



The Power of Positive Influence

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Introduction

Which of the “Influence Quotes” below most resonates with you?

A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump. —Galatians 5:9

He who influences the thoughts of his times, influences all the times that follow. He has made his impress on eternity. —Orison Swett Marden

Power lasts ten years; influence not more than a hundred. —Korean Proverb

Influence: What you think you have until you try to use it. —Joan Welsh

Every life is a profession of faith, and exercises an inevitable and silent influence. —Henri Frédéric Amiel (1821-1881) Swiss writer

People exercise an unconscious selection in being influenced. —T. S. Eliot (1888-1965) American-English poet

It would be difficult to exaggerate the degree to which we are influenced by those we influence. —Eric Hoffer (1902-1983) American philosopher and author.

Leadership is influence. —John C. Maxwell

What approach do you take when persuading and influencing others? Are you a “pusher” or “puller?” How do you go about advancing your goals, ideas, and agendas? What do you do to influence others to change?

How would you classify yourself: (Circle one the characteristic that best describes you in each horizontal row.)

- | | | | | |
|-------------------|--------------|---------------|---------------|-------------|
| 1. Authoritarian | Confident | Diplomatic | Peacemaker | Ambiguous |
| 2. Forceful | Composed | Common ground | Redirect | Preventive |
| 3. Unbending | Self-assured | Subtle | Disengaged | Steer clear |
| 4. Uncompromising | Firm | Tactful | Precautionary | Vague |
| 5. Inflexible | Insistent | Cautious | Forestall | Evasive |

Aggressive

Assertive

Ambassadorial

Averting

Avoiding

How would others classify you?

What it would be like to be the other side of your management efforts? Can you get yourself out of your own shoes long enough to know the effects you have on others when you go about

pursuing an influence goal? The follower, not the leader, determines the effects of one's influence.

Objectives

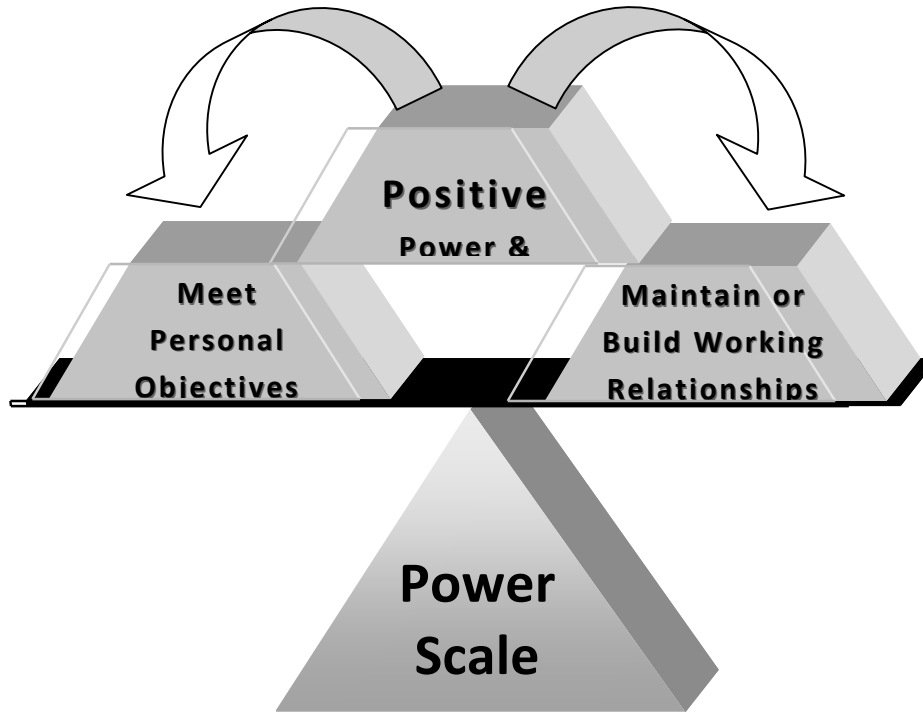
- ✚ Learn to achieve objectives while strengthening relationships.
- ✚ Assess which Influence Styles one uses, misuses, or avoids.
- ✚ Refine present skills, and develop alternative Influence Styles so as to maximize one's impact across a wide range of situations.
- ✚ Learn to assess and enhance appeal of their ideas so as to significantly raise the probability that good ideas and change initiatives are effectively championed.
- ✚ Design an action plan for using the new learning on the job.

Purpose

To excel as an effective leader/teacher one must positively influence others – students, colleagues, administrators, parents, pastors – both inside and outside the organization. Typical influence goals include gaining buy-in for one's ideas, securing cooperation, attuning agendas, and sustaining action.

Strong influencers fulfill personal and organizational objectives while maintaining and nurturing important teacher-student and work relationships. That sounds simple, but in practice it can be extremely challenging. Many people achieve their influence objectives only at the expense of important relationships. Others habitually avoid challenging influence situations, at the expense of their credibility and effectiveness as a teacher/minister, co-worker and leader.

Defining “Positive Influence”



“People apply positive power and influence when they meet their personal objectives (e.g., finish a work assignment) and enhance their working relationships, rather than trading one off against another. To consistently apply positive power and influence, you must shape influence strategies specifically for each situation you encounter, and apply proven influence skills that fit your strategy.”¹ For example: Teachers who maintain strong student relations while increasing demands of excellence in discipline and output from their students.

Positive influence means that your approach to influence is constructive and respectful. There is integrity to what your real goals are and what you represent them to be. That also includes not having any hidden agendas.

Where INFLUENCE matters...

- Mobilize resources to get things done.
- Influence others without the use of positional authority.
- Manage and motivate “difficult” or non-performing employees.
- Lead others through rapid change and uncertainty.
- Improve cross-functional, organization – pastor – parent and student relationships.

¹ Situation Management Systems, Inc., *Positive Power and Influence Program*, Fourth Edition, 1998.
www.go2teach.org

- Become more effective team members/team leaders.

Activity

Identify an influence effort that you have been engaged with and have not been satisfied with the outcome:

What is your goal?

What have you tried/done so far?

What results have you seen?

What do you think the student/colleague wants instead?

Exploring How You Influence

At its heart, leading is about your ability to **influence effectively**. Paying attention to how you establish relationships and present yourself, your ideas and your ministry will help you to refine your leadership skills and be more effective as a teacher/leader. The following information is designed to ask you to look at the *effect* of your influencing behaviors on others. By becoming more aware of the impact of your behavior on others and developing the ability to be **flexible** in relation to others, you improve your ability to influence others positively and “above board.”

David Berlew of Harvard University has identified three different effects one has on others in influence situations:

- ***Push*** —Tell people what we think and try to persuade them by giving reasons and information that are convincing.
- ***Pull*** —Seek and emphasize areas of common ground and agreement.
- ***Move Away*** —Temporarily disengage from an interaction with another person or make the decision to avoid an issue altogether.

Examples of how you have been pushing, pulling and moving away all of your life: Ask participants who were oldest children with a couple of younger siblings “How did you get what

you want?" (Usually push examples); then youngest children: "Were you powerless? How did you get what you wanted?" Often they mention alliances, which are good examples of doing a pull in order to create the alliance: focusing on common ground.

For example, a youngest child says to a middle child: "if we get together we can really make (our oldest brother's) life miserable!" Making the oldest brother the common enemy is the common ground of the alliance. Middle children often report feeling invisible: Is it ever to your advantage to be invisible? Yes, it is. You can get away with a lot when people aren't looking, and you can step back and observe, giving you the opportunity to effectively time when to say something.

This line of questioning helps them see they have been pushing, pulling and moving away all of their lives.

Now we'd like to shift from talking *about* push, pull and move away toward experiencing these effects. (Have everyone stand, find a partner of similar size. They are to do each round non-verbally. Each person faces their partner, and holds out the palm of his/her dominant hand, touching the partner's hand palm to palm...)

In the first round, and without talking, I want you to push. (they do it) Now, stop. Have you ever been in a conversation in which it kind of felt like that just felt? (Acknowledgement) What is the likely outcome if you are evenly "matched" (i.e. at the same level and experience in an organization) and you both are deeply committed to pushing? (A stalemate) So why would two intelligent people do that? (Ego, competition, integrity if you feel you are right, ... the point of the discussion *is* that it is often a natural thing to do - to keep pushing, but that may not lead to effectively influencing and shaping an acceptable outcome. Also. In this round, where were you looking? (A few make direct eye contact; most do not. they look down, at the back of the hand, at the instructor) This is an analogy for a certain "push momentum" which takes over. We get so wrapped up in focusing on our own push, that to acknowledge that that is a human being on the other side is actually a distraction. Think how that bodes for resolving differences.

In the second round, you will start palm to palm. The goal (you can demonstrate this with one of the participants) is to get the back of your partner's hand to touch his or her corresponding shoulder as many times as possible in the time allowed. There is no discussion. This is Nonverbal! Go. (Some partners will quickly realize that they can "exchange touches" and shift back and forth, Others will compete for a touch because they assume they are to get more touches than their partner does; this results in a push-push).

Discuss why some were competing with a push-push: they interpreted the goal to mean get more touches than your partner (a typical high achiever assumption).

Talk specifically to a partnership where they started with push-push and shifted to an exchange.

Someone had to make the first move. Ask if it occurred to you that maybe the partner wouldn't get it that this was supposed to be an exchange. Then ask the partner, did the fact that the other person let you have a touch surprise you. You had to "wake up" and pay attention. All of these examples are an illustration of how complicated it can be to shift the energy. You can make a point that in a push oriented culture (at work) it is often not the fact that pull is so difficult to do. It is the fact that you are vulnerable to not getting your push in if you lead with pull. This causes people to get stuck in push, and as we saw in round 1, you often don't get very far as soon as there are two pushes pitted against one another.

In the third round, partner A will push and partner B is to start out pushing and then is to pull his/her hand away quickly. This is a good way to demonstrate how people protect themselves. The A's don't push like they did in round 1.

They put their energy into keeping their balance because they know from the instructions that they cannot trust their partner. B's *Move Away* in this exercise is an example of a destructive move away. It is done with the intent to catch the partner off balance, even though it looks like a harmless thing to move away. This is an example of passive aggressive behavior.

INFLUENCE STYLE INVENTORY

Think of a specific person or group in your work situation you find challenging to influence. Give each statement a rating according to the degree to which it describes the way you typically communicate to the person or group you've identified.

- +2 = This is very descriptive of me
- +1 = This is somewhat descriptive of me
- 0 = Uncertain if this is descriptive of me
- 1 = This is rarely descriptive of me
- 2 = This is almost never descriptive of me

Your ratings will *not* be seen by anyone unless *you* choose to share how you rated yourself with others.

When communicating with the person or group I am attempting to influence, I typically ...

Rating:

- ___ 1. ...speak freely about my ideas and opinions as they occur to me.
- ___ 2. ...wait and think about what has been said in our conversation so that I can carefully formulate an effective response to be used later.
- ___ 3. ...comment on inconsistencies or flaws in the reasoning or ideas presented to me.
- ___ 4. ...ask them to elaborate on what they are saying so that I can fully understand their point(s) of view.
- ___ 5. ...find a way to withdraw from the conversation when there is evidence of conflict emerging.
- ___ 6. ...talk about the areas where we are in agreement rather than focus on areas where we disagree.

When communicating with the person or group I am attempting to influence, I typically ...

Rating:

- ___ 7. ...offer more reasons why they should support my stance when they do not agree with my ideas.
- ___ 8. ...find a way to end the conversation when I feel defensive.
- ___ 9. ...focus harder on listening when they do not agree with what I am saying.
- ___ 10. ...summarize what has been said in order to emphasize areas of agreement, and to determine what has yet to be decided.
- ___ 11. ...use humor to change the subject when we seem tense or anxious.
- ___ 12. ...tell them my honest reactions when they do things I do not like.
- ___ 13. ...repeat my position or my ideas when I do not get a response from them in a conversation.
- ___ 14. ...hold back on stating my ideas and ask about their ideas so that if our thinking is similar, they can think the solution is their ideas.
- ___ 15. ...avoid reacting to sarcastic comments or implied attacks and pretend they never happened.
- ___ 16. ...keep my opinions to myself when I disagree.
- ___ 17. ...work on building a personal relationship with them, including subjects other than our immediate work together.
- ___ 18. ...add my own ideas and opinions to the ideas and suggestions presented by them.

SCORING

To determine your PUSH score, record your ratings for the items listed below and determine the net total:

<u>Item</u>	
1	_____
3	_____
7	_____
12	_____
13	_____
18	_____

Net total: _____

To determine your PULL score, record your ratings for the items listed below and determine the net total:

<u>Item</u>	
4	_____
6	_____
9	_____
10	_____
14	_____
17	_____

Net total: _____

To determine your MOVE AWAY score, record your ratings for the items listed below and determine the net total:

<u>Item</u>	
2	_____
5	_____
8	_____
11	_____
15	_____
16	_____

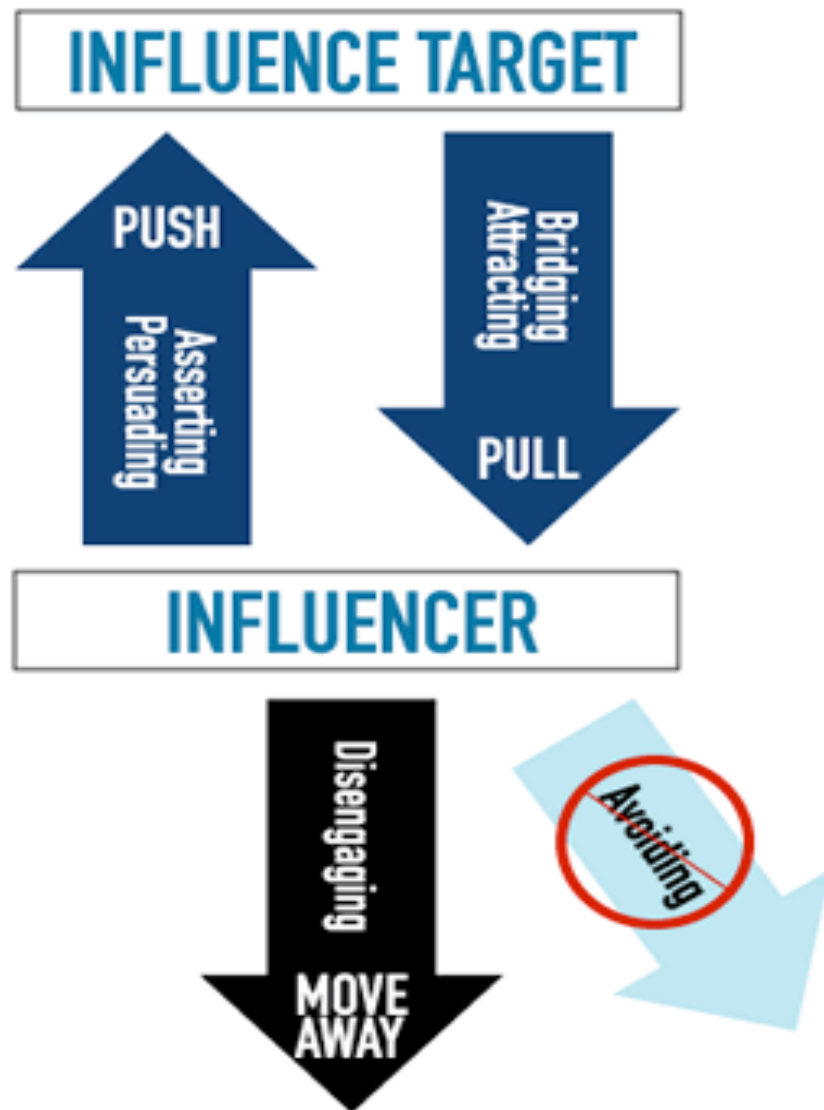
Net total: _____

INSTRUMENT INTERPRETATION:

If you have large, small or even a score in the negative range, that is less significant than is the difference between the categories. If there is a difference of more than five points - or more - then there is a clear bias in your choices about how to influence. What we know about influence

is that if you overuse one choice to the exclusion of other choices, you will be less effective. Integrating push, pull and move away leads to the most effective influence over time. Examine your results, and think about the accuracy of these scores given the relationship you had in mind. What would you do more of or less of to be more effective?

We need not rely on one predominant influence style. Rather, we can apply the specific style best suited to each influence situation we face:



PUSH

Definition: Asserting and Persuading

The influencer asserts his/her position or seeks to persuade key stakeholders. You are using push whenever you are advancing your own agenda. You can tell others what you want, persuade them, convince with evidence and logic. In all cases, when you are focused on getting your agenda *accomplished*, you are in *push* mode.

Push skills are appropriate when...

- You have a helpful idea or suggestion to add.
- You have requirements or standards that need to be met.
- You need to hold someone accountable to an agreement or a responsibility.

Push Skills from the Inventory

1. I speak freely about my ideas and opinions as they occur to me.
3. I comment on inconsistencies or flaws in the reasoning or ideas presented to me.
7. I offer more reasons why they should support my stance when they do not agree with my ideas.
12. I tell them my honest reactions when they do things I do not like.
13. I repeat my position or my ideas when I do not get a response from them in a conversation.
18. I add my own ideas and opinions to the ideas and suggestions presented by them.

PULL

Definition: Bridging and Attracting

The influencer uses empathy (empathic listening) or other involving, cooperative, value-based behaviors to attract and build bridges to key stakeholders. When you are authentically searching for common ground and you actively listen, support areas of agreement and move forward using that common ground as a basis, you are using pull energy. You have to be willing to be influenced by others if you are going to listen and really move with the common ground.

Pull skills are appropriate when...

- You want to develop a partnership.

- Your goal is to resolve differences.
- You are dealing with emotional reactions.

Pull behaviors from the Inventory

4. I ask them to elaborate on what they are saying so that I can fully understand their point(s) of view.
6. I talk about the areas where we are in agreement rather than focus on areas where we disagree.
9. I focus harder on listening when they do not agree with what I am saying.
10. I summarize what has been said in order to emphasize areas of agreement, and to determine what has yet to be decided.
14. I hold back on stating my ideas and ask about their ideas so that if our thinking is similar, they can think the solution is their idea.
17. I work on building a personal relationship with them, including subjects other than our immediate work together.

MOVE AWAY

Definition: Disengage and Re-evaluate or Avoidance

The influencer disengages when perceiving a deadlock or other insurmountable impasse and re-evaluates his/her influence strategy. Note: disengaging is not avoiding, as the influencer is still actively seeking to influence key stakeholders. There are two different ways we use move away... as a temporary disengagement (to think, refocus, buy time) with the intent of getting back together... examples are a cooling off period in labor/management negotiations, or walking away from a sales person when they do not negotiate in the hopes they will reconsider and invite you back to the table with a better deal. Another type of move away is to diplomatically avoid something, which is a distraction to your priorities. If you take on every battle, you will spread yourself so thin that you cannot accomplish anything well. In that case, knowing how to "back burner" something will help you get focus and increase your effectiveness.

Move Away Skills are appropriate when:

- You need to be selective about what issues you choose to influence.

- Engaging with someone who is difficult *and* not essential in order to achieve your objective.
- You or those with whom you are communicating need time to think or refocus effort.

Move Away Behaviors from the Inventory

2. I wait and think about what has been said in our conversation so that I can carefully formulate an effective response to be used later.
5. I find a way to withdraw from the conversation when there is evidence of conflict emerging.
8. I find a way to end the conversation when I feel defensive.
11. I use humor to change the subject when we seem tense or anxious.
15. I avoid reacting to sarcastic comments or implied attacks and pretend they never happened.
16. I keep my opinions to myself when I disagree.

INFLUENCING EFFECTIVELY

- Positive Influence is a process that involves appropriate balance between pull, push and move away.
- Your ability to be flexible in your influencing choices gives you access to a higher level of effectiveness.
- The key is to be aware of the impact your behavior is having on your workers.
- If you pull more effectively, your workers will pay more attention to your push.

PULL SKILLS

Pull Skills Help You:

- Understand the needs and positions of others.
- Diffuse anger and resistance.
- Move toward joint problem solving.

The skills of active listening, summarizing common ground and communicating a vision involve the following:

1. Being non-verbally attentive to the other person, asking questions to help you understand and paraphrasing the other person's message.
2. Supporting areas of agreement, and choosing to de-emphasize areas of difference.
3. Identifying values, beliefs and needs which all parties involved share.
4. Disclosing your ideas for future possibilities without imposing them on the other person.

DEGREES OF PUSH

Gentle Push

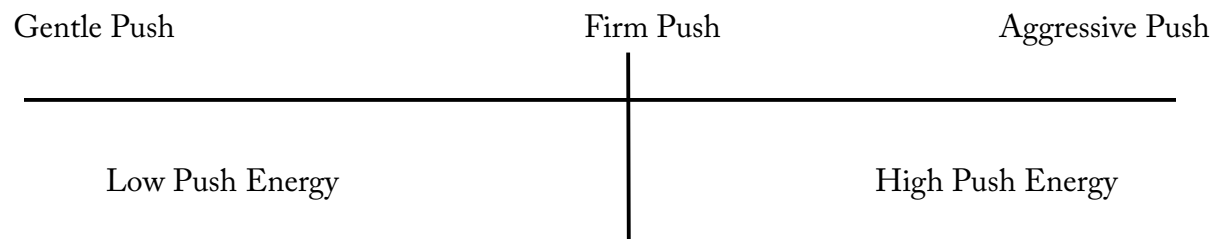
- Tentative. A suggestion rather than a direct statement of what you want.
- Used effectively when you want to get a discussion going. However, it is not effective when your suggestion is making a stronger point of view.

Firm Push

- Clear, direct statement of what you want or of your opinions. Use "I" language to own your opinions.
- Non-verbal communication sends a message of confidence.

Aggressive Push

- Blaming, labeling, judging language used. Verbal message or non-verbal message is intimidating.
- *Never* appropriate. This most often happens as a result of being angry and is not an effective way to influence.



PRINCIPLES OF POSITIVE INFLUENCE

- You will not be able to effectively influence or advocate a position unless you have identified a person you want to influence, believe you can influence, and are clear about what you want as an outcome.
- Any choice (PUSH, PULL, or MOVE AWAY) becomes ineffective if it is not used in combination with other choices.
- Effective influence/advocacy does not happen as a result of a single interaction; it requires many interactions over time.
- PUSH, PULL and MOVE AWAY effects can be achieved which are *either* constructive *or* destructive, depending on how those choices are exercised.
- When you PUSH, less is more. Influence is increased if you are concise and clear about what you want.
- When you PULL, it must be done authentically or it will not have a PULL effect. You cannot fake PULL.
- If you are going to disengage (MOVE AWAY) in order to buy time, collect your thoughts or think about what has been said. Let others know about the choice you are making.

ACTIVITY

Directions: Take some time now to complete the messages to myself page in your materials. When you respond to question 3, give specific examples, not just the headlines of push, pull, move away. (Give them about 5 minutes of quiet time to complete this page before going on to the next step).

MESSAGE TO MYSELF ABOUT HOW I INFLUENCE

1. The Influence choice(s) I use most often is (are):

2. The Influence choice(s) I use least often is (are):

3. When I think about the choices I make to influence, my effectiveness would be more enhanced if I would ...

...do more:

...do less:

...keep the same: