

The Five Essential Ingredients for Getting to Yes



By Chuck Terry

Getting someone else to tell us yes is a quest that begins as soon as we can speak and continues throughout our lifetime. It is a process of influence management we begin using with our parents as children. If you have children you are practicing it on them as well as them on you. If you have a spouse then obviously it was utilized effectively to get to the altar. You practice the act of getting to yes on babies, brothers, bosses, and banks but make no mistake every human on the planet is “working it” every day. I am constantly amused when someone sitting in on a sales training class makes the statement, “but you need to understand, I’M not in sales”. Yes they are, we’re all actively engaged in some form of selling all the time, however, it is the people that choose to make getting to yes their life’s work that elevate the practice to art form.

Almost every person that has amassed great wealth through business has gotten pretty darn good at getting others to say yes to them on a regular basis. What is it they know that others don’t? Is there a secret handshake or something that causes people to say “yes” to whatever is being offered? Not at all, it is nothing more than the simple act of influencing others to take action. There are some simple yet essential principles that every person enjoying the status of sales superstar has mastered at a very high level.

Although I am about to outline 5 ingredients for getting to yes on a more regular basis I will predict two things. First you aren’t going to read anything you haven’t heard or read before and two you will probably read them and go back to doing things the way you always have. It is human nature to do so. The secret to these five principles or ingredients producing amazing results and wealth is not in **knowing** them. The power lies in actually taking the principles to heart, practicing them every single time you are selling, and having the dogged determination to stick with them until you get very good at using each one every single time.

Principle One: All things being equal people will buy from other people they like

This doesn’t mean you have to become a phony and it isn’t some psychological Jedi mind trick like the well documented “feel, felt, found” manipulation tactic. What I am referring to is the simple concept of being likable and flexing your natural style to align with the person you are selling to. If you are selling to a busy CEO that wants to get quickly to the point and you want to shoot the breeze about football scores or gardening you are probably not connecting as well as you could. If you are selling to someone who is the life of the party and can’t wait to find out what teams you root for or what is growing in your

garden then getting quickly to the point probably isn't going to be as effective. Every person is different and they don't all fit nicely and neatly into a "one size fits all" sales cycle and process. If you think about people in your own life that you don't particularly like, you will probably find they are people who are almost completely the opposite of you. To become a master of getting to yes you need to be able to flex your communication style to align with all types of people. Otherwise you will only be able to successfully influence a narrow bandwidth of personality types. People buy emotionally and justify their decision intellectually. If you can't make a solid connection you will never be able to successfully sell at an emotional level.

Principle Two: Understand the situation from the other party's perspective

Whether you are selling a jet airplane in a foreign country or negotiating curfew with your teenage daughter there is going to be some dialogue where the other party expresses concern, disagreement, or perhaps just some confusion over something that you have said. Our nature as humans is to take everything that is said during these exchanges and process them through our own perception and apply our own meaning to what is being said from our own personal point of view. There are many words in the English language that can mean different things to different people. You need to make sure you are considering the other persons point of view in order to understand what the conversation means from **THEIR** perspective in order to have true alignment. Once you both clearly understand the situation in the same way it is much easier to effectively communicate and come up with solutions. There are some helpful tools such as Sandler Training's "Reversing" model that are invaluable in mastering this principle.

Principle Three: Make sure you understand the PAIN of the other party

How hard is it to teach someone to ask questions effectively enough to uncover a prospects needs? The answer is it is very easy and some sellers actually carry a list of questions designed to uncover those needs. You can get some "yeses" by uncovering needs but as previously stated people buy emotionally. A need is at an intellectual level and doesn't allow access to the emotional buying process. To be truly effective you have to tap into the "pleasure or pain" emotional triggers for buying. If your diagnostic process does not have methodology that allows you to get to the emotional level with a prospect you need to get a new process. Sandler Training and SPIN Selling are two sales processes that capture this principle quite effectively.

Principle Four: Make sure what you are proposing is directly aligned with the PAIN of the other party

It almost seems silly that this would need to be a specific principle but it is amazing how much other "stuff" can be thrown into the mix that isn't aligned with fixing the prospect's pain that you have uncovered during the diagnostic process. Everyone likes to talk about what is important to them. Doesn't it just make sense that, in keeping with the spirit of our earlier principles, we stay focused on talking about what is important to the **other party** and not what is important to us? There may be additional elements of what you are trying to get a yes on that you REALLY like but unless it directly cures the prospects pain **don't talk about it!** Everything you offer that you would like the other party to say yes to should be aligned with what is important to them. Your ratio of getting to yes will go up dramatically if you remember that point.

Have you ever heard the expression “talking yourself out of a sale”? Violating the fourth principle is exactly how you go about accomplishing that.

Principle Five: Make the other party part of the solution

There is a great expression that illustrates the point of this principle. “People support what they help create”. The more involved the other party is while following the first four principles the more they will feel that arriving at yes was something you built together. When someone has a sense of ownership over a solution that they have collaborated with you on they become highly supportive of making the solution work. Not only will they say “yes” to you but they will become a committed partner in making sure it was the right decision because it was partially their idea. This is where the intellectual justification of the emotional buying decision takes place.

I guess we could really add a “bonus” sixth principle and it would be finally asking them for whatever it is you want them to say yes to. I contend that getting a yes is a foregone conclusion if you follow the first five principles but you still need to ask the question or “close the deal”. There is a saying that Lee Iacocca was famous for that states “75% of people won’t buy unless you ask them and 50% of sales people never ask”.

There is absolutely no doubt that if you make each of these principles part of your influencing strategy, practice them until you become skilled at them, and utilize each one every time out that you will hear “yes” on a much more regular basis. The world is always a better place when you hear “yes” more frequently!

