

DOESN'T HURT TO ASK

Using the Power of Questions to Communicate, Connect, and Persuade

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TREY GOWDY is a former state and federal prosecutor. After two decades working in the legal profession, he entered politics and was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives in 2010. He served as chair of the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, and the Select Committee on Benghazi, and also on several other intelligence, ethics, judiciary, and education committees. After four terms, Trey Gowdy decided not to seek reelection in 2018, and returned to practice law in South Carolina. He recently co-authored the New York Times bestseller *Unified*. Trey Gowdy is a graduate of Baylor University and the University of South Carolina School of Law.

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MAIN IDEA

The best way to persuade anyone about pretty much anything is to ask questions. What works in a court room is precisely what works best in real life, and in business as well. Don't state facts – ask questions that help people figure things out for themselves.



If you really want to become persuasive on the issues that matter most to you and to the people closest to you, learn to use questions in a constructive way. The process is:

USING QUESTIONS THAT PERSUADE

- 1 ALWAYS ASK YOURSELF THE RIGHT QUESTIONS FIRST**
- 2 PLAN HOW TO ASK OTHERS QUESTIONS WHICH MOVE THEM**
- 3 NEVER STOP ASKING QUESTIONS**

"The most effective persuaders listen as much as they talk. The most effective persuaders ask as many questions as they answer. Asking questions is more than a grudging prerequisite to gaining information. Asking questions, in the right way and at the right time, may well prove to be the most effective tool you have when it comes to moving someone closer to understanding your position or simply moving others closer to one another."

– Trey Gowdy

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1. Always ask yourself the right questions first Pages 2- 3

There's no point even trying to persuade someone else of something until you first stop and ask yourself five key questions:

- 1 WHAT DO YOU WANT TO ACCOMPLISH?**
- 2 WHAT IS YOUR OBJECTIVE?**
- 3 HOW DO YOU MEASURE SUCCESS?**
- 4 WHO IS YOUR JURY?**
- 5 HOW HARD WILL IT BE TO PROVE?**

2. Plan how to ask others questions which move them Pages 4 - 6

Once you've asked yourself the right questions and gathered facts, you can then figure out the specific type of questions you should be asking of the person you're trying to persuade. When it comes to the act of persuasion, there are really only two possible objectives: You can ask questions which corroborate and advance your point, or you can ask questions which contradict the other person's point of view. Know when to use the right kind of question and you're half way there.

3. Never stop asking questions Pages 7 - 8

Many people assume the ultimate aim of persuasion is to get the other person to permanently change their mind. That rarely ever happens in the real world. Instead, you should keep asking questions with the aim of finding common ground. Persuasion, at its heart, is movement. Seek common ground over complete consensus. That's what victory really looks like when it comes to persuasion.