



Episode 58: How to Convince Others More Easily

Welcome to In the Right Direction podcast, where we believe you get to choose what's on your plate, you can manage the overwhelm, and that change is possible. I'm your host, Deb Elbaum, and I'm here to share insights and strategies to increase your happiness, one baby step at a time. Let's dive in.

Hi everyone, it's Deb. Let's start by thinking about the people in your life you usually seem to be discussing things with or negotiating with. How easy is it for you to get them to see your point of view?

Much of life involves making decisions and negotiating with other people. If you're at a start-up, you're deciding how to spend your limited budget. On a weekend, you and a friend might be deciding which movie to see. When you're on a hiring committee, you're discussing which candidate to offer the job to.

These conversations involve people sharing their thoughts and ideas, and often trying to convince others to see their point of view. How successful you feel in convincing people depends on a few factors, including the level of trust and respect in the relationship, and how much the topic of conversation matters to the people involved.

When these conversations are easy, people quickly come to agreement. People feel heard and like their opinions were taken into account. But what about those conversations that don't go as smoothly?

What happens when we try to convince someone of something we know would benefit the department or the company or the family, and the other person doesn't listen to us? What can we do?

When you face resistance in conversations, it's usually due to two things. First, the other person has an underlying need that they might or might not have explicitly articulated. Second, the other person is likely making assumptions about your thinking and motives, and what's important to you.

To make these conversations more productive, it's helpful to have a tool to be more convincing. It's important to have a way to tell people what you're thinking, to explain your approach, your motives, the values you took into account when you suggested something, and the way you see your suggestion benefitting or impacting others.

It's not enough to simply share what you want or your point of view. Even if they know us well, the people we live and work with cannot read our minds. They're still making up stories about our goals and reasoning.

If we want to convince someone of an idea or solution that matters to us, we need to share more. We need to share our thinking behind the scenes, our "why", our big "because."

That's our communication strategy today. It's an easy phrase that you can use in conversations and negotiations that positions you perfectly to share your behind the scenes thinking.

Because when you share your reasoning and thinking, other people can more quickly understand where you're coming from, what you care about, and what's important to you.

A quicker and deeper understanding of others builds trust. Increased trust strengthens relationships, and stronger relationships pave the way for easier conversations and more alignment.

If you want to convince others more easily, you need to incorporate your “why” into your conversations.

There are different ways to share your “why” with someone, and today’s tool is one way. It’s a phrase that’s easy to remember and effective to use. It allows people to share their reasoning and perspective in a way that’s concise, easy to understand, and authentic.

When you share your “why” to try to convince others, you want your reason to come from your integrity, and to reflect your purpose, values, and vision. When what you say is authentic and resonant, other people are more likely to hear and believe it.

The phrase that can help you be more convincing is these 2 words: So that.

I suggest you use this phrase so that you have a way to show others you’re on their side, that you are thinking about the totality of the situation, and that you’re trying to find a win-win for everyone.

When you use the phrase “so that” in an explanation, it immediately helps the person you’re speaking with see your purpose and the dots you’re connecting as you suggest an idea.

Here’s an example from a client.

One of my clients was working on delegating more to her team. At the same time, she wanted her boss to still think she was a hard worker and doing the work expected of her. She had a task she wanted to delegate, and she needed her boss’ okay to delegate the project to her team member.

We talked about how the “so that” phrase might come in handy.

Simply telling her boss that she wanted to delegate the project to her team member didn’t sit right with my client. She was worried that her boss would think she was slacking off, and my client wanted to convince her boss that she was working hard and that part of her leadership growth was to empower others.

So we practiced the “so that” phrase. She decided she’d say this to her boss:

“I’d like to give this project to Jane so that she can be exposed to this area, because having someone else who knows this subject matter will help when the team gets really busy.”

My client liked her explanation, because it allowed her to show her boss that 1) she was thoughtful about this decision, and 2) it showed her values of supporting the team and personal growth.

Most of all, the “so that” phrase helped my client feel confident. And confidence matters when it comes to making our case.

In my client’s case, her boss agreed with the decision to hand the project over, and appreciated my client’s commitment to giving others opportunities.

Seeing the benefit of that phrase, my client then made sure to include her “so that” when delegating to Jane. She said, “I’m having you do this project so that you can become a subject matter expert in this area so that you can take on more of a leadership role in certain meetings.”

The phrase “so that” makes explaining easy and understandable so that people can be on the same page about the plan, the vision, and the next steps.

This is true both at work and in our personal relationships.

Think of all the misunderstandings that happen because you jumped to a conclusion about your partner's motives or thinking. Or someone made a negative assumption about you. It's easy for feelings to get hurt.

When we share our "so that", we invite understanding and connection. We're also taking the time to get clear in our own heads about our thinking. Much of the time we're rushed, and any time we have an opportunity to clarify what's important to us and the reason behind the solution we're proposing, it helps us. Being clear in our own head helps us be clear out in the world.

Knowing our reason helps us communicate confidently, clearly, and convincingly.

Let's bring this to you.

In your conversations with friends, family, and colleagues, please be on the lookout for those times when a "so that" might help a conversation go more smoothly.

It might sound like this:

I think that we should go out to eat so that we can try out the restaurant where we might have your birthday party.

or

I want to hire this candidate so that we can use their unique skills because we currently don't have them in the group.

Leaders take responsibility for how they show up, and leaders have a point of view they get to share. If you want to enroll others in your vision, it helps to share your reasoning.

Your "so that" is especially helpful when delegating and giving feedback. For example, when giving feedback, you could say:

I'm sharing this feedback so that you can be intentional about your brand with the team, as I know it's important to you how your behaviors are perceived.

When you share your "so that," other people no longer need to guess what you're thinking. Instead, they hear it from you. That's taking responsibility, and that's being a leader.

Thank you so much for listening and being part of my community. If you would like help communicating more effectively, please reach out. Email me at deb@debelbaum.com or go to my website debelbaum.com to schedule a consult. I look forward to it. I'm here to help you create your best self at home and at work, so that you're confident you're moving in the right direction for you.

Until next time!