

Getting Cooperation

The knack of getting someone's cooperation is making him think it was his idea all along. That's a fun skill to acquire because not only do I have to get my ego out of the way, but I've got to stroke the other guy at the same time.

Dale says the way to do that is to make a tentative suggestion about something, then let the other person flesh it out so I can give him credit for the whole thing. People need to feel they contributed to the effort. What's nice about this approach is that they *are* contributing, and they *do* deserve the credit for it. We lead them to the solution they want by finding out what kind of solution they are after. We lead them to conclude that they cannot do without what we're offering. And it's true - they can't. Don't tell them that directly. Just sit back and let them discover it for themselves. They'll thank you for it and you'll have fun watching the light go on in their eyes.

Dale quotes Lao Tse when describing the attitude we need to have to make this work. We submit to the needs of our listener. But there's a Biblical source for the same idea. "He who would be first must be last, and servant of all." (Mark 9:35) When we present the offer, we are serving our listener. We give facts but we let the listener draw the conclusions. We show honor and respect to our listener by never forcing anything on them. We should never come across as bludgeoning them with the truth and the logic of it all.

Be gentle. Be kind. Be understanding. Be patient. Be interactive. Draw them into the conversation and then into the presentation itself. Enable them to own it. Just polish it, and admire it, and they will want it for themselves.