

# Selling Your Ideas and Winning Agreement

by Kare Anderson

Author SmartPartnering, LikeAbility and Make Yourself Memorable  
and Emmy-winning former NBC and Wall Street Journal reporter

- 1. Anticipate what you want out of a situation before you go into it.**  
Know your bottom line in advance - what you need most, especially if you have strong negative or positive feelings about the other person or people in the situation. Then you can be more open, flexible and able to listen. Not anticipating your bottom line need increases the chance you'll be more rigid and reactionary and less able to listen.
- 2. Demonstrate visible goodwill upfront.**  
Establish your willingness to find a compromise and ability to be genial even, and especially, if you don't like the person or the situation. This is first a commitment to your own standard of behavior, and secondly the best way to keep the channels open.
- 3. Know that "less is often more."**  
Especially in the beginning, listen more, talk and move less and keep your motions and voice lower and slower. These animal behaviors increase the chances that others will feel more safe and comfortable around you.
- 4. Go slow to go fast.**  
When you first meet and re-meet people, move and talk more slowly and obliquely. Give them room to "own their territory" and feel heard. Later you can be more direct and move quickly. For role models, watch the classic TV lead characters in Murder - She Wrote, Matlock and Columbo.
- 5. Act as if the world is going to treat you well.**  
Look to their positive intent, especially when they appear to have none.
- 6. Play with your full deck.**  
You have a great variety of personal physical and verbal styles, most of which you've lost after around fourth grade. Practice widening your range of behaviors to adapt to the moves and sounds in you which are most like the person you are around.
- 7. Step outside yourself to see the situation as the other people might.**  
In hostile situations we tend to focus on the best parts of how *we* are acting and the worst parts of how *they* are acting. This causes escalation. Presume innocence. You can't support the positive behavior with negative feedback.
- 8. Make an instinctual habit to refer to the other person's interests first.**  
Refer to *their* interests first (you), then how the topic relates to your *mutual* interests (us) and finally, how it relates to *your* interests (me).  
  
Research shows they will listen sooner, longer, remember more and assume you have a higher I.Q. than if you were to address your interests first, and then theirs.
- 9. Act to enable them to save face and you will preserve the relationship.**  
If you think they are lying, keep asking questions rather than accusing them of misrepresentation. Asking questions gives you the time to see if you were mistaken, thus possibly saving face for yourself, while gently cornering them to make a self-admission that they were mistaken and volunteer an alternative. You also leave room to escalate later.

## **Selling Your Ideas and Winning Agreement** (Cont'd)

### **10. Honor commonalities more frequently than differences.**

Whatever you refer to most and most intensely will be the center of your relationship. Keep referring to the part of them and their points that you can support and want to expand upon.

### **11. Don't assume they readily see the picture you are presenting.**

Do not presume that the other side recognizes all the benefits of what you are proposing. Take time to vividly describe them, in *their* terms.

### **12. Don't push too close.**

When considering how fast to move in suggesting a "final offer," lean towards the slower option. The best results, as with a Chinese meal, happen with the most time spent on advanced preparation and groundwork, so the final part goes most smoothly and quickly.

### **13. Have a point person.**

If there is more than one person representing your interests, make sure that only one person is responsible for taking the lead in discussions.

### **14. Don't offer what you can't accept.**

Do not bluff in making an offer you cannot live with, if accepted. For example, including parts which you believe the other person would find unacceptable and not accept and then would move onto another alternative.

### **15. Make the same offer a different way.**

Do not overlook rearranging the same elements of an offer to find a more mutually attractive compromise. For example, in money, consider alternative timing and division of payments.

### **16. Walk your talk.**

Find ways to reflect your values in how you approach your work and all the people in your life. Your specific life mission gives you clarity, context and boundaries.

### **17. Be present.**

Keep grounded and involved in what is happening right now, glancing to the past and future only for context and balance.

### **18. Consider how you say what you say.**

Consider *their* perspective in how you make any request. Example, a priest once asked his superior if he could smoke while praying, which led to a negative answer. Yet if he'd asked if he could pray while smoking he might have received a more positive response.

### **19. Make and keep agreements.**

In an often unpredictable world, you build an 'emotional deposit' of trust when your words and actions aren't contradictory. Then when your inevitable mistakes happen, they have built up a level of trust to help them forgive your lapse.

### **20. Have a larger vision of yourself as your reference point for making choices.**

Establish your central life purpose and core values; let your actions reflect them. Your choices are then more clear, you will inspire trust and encourage others to act out their best side.

### **21. Take your high road.**

Relate your vision to the mission of your organization and your role among family and friends.

### **22. Use time, rather than letting it control you.**

Plan and act early to avoid last minute rushing and thinking. Do not be panicked when you have unavoidable outside time constraints. Use the time pressure to get more accomplished in less time.

### **23. Find fairness first.**

Remember it is usually more important to be - and appear to be - fair than well-liked. And, while not mutually exclusive, they are not always synonymous options.

### **24. Agree amongst yourselves first.**

If more than one person is involved in representing one perspective in a conflict, it is always helpful to agree on the bottom line first amongst yourselves; and to not mistake knowing the content to be discussed with agreeing on your common bottom line. We don't always hear the same things, even among genial colleagues. Thus your bottom line and specific approach bear repeating amongst yourselves *before* entering discussions with others.

### **25. Enable others to save face and self-correct.**

If you embarrass or anger someone you will probably never have that person's full attention again.

### **26. Recognize your blind spots and your hot buttons.**

When you find yourself getting angry with someone else, look to yourself before lashing out.

### **27. Show respect for yourself by respecting them.**

Even and especially when you have the upper hand, do not make a victim of the underdog.

### **28. Trust the power of trust over all other qualities.**

Being right, smart or hardworking is often no help in protecting your interests. Being trusted to act in mutual best interests is often more valuable.

### **29. Be a "synthesizer" leader.**

The person who listens longest at first, then most refers to others' points in common as a way of stating their own perspective will eventually gain the most trust and power in a group.

### **30. Support their ability to like how they are acting when around you.**

People like people who like them. The more they like the way they are when they are around you, the greater the chance is that they will like you, even give you credit for things you did not do and go out of the way to help you, event to their own detriment.

On the other hand, if they do not like the way they are when they are around you, they will blame you for it, more than they are consciously aware. They won't give you credit for things you did and may even sabotage projects on which you are working, even to their own detriment.

### **31. Problems seldom exist at the level at which they are discussed.**

When you continue arguing for more than ten minutes, you are not discussing the real, underlying conflict that must be resolved for compromise to be attempted and then peace restored.

### **32. Aim humor at yourself.**

Release tension by being self-deprecating. Poke fun at yourself. Refer to a situation where you made a mistake or even looked foolish.

**Summary: Five Tips for Reaching Better Agreements  
More Easily in Everyday Life**

1. If you ever embarrass someone while trying to reach an agreement, you will never have that person's full attention again.
2. Even and especially when you have the upper hand, do not make a victim of the underdog.
3. Offering something free and valued up-front, unasked, often implants the desire to reciprocate, even beyond the value of the offer.
4. Problems seldom exist at the level at which they are discussed. Until you recognize the underlying conflict, you will not be able to find a solution.
5. If you want more from another person, wait to ask for it until after that person has invested more time, energy, money, reputation, or other resource.