yourself. There's been a lot of research in recent years on what it takes to build a new habit, and the weight of that research is very much in favor of the conclusion that small efficient steps are way more effective than large scale effort. But while you don't have to invest a significant amount of time in 2023 to become more powerful and more influential, there are a few things that are vital to building new habits and learning new skills.

One of those things is that you have to be intentional. In other words, you need to consciously select a skill to work on and plan how you're going to work on it. And the other thing you need to be is consistent in your practice. In other words, the amount of time you spend per week or month doesn't have to be very much at all, but the frequency should be regular.

For example, you actually might spend only 30 minutes a week working on a new habit or skill, or perhaps a practice of five to 10 minutes a day suits you better. But whatever the actual increment of time, you should be striving to have a consistent daily or weekly practice. Consistency is what gets you results. Consistency is what ensures that at the end of the year you'll actually be more influential and be more powerful, not still just wishing that you were.

So, I've just described the mindset you need to be more influential and persuasive by the end of 2023. You need to be intentional and you need to be consistent. Now let's talk about what actions you could take beyond just listening to this podcast regularly.

Now, there are a gazillion actions you could take to get better. Look at it this way, you might make a New Year's resolution to get more fit and healthy, for example. The actions that you take to do this are endless. You could do things with your

diet, you could join a gym, you could start hiking regularly, you could start training for a marathon. You might even just do 10 sit ups every other day.

The point is that you choose actions that are a good fit for who you are, your current circumstances, and your ultimate goal. The same is true for getting better at influence and persuasion. You might develop a plan to practice each and everything you hear in this podcast, and good for you if you do. But the more likely scenario is that you might want to dip your toes in the water first and start off with a few very simple things.

And if that's the case, then I have three different options for you. You can either select one of these actions, or you can be inspired by these examples to come up with an action of your own. So action one works like this, at the beginning of the week you look at your calendar and you identify one interaction or event where you'd like to apply a skill that you learned about on the podcast.

So maybe sometime in the week you're going to meet with someone higher up in your company. That's a great opportunity to grow your influence, right? You could look up a podcast episode that has an influencing tip in it and then use that tip during your meeting. Bingo, you're practicing an influencing skill without a lot of time and energy on your part.

Or maybe the following week you look at your calendar and you see that later on in the week you're giving some sort of presentation. It might be a quick informal one or it might be a more important one where the stakes are a little higher. And then you think to yourself, "Aha, this might be a good time to practice a persuasion tip. Or perhaps a good time to add a new technique that's going to increase your executive presence." So you look up a podcast episode on one of those topics, you pick a technique, and you use it later on that week in your presentation.

So as you can see, this is a very simple way of regularly practicing your skills. All it takes, or it requires of you, is to commit to something that you're probably already doing, looking at your calendar at the beginning of the week. Each week you just look at the calendar for the week ahead, you pick an interaction or two, and you make a deliberate decision to apply a technique to that interaction. By the end of 2023 you'll be amazed at how much you've very naturally become more persuasive and influential.

So maybe you don't want to commit to a weekly practice. Well, then here's another approach you can take. In action number two, you target a particular

relationship that you want to improve and you use that relationship as the opportunity to practice your skills. It becomes the focus of your practice.

So suppose you have a colleague who you struggle to get aligned with and who is something of a thorn in your side. Or suppose you have a boss who is not particularly focused on you and where you often feel out of sync. When you use action number two, you target that relationship and you choose a variety of influence, persuasion and presence techniques to try to improve it.

So here's how it works, you listen to a podcast episode and you hear an interesting but simple little tip on how to deepen relationships. You say to yourself, "Aha, I'll try this tip out on my colleague." And then another week you might hear a podcast episode on a persuasion technique. And again, you'll say, "Oh, I'll try this out with my colleague the next time I have to persuade him or her of something."

In other words, over the course of 2023 you get to try a lot of different techniques on a particular colleague or boss. So what's the result of using this action number two? Well, at the end of 2023 that relationship will probably be better. I'm not going to lie to you though, it could be a little better or it could be a lot better, we just don't know.

But how good that relationship is, is actually not the point. The real point is that you will be a lot better because by doing all that practice you will have become more influential and persuasive in every other aspect of your life.

So here's a funny illustration of that from my own life. Long ago I was in a relationship with someone who was very nice, but we could just never quite get on the same page. I thought we had a communication problem. So what did I do? Well, being the nerd that I am, I kept learning more and more communication techniques and then applying them over and over again to this particular relationship in the hopes that we could stop being misaligned all the time.

I did this for several years before realizing he and I just didn't have a communication issue, we were actually very, very different. And we were always going to remain very, very different. So did practicing all those communication techniques help make the relationship better? Well, yeah, it probably made it a little better and a little more workable. But, of course, it couldn't solve the underlying problem.

However, what all that practice did do was to make me a better and more persuasive communicator in all my other relationships, including those at work. And as a result, I became a more effective leader. The same will be true for you. If you select a person on which to practice your influence, persuasion and presence skills, over time you too will notice that your overall ability to get heard and to move your ideas forward at work, gets stronger and stronger.

And finally, if neither of those two practices appeals to you, here's a third and different action you can take. Action number three feels like a simple game, but it's a method that you can use to build a more powerful and astute mindset. It makes you more and more accurate in understanding what's driving and motivating other people. And when you're more accurate at doing that, you then also are more accurate in choosing the right influence, persuasion or presence skill to help steer other people in the right direction.

So what's this little game? Well, anytime someone important in your work life makes a decision or says something that has an impact on you and what you're doing, write down five different possible reasons why he or she may have done that. And that's it, that's all you need to do.

However, for this to work, in other words, for you to get that powerful mindset, you're not allowed to take any shortcuts. You must come up with at least five different reasons, and you must write those reasons down. So let me take you through an example and explain why that is.

Let's say you start up your computer one morning and you see an email waiting from a peer and another department. It's not good news. You've been waiting for him to provide you with a complex market analysis. You need that analysis for an important presentation you're making at the end of the week. And in fact, the presentation is to the management team. They won't be happy if you lack some of the essential information.

So obviously this isn't great news and it makes you feel anxious, and perhaps even angry. So what are you going to do now? The real reason, or the real answer to that question, is that you're really not equipped to do anything yet. Because you really don't know yet what problem you're solving for.

You could make an assumption at this point as to why your colleague is letting you down. But if you do that, there's a high probability that the assumption that you make will be flawed in some way. It's either going to be flawed in a small way, or it's going to be flawed in a big way. And we know this because research has proved

over and over again that our ability as human beings to deduce other people's motivations is almost always so so, no matter how convinced we are that we're right.

Instead, what you first need to do before you make any assumptions or take any action is to create a mindset that is expansive and curious. Because when you do that, your ability to see relevant and helpful data expands versus narrows. And as a result, your ability to come up with good solutions becomes more strong.

So this little game of coming up quickly with five possible motivations for your colleague's email, shifts your mindset into that expansive and curious place it needs to be in to do more effective problem solving. Your answers themselves don't have to be accurate, actually. In fact, some of them can be even a little far fetched. And that's because your answers are simply the tool that makes your brain become more open.

So as an example, if I were looking at that email telling me that my colleague was letting me down, here are six different reasons I might think of for his behavior. One, my colleague fell behind in work. Two, my colleague's boss had a competing priority and told him to stop working on my project. Three, my colleague, or my colleague's boss, is trying to sabotage my project.

Four, my colleague has just had an unexpected personal emergency. Five, my colleague has just been demoted or promoted. Or maybe he's leaving the company. Six, my boss saw my colleague in the hallway late yesterday and mentioned the presentation has been postponed a month, but she hasn't gotten around to telling me that yet.

See how many different possibilities there could be. And of course, there may be many other motivations as well for your colleague's behavior. But by simply taking the time to actively identify five to six possibilities, you've put yourself in an expansive and curious frame of mind. One that is perfect for getting to the bottom of what's really happening, and perfect for crafting a good solution that works well for you and your project.

And why must you write these possibilities down when you play this game? Because if you don't, you're 90% likely not to truly think things through. Writing down your possibilities makes your mind feel that these possibilities are feasible. And it's that feeling, feeling of feasibility that causes your mind to open up.

So think of it this way, a muscle doesn't get stronger when you simply think about the weight you're going to pick up. It only responds to you picking up the weight so it can feel it. And that's what you do when you start writing down these possibilities. The mind suddenly realizes that it's feasible that there are other possibilities at work. It gets stronger, and more expansive, and you are in a better position.

So there you have it, my friends, three different and relatively simple actions that you can take to get better and better at influence, persuasion and presence. If you pick any one of them, by this time next year you'll be more adept, more effective, and ultimately more powerful at whatever it is that you do. And that's not a bad outcome for 2023, regardless of what the future holds for all of us. In the meantime, I hope you have an awesome week ahead and I'll see you in our next episode.

Hey there, would you like some personal guidance about how to use the power skills of influence, persuasion or presence on a particular situation in your workplace? Well, if so, we've got your back. Just send us a note explaining your situation to powerskills@significagroup.com. We'll drop that email address in the show notes. We'll feature your inquiry in an upcoming episode, keeping your

identity anonymous of course, and make sure you have some tips and strategies to help you navigate your particular situation skillfully.

Thanks for listening to this episode of Mastering The Power Skills. If you like what was offered in today's show and want more insights and resources from Kathy, check us out at www.significagroup.com.