

How to have more influence - TalkWise worksheet

How can I have more influence? It's an important question in a crowded, noisy and competitive world.

In theory there are many sources of power and influence: position, expertise, association, reputation, and of course wealth, if you're lucky enough to have some. But most of these are difficult to acquire and highly dependent on the support or goodwill of others. Yet there is one source of influence that is uniquely within our own control: the power of the spoken word.

History is full of examples, whether we admire their personalities and achievements or not, of individuals whose command of the spoken word won them exceptional power and influence.

Learning to be a powerful speaker, an effective user of words, language and talk, is entirely within our own control. Of course we can, and need, to learn from others, both how to do it well and how to avoid doing it badly, but the competence itself is there to be learned. This is the one source of influence to which no one else can deny us access.

Think of a speaker you admire. It may be a public figure, a business associate, or a colleague or friend. With this person - and how they talk - in mind, answer the following reflection questions.

- What appeals to me about how this person speaks?
- Which voices are they using? What role are these voices playing in giving this person influence?
- What words, phrases and non-verbals are supporting the power of their speech?

Now, think about yourself.

What kind of influence do you want to have?

1. I want to reduce confusion and tensions
2. I want to put forward a particular position and bring people along with me
3. I want to move us from opinion to fact
4. I want to improve the quality of what's happening
5. I want to use my authority to make things happen
6. I want to ensure we are being objective
7. I want to navigate uncertainty and complexity
8. I want to engage and involve others
9. I want to make sense of things

Based on your answer, select your focus voice:

1. The Articulate voice has influence because it clarifies.
2. The Advocate voice draws its power from personal conviction.
3. The Advise voice draws influence from know-how.
4. The Challenge voice is influential because it keeps discussions on point.
5. The Direct voice has the power of authority; it tells others what they are required to do.

6. The Evaluate voice derives its influence from reasoning and logic.
7. The Probe voice influences by bringing more into the open and into consideration.
8. The Inquire voice obtains its power from open-mindedness.
9. The Diagnose voice gets its power from making connections and finding significance.

Reflect on your relationship with this voice, and what you may need to do to dial it up in the moments when you want to have more influence. It may be useful to ask yourself the following questions, or to explore them with a VoicePrint Practitioner.

- What is the role of this voice in my VoicePrint profile? Do I use it regularly, or occasionally?
- Does my use of this voice change under pressure? What does that tell me?
- When do I tend to use this voice? Does it have the impact I intend?
- How can I remind myself to use this voice in moments that I want to influence?

Finally, think about what you will say on the upcoming occasion when you want to influence. Practice out loud. Then, make some notes to support yourself going forward.

My key message is...

In my focus voice, useful words and phrases are...

Non-verbals to reinforce my message include...