

# For Persuasive Speaking, Use These Four Powerful Techniques

By [Gary Genard](#)



How good are you at persuasion? Use these four persuasive techniques for pitches, sales, negotiations, or whenever you need to persuade.

Do you know how to be persuasive?

We all like to think we have a positive effect when we talk to others. Even if our audience is resistant, we still have a tendency to think we'll resoundingly win the day.

The sobering reality, however, is that few speakers achieve that kind of influence. That's because most approaches to an issue are like *all the other approaches* to the topic. They show little creativity or boldness. So they fail where the crucial requirement of influencing listeners is concerned.

## How to Be More Persuasive When You Speak

If you'd like a handle on being more persuasive and creating true impact, here are four approaches to employ. They work for sales talks, investor pitches, negotiations, advocacy, and whenever you need to persuade. They will help you establish rapport and reach listeners in an actionable way, even in the face of resistance.

Simply focus on staying **S.A.N.E.** Those letters stand for the following four practices. Together, they are more concerned with strategy than performance, which matters greatly when it comes to changing people's minds.

## Shape the issue:

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You give yourself a tremendous advantage as a speaker when you frame your message in ways that work to your advantage. In fact, it's difficult to overcome skepticism and resistance *unless* you do so.

As a good example, think of a management-labor dispute. In these situations, union leaders will most likely present the issue as either a) a "fair shake" for the working man and woman, or b) a case of Big Business vs. the little guy. Often they use both arguments.

Management, on the other hand, often comes to the fairness argument from another direction, asking: "Are the union's demands fair compared to what ordinary Americans are getting in terms of wages and benefits?" Or they may frame the situation in even starker terms, warning that the company won't survive if the union's demands are met. Both sides in a labor-management dispute thus consciously shape the issue to their own advantage.



## Areas of agreement:

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When it comes to a resistant audience your influence depends on whether you can establish common ground with them. And the earlier you do so, the better.

Once listeners understand that you and they are working toward a common goal, they'll be much more likely to view you as a person of integrity. This is especially important if your views differ greatly from theirs. So if you're facing some basic, fundamental areas of disagreement, try to be the humane speaker who is only asking to be listened to fairly. What person who views themselves as fair-minded can resist that request?

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## New approaches:

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People who resist your point of view often think they've already heard all the arguments on your side. So surprise them. Give them something they haven't heard before. It needn't be a radical departure from past approaches (though it might be). Employ stories and metaphors to make your case. And use comparisons everyone can understand.

An example: A group of salespeople I once trained was amazed to hear that *silence* is as important as anything they say. They related to the concept immediately when I told them that a prospect needs a second or two to grasp an important selling point. To illustrate, I mentioned the Zen technique of looking at the space *between objects* instead of at the objects themselves. It was an unexpected but I hope apt comparison.

## Emotions:

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You hold the beliefs you do because you think they are the right beliefs, the ones that correspond to your values. And that involves a strong emotional component. If you want to change other people's convictions or behavior, you won't do it only with statistics and pie charts. You need to talk about your issue in ways that touch people's lives. You can do so by learning how to use emotional language to influence and persuade. And that goes for business presentations as well as more overtly emotional situations.

For instance, don't be afraid to reveal how you yourself have wrestled with the issue you're discussing. By doing so, you'll be giving them permission to do the same. And who knows? They just might come out on your side of the question.

## Key takeaways

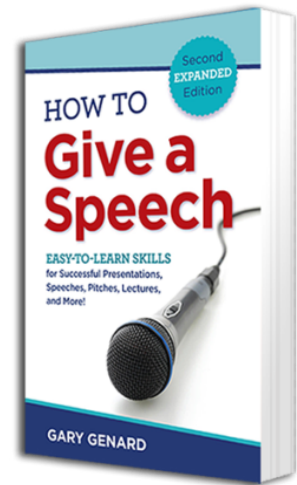
- Most approaches toward difficult issues are like all the others in that industry. Be different!
- To persuade people, frame your message in a way that works to your advantage.
- Establish common ground with your listeners as soon as possible.
- Show people a new approach by using stories they haven't heard.
- To truly speak with influence and impact, use emotional language.

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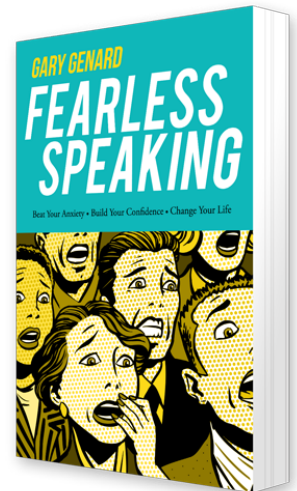


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