



TRANSCRIPT

Episode #39: 2 Tips for Developing Your Mastery

You are listening to episode 39 of *Mastering The Power Skills*. I bet if you follow this podcast you're someone who likes to learn and improve their skills. In fact, it's probably one of your signature traits. So have you ever wondered what the difference is between being a good learner on one hand, and developing mastery of that skill on the other?

In fact, there's not much difference at all except those who develop mastery have a few simple practices. Join us in this episode to learn two of those practices that you can start using right now.

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.

Hi, everyone. The other day I had coffee with a friend of mine who's a seasoned CFO. He had just successfully steered a family-owned company through a major transaction. And we were reminiscing on all the odd twists and turns the process took, especially given all the parties who were involved. There were the family members who had never been through a transaction like this before, the parties on the other side of the transaction, the bankers, the attorneys, and of course, the employees.

That's a lot of different interests and a lot of different emotions. But every time things started to go a little haywire, my friend calmly got everyone realigned on the same page and heading in the right direction. It was quite a feat. And I made a special point of telling him how impressed I was because you know what? He made it look so easy and so drama free that some of the people involved might not have recognized how lucky they were to have him in the first place, navigating the process on their behalf.

But of course, I realized what skill and insight it took to pull something like that off and I wanted to make sure that he got recognized. We should always tip our hat to someone when we see that level of mastery in play. After I congratulated him, I also asked him what he had learned from the experience. What worked particularly well? What would he do differently the next time he encountered a transaction like that?

I was super interested in that because you don't get to that level of mastery and ease without always being in learning mode. I knew that no matter how successful this transaction was, my friend is the sort of person who figures out a way of doing it even better the next time around. And, of course, when I asked him that question, he had some great observations on that as well.

So what's my point? What does this all have to do with the power skills of influence, persuasion and presence? Well, the experience of talking with my friend reminded me of something that I observe all the time when I'm teaching the power skills to teams. Each member of the team pretty much easily grasps the tactics that I'm teaching. And no surprise there because I make a point of teaching simple tactics that anyone can use that will make a big difference in their career.

What I also know is that only a few of the people in that room will reach a level of mastery where they've integrated those skills into their normal and instinctive behaviors. In other words, however complex the politics and the inter dynamics of their workplace, they easily steer their way through those challenges and they get their ideas heard and accepted. They're not only successful, but they make what they're doing look simple like my friend did.

So why is that? Why do some people reach that level of mastery and others don't? Over time, I've realized that the difference is that the masters stayed

in learning mode, long after the class was over, and others didn't. The masters became highly skilled because they practiced. They didn't just absorb information at a workshop, they took that information and applied it over and over again until it just became part of their normal operating system.

You can do that too. There are two particular practices that I've seen lifelong learners use that caused them to accelerate to new levels of performance. And these two practices are well suited to mastering the power skills of influence, persuasion and presence. So let's talk about them now.

The first practice is intentionally targeting a person or a situation in which to use a particular power skill, let's say persuasion. Now, that seems pretty simple, right? But many of us don't in fact do that. Instead, we're far more likely to wait for a situation to present itself.

Here's an example. In the workshops that I do, I share a powerful presentation technique that I call the outcome-oriented approach. In fact, it's so powerful that anyone who uses it is guaranteed to be more persuasive than they would have been otherwise.

Now, the outcome-oriented approach can be used in a wide variety of circumstances. It can be used in one on one meetings, group discussions, and even in memos and emails. And it's a killer technique when you're doing a formal presentation, the kind where you want a group of decision-makers to approve your idea. But that's where people can get stuck after the workshop.

They say to themselves, I'm going to wait until I have a formal presentation and then I'm going to try out this technique. And the next thing you know, months and months have gone by before they have to make a formal presentation. During those months they were busy with other things. And they forgot about the outcome-oriented technique and they have just a hazy recollection of it.

So if they're going to use it now when they finally do have a formal presentation, they have to go back and learn it all over again and that takes time and energy. No wonder a busy person might skip using that technique altogether or end up using the technique but not as skillfully as they could. That's a missed opportunity, clearly.

Now, in contrast, continual learners don't wait for the perfect or the most critical opportunity to present itself. Instead, after the workshop they ask themselves, what's happening in my work life right now? What person or

situation am I dealing with that would be a good opportunity to practice what I just learned?

A continual learner understands that you learn and achieve mastery by doing, not by waiting. Continual learners take a concept and they apply it. This builds their skill and it also results in them having a greater and greater sense of ease in what they're doing.

The second practice that builds mastery is the type of conversation I had with my friend, the CFO, over coffee. It's called the post-mortem. In other words, it's the review you do after something has occurred. Now, a post-mortem is not, as some people think, a process of second-guessing or criticizing yourself or other people. Instead, it's a calm and thoughtful process that captures your learning while that learning is fresh so you can perform even better the next time you're in a similar situation.

When you do a post-mortem you ask yourself questions like, what things went particularly well and why? Or what things were problematic? And what steps could I take in the future to reduce the risks of those particular problems? Or you can ask yourself, what surprises happened? And is there any way of reducing the risk of surprises like those?

And here's my personal favorite question to ask myself when I'm doing a post-mortem on a project that involves other people. The question is this, the next time around what clear expectations do I need to set with myself and with other people at the beginning to make sure things go smoothly over the course of the project? Because often what we perceive as problems really just are issues of unconscious misalignment.

So, for example, we assume that communication on a project will be handled in one way, while someone else has unconsciously assumed it will be handled in another way. You can see how that could cause problems over the course of the project. So during your post-mortem, you can say to yourself, "Oh, next time, I can explicitly make clear how communication should work. And not only that, I now have a persuasive example of what happens when it doesn't work that way."

So imagine how quickly you'll start mastering the power skills of influence, persuasion and presence if you adopt these two practices. Number one, intentionally targeting a person or situation to practice on. And number two, doing a post-mortem to capture your learning from that interaction so you can do it even better next time.

By the way, that's exactly what I do with my one-on-one coaching clients when they're looking to take their leadership skills to the next level. And after 20 years of doing this work, I can tell you that these practices work

beautifully. The clients who do these practices are also the ones who get the unsolicited compliments on their leadership and the unsolicited promotions.

They don't just wait around hoping to get recognized, they're actively and intentionally working on achieving mastery. So they not only are increasingly more effective at what they do, but they're also comfortable and at ease when they do it.

So, all right, my friends, here's to you selecting some of the power skills that we've been talking about in the past year on the podcast and becoming a master of influence, persuasion and presence yourself. 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 in 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.