FLASHFEED STUDY GUIDE

How to Win Friends and Influence People

Unofficial study guide by FlashFeed

November 2026 edition · pack version 1.0.25

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How to Win Friends and Influence People: unofficial study guide

Dale Carnegie on getting people to like you and agree with you: genuine interest, remembering names, and honest appreciation over flattery, avoiding arguments and admitting your own mistakes first, and praising before you critique.

Unofficial study guide for *How to Win Friends & Influence People* by Dale Carnegie. FlashFeed is not affiliated with the author or publisher.

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Contents	6 lessons · 300 cards in the app · 60 self-test questions · 22 pictures
In the app	flashfeedlearningapp.com/packs/how-to-win-friends

How to use this guide

Take one lesson at a time: read the study guide, then go over any key facts. Where a lesson has a self-test, try it from memory before you check the answer key at the back. Follow the Go deeper links when you want more.

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LESSON 1 OF 6

Fundamental Techniques in Handling People

Human Nature, Ego Defense, and the Futility of Criticism · Sincere Appreciation vs Flattery and Arousing Eager Wants

WHAT YOU'LL BE ABLE TO DO

- Explain why harsh criticism triggers ego defense mechanisms and resentment rather than behavioral change.
- Distinguish sincere appreciation from shallow flattery and arouse an eager want by focusing on the other person's motivations.

This study guide examines the core interpersonal psychology, behavioral foundations, and classical principles outlined in Part One of Dale Carnegie's landmark masterwork.

Human Nature, Ego Defense, and the Futility of Criticism

When dealing with human beings, the foundational premise to recognize is that **human beings are not creatures of pure logic, but creatures of emotion**, bristling with prejudices and propelled by pride and vanity. Ninety-nine times out of a hundred, individuals rationalize their actions and refuse to criticize themselves, regardless of how destructive or erroneous their conduct has been.

Consider the historical evidence from the criminal underworld: **Francis "Two-Gun" Crowley**, the notorious cop-killer who was cornered on West End Avenue in May 1931 during a sensational police siege involving 150 officers, penned a letter while under machine-gun fire declaring: *"Under my coat is a weary heart, but a kind one—one that would do nobody any harm."* Similarly, the infamous Chicago gangster **Al Capone** reflected upon his career: *"I have spent the best years of my life giving people the lighter pleasures, helping them have a good time, and all I get is abuse, the existence of a hunted man."* Even racketeer **Dutch Schultz** viewed himself as a public benefactor. If hardened criminals rationalize their misdeeds, ordinary citizens in daily life defend their self-image with equal tenacity.

Sharp criticism is completely futile because it puts the recipient on the defensive and invariably provokes them to strive to justify themselves. Criticism wounds a person's precious pride, hurts their sense of importance, and arouses bitter resentment that can endure for decades without generating positive behavioral change. As behavioral psychologist **B.F. Skinner** demonstrated through rigorous empirical research on **Operant Conditioning**, animals rewarded for good behavior learn significantly faster and retain what they learn far more effectively than animals punished for bad behavior. Subsequent psychological investigations confirm that punishment and sharp condemnation breed defensive avoidance, psychological anxiety, and hostility rather than constructive reform.

The quintessential exemplar of mastering this principle was **Abraham Lincoln**. In his youth in Indiana and Illinois, Lincoln was prone to biting public satire, writing anonymous mocking letters in local newspapers. In the autumn of 1842, Lincoln published a satirical letter in the *Sangamon Journal* ridiculing a vain Irish politician named **James Shields**. Deeply humiliated, Shields challenged Lincoln to a duel to the death with cavalry broadswords on a sandbar in the Mississippi River. Just as the combatants drew weapons, their seconds intervened and halted the duel. This near-fatal catastrophe served as Lincoln's pivotal turning point in human relations. Lincoln never again wrote an insulting letter or mocked a peer. During the turbulent years of the American Civil War, when generals failed and cabinet members plotted against him, Lincoln governed by the timeless maxim: *"Don't criticize them; they are just what we would be under similar circumstances."*

When **General George Gordon Meade** allowed Confederate General Robert E. Lee to escape across the Potomac after the Battle of Gettysburg in July 1863, Lincoln was devastated. Lincoln drafted a blistering letter detailing Meade's failure, but he never signed or sent it; it was found among his papers after his death. Carnegie admits that his account of Lincoln's reasons is only a guess. In that guess, Lincoln sees that the letter would ease his own feelings but put Meade on the defensive, breed resentment, weaken him as a commander, and perhaps push him to resign.

Criticisms are like homing pigeons—they always return home to roost. The person we set out to correct will almost certainly justify themselves and retaliate in turn. Diplomat **Benjamin Franklin** summarized his life secret simply: *"I will speak ill of no man and speak all the good I know of everybody."* As Scottish essayist **Thomas Carlyle** observed: *"A great man shows his greatness by the way he treats little men."*

The foundational rule of all human relations is: **Do not criticize, condemn, or complain.**

Sincere Appreciation vs Flattery and Arousing Eager Wants

There is one supreme hunger in the human psyche that is almost as deep and unyielding as the desire for food and sleep, yet is rarely gratified: what American philosopher **John Dewey** termed **"the desire to be important,"** and what pioneering psychologist **William James** called **"the craving to be appreciated."**

Notice that James did not speak of a mere "wish" or "desire"—he used the word **"craving"**. This gnawing, relentless psychological hunger for significance drives human achievement, civilization, and culture. It inspired George Washington to seek the title *"His High Mightiness, the President of the United States,"* prompted Christopher Columbus to plead for the title *"Admiral of the Ocean,"* and moved Catherine the Great to refuse letters not addressed to *"Her Imperial Majesty."*

In 1901, industrialist **Andrew Carnegie**'s newly formed United States Steel Corporation named **Charles Schwab** its first president, granting him an unprecedented salary of one million dollars a year. When asked why Schwab was worth three thousand dollars a day, Schwab explained:

> *"I consider my ability to arouse enthusiasm among my people the greatest asset I possess, and the way to develop the best that is in a person is by appreciation and encouragement. There is nothing else that so kills the ambitions of a person as criticisms from superiors. I never criticize anyone. I*

> *believe in giving a person incentive to work. So I am anxious to praise but loath to find fault. If I like anything, I am hearty in my approbation and lavish in my praise."*

We nourish the physical bodies of our family members, colleagues, and subordinates, yet how often do we starve their self-esteem and leave their hunger for appreciation unfulfilled? Honest appreciation yields extraordinary loyalty, creative energy, and sustained morale.

Crucially, Dale Carnegie draws a sharp boundary between **Sincere Appreciation** and **Flattery**:

- **Sincere Appreciation**: Originates from the heart, is completely unselfish, reflects objective admiration of another's genuine qualities, and is universally respected.
- **Flattery**: Originates from the teeth out, is selfish, represents shallow verbal manipulation, and is universally condemned.

Flattery rarely deceives discerning people because it is transparently transactional. As philosopher **Ralph Waldo Emerson** reflected: *"Every man I meet is my superior in some way. In that, I learn of him."* If we cease thinking constantly of our own egos and focus on uncovering the genuine strengths in others, sincere appreciation flows effortlessly.

The second foundational technique is: **Give honest and sincere appreciation.**

When it comes to persuading others to take action, one must understand the psychology of **Arousing an Eager Want**. Carnegie uses the vivid analogy of fishing in the Maine woods: while an angler may personally love strawberries and cream, fish prefer worms. A successful angler baits the hook not with what the angler enjoys, but with what the fish hungers for.

In human interactions, individuals are naturally preoccupied with their own desires, ambitions, and problems. Therefore, the only way to influence another person is to speak in terms of what they want and demonstrate how your proposal assists them in obtaining it.

As psychologist **Harry A. Overstreet** wrote in *Influencing Human Behavior*:

> *"Action springs out of what we fundamentally desire... and the best piece of advice which can be given to would-be persuaders, whether in business, in the home, in the school, in politics, is: First, arouse in the other person an eager want. He who can do this has the whole world with him. He who cannot walks a lonely way."*

Industrial pioneer **Henry Ford** echoed this principle: *"If there is any one secret of success, it lies in the ability to get the other person's point of view and see things from that person's angle as well as from your own."* When salespeople fail, it is almost always because they talk endlessly about their products, company quotas, and features, rather than showing how their service solves the customer's urgent problem.

To persuade effectively: **Arouse in the other person an eager want.**

Key terms

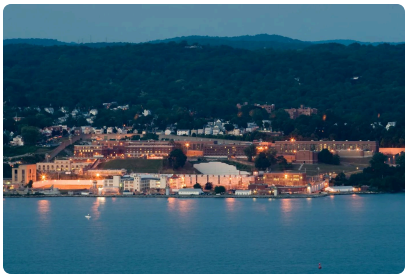
Lincoln's Broadsword Epiphany

The transformative near-fatal duel encounter in 1842 that permanently cured Abraham Lincoln of writing biting mockery or public ridicule.

The Desire to Be Important

The deep, unyielding human urge identified by John Dewey as the fundamental driver of ambition, civilization, and personal accomplishment.

Key facts



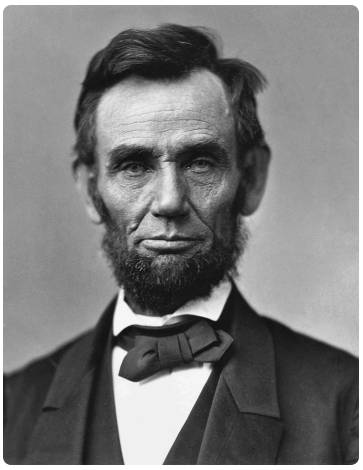
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Human Self-Justification

Ninety-nine percent of the time, individuals defend their ego and rationalize their actions rather than admitting fault.

> **Even Criminals Feel Innocent**
>
> Dale Carnegie points to the criminal underworld as proof that self-justification has no limits. Cornered by police in 1931, cop-killer **"Two-Gun" Crowley** wrote a letter describing himself as having "a weary heart, but a kind one." **Al Capone** likewise saw himself as a misunderstood benefactor giving people "the lighter pleasures" of life, not a dangerous racketeer. If hardened criminals rationalize their worst acts, ordinary people defend their much smaller faults with the same tenacity.

> **Why Criticism Backfires**
>
> Sharp criticism doesn't produce reflection, it produces defensiveness. Telling someone they're wrong wounds their pride and triggers a justification reflex that can breed resentment for decades. **B.F. Skinner**'s research on operant conditioning backs this up: animals rewarded for good behavior learn faster and retain it better than animals punished for bad behavior. Carnegie's own image for criticism is a homing pigeon: it always flies back home to roost, provoking retaliation against the person who sent it.



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Lincoln's Lesson in Restraint

In 1842, a young **Abraham Lincoln** published an anonymous satirical letter mocking politician James Shields, who challenged him to a near-fatal duel with cavalry broadswords; their seconds halted it just in time, and Lincoln never mocked anyone in print again. During the Civil War, after General Meade let Robert E. Lee escape following Gettysburg, Lincoln drafted a scathing rebuke, then set it aside, unsent. His creed: "Don't criticize them; they are just what we would be under similar circumstances."

Creatures of Emotion

Human beings make decisions primarily based on pride, emotion, and prejudice rather than pure formal logic.

Historical Voices Against Judging

Carnegie backs Principle 1 with testimony from history. **Benjamin Franklin** credited his diplomatic success to a personal rule: "I will speak ill of no man and speak all the good I know of everybody." **Thomas Carlyle** observed that "a great man shows his greatness by the way he treats little men." And **Samuel Johnson** reasoned that since "God Himself, sir, does not propose to judge man until the end of his days," mortals have even less standing to rush to condemn someone.

A Practical Habit for Catching the Urge to Criticize

Building on Carnegie's core insight that criticism backfires, here is a practical four-step habit for catching yourself before you criticize. First, notice the emotional urge to correct or condemn someone. Second, pause and remember that people are driven by pride and self-justification, not pure logic. Third, recall your own past blunders and how you'd have reacted in their place. Finally, replace the criticism with curiosity, patience, and encouragement.

Principle 1: Don't Criticize

The very first rule in Dale Carnegie's entire system of human relations is deceptively simple: do not criticize, condemn, or complain. Every other technique in the book builds on this foundation, because criticism reliably damages relationships while rarely changing behavior for the better. Carnegie treats this as a prerequisite, not a suggestion, the starting discipline that makes every later principle possible.

The Craving to Feel Important

Philosopher **John Dewey** called it "the desire to be important"; psychologist **William James** called it the "craving to be appreciated." Both were describing the same near-universal hunger, as deep as the desire for food or sleep, and just as rarely satisfied. James chose the word "craving" deliberately: this isn't a passing wish but a relentless psychological need that drives ambition, achievement, and civilization itself.



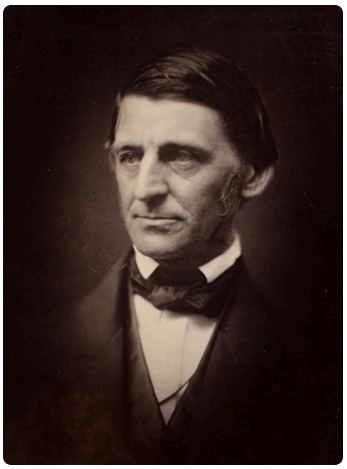
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Principle 2: Give Honest Appreciation

In 1901, **Andrew Carnegie**'s newly formed U.S. Steel named **Charles Schwab** its first president at a salary of a million dollars a year. Schwab explained why: "I consider my ability to arouse enthusiasm... the greatest asset I possess... I am anxious to praise but loath to find fault." Most organizations feed their people's bodies but starve their craving for appreciation. Principle 2: give honest and sincere appreciation.

Sincere Appreciation vs. Flattery

Carnegie draws a hard line between two things that can sound alike. Sincere appreciation comes from the heart, is unselfish, and reflects real admiration of someone's genuine qualities. Flattery comes "from the teeth out": it's selfish, transparently transactional, and universally distrusted once detected, whether spoken aloud or written into a business letter. Lavish, insincere flattery in correspondence doesn't build partnerships; it damages credibility.



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Emerson: Everyone Is Your Superior

Philosopher **Ralph Waldo Emerson** believed that "every man I meet is my superior in some way. In that, I learn of him." Carnegie extends this into a practical rule: almost everyone you encounter feels superior to you in some specific way, and sincerely recognizing that strength, rather than competing with it, is the surest key to their goodwill.

> **The Fishing Bait Metaphor**
> Effective persuasion requires baiting the conversational hook with what the listener desires rather than what the speaker likes.

> **Arousing an Eager Want**
> Psychologist **Harry Overstreet** wrote that persuasion begins with desire: "first arouse in the other person an eager want. He who can do this has the whole world with him." **Henry Ford** called seeing a situation from someone else's point of view the single greatest secret of success he knew. In practice: identify what the other person actually wants, examine your proposal entirely from their side, and show exactly how it satisfies their want, not yours.

> **Principle 3: Arousing an Eager Want**
> The third fundamental technique in handling people is: Arouse in the other person an eager want.

Matched pairs

Each item on the left goes with the one on the right.

B.F. Skinner's Operant Conditioning
→ Rewards accelerate learning whereas punishment yields defensive avoidance

Thomas Carlyle's Maxim on Greatness
→ A great man shows his greatness by the way he treats little men

Charles Schwab at US Steel
→ Arousing enthusiasm through generous appreciation and encouraging incentives

Harry A. Overstreet in Influencing Human Behavior
→ Action springs from fundamental desires; first arouse in the other person an eager want

Step by step

A Practical Habit for Overcoming the Impulse to Criticize

1. Notice the emotional surge of irritation or urge to correct another person.
2. Pause and remind oneself that humans are emotional beings driven by pride and self-justification.
3. Reflect on one's own past blunders, limitations, and similar potential reactions under those conditions.
4. Substitute destructive critique with empathetic curiosity, patience, and positive encouragement.

Arousing an Eager Want in Persuasive Communication

1. Identify the target person's primary desires, goals, anxieties, or pain points.
2. Examine your proposal entirely from their vantage point and eliminate self-centered appeals.
3. Structure your message showing exactly how accepting your proposal fulfills their specific want.
4. Allow them to experience the satisfaction of achieving their own objective through cooperation.

Self-test

Answer each question from memory, then check your work against the answer key.

1. Why might Lincoln have kept his angry letter about General Meade's failure unsent?

A) Cabinet said Meade's failure was minor
B) Feared Meade would resign to a rival
C) Meade would turn defensive, maybe resign
D) Planned to publish it as public rebuke

2. B.F. Skinner's operant-conditioning research found that animals learn fastest when they are:

A) Ignored regardless of behavior
B) Rewarded for good behavior
C) Punished for bad behavior
D) Rewarded and punished equally

3. Which gangster did Carnegie quote as calling himself a misunderstood benefactor who gave people 'good times'?

A) Two-Gun Crowley
B) Dutch Schultz
C) John Dillinger
D) Al Capone

4. What 1842 incident permanently cured Abraham Lincoln of mocking or insulting others in public?

A) Near-fatal duel over a satirical letter
B) A public debate loss to Stephen Douglas
C) A failed reelection campaign
D) A newspaper libel lawsuit

5. Which of these is NOT a real effect of sharp criticism, according to Carnegie?

A) It wounds a person's pride
B) It arouses lasting resentment
C) It builds trust in the critic
D) It triggers self-justification

6. What distinguishes sincere appreciation from flattery, per Carnegie?

A) Comes from the heart, unselfish
B) Comes from calculation, strategic
C) Comes from fear, manipulative
D) Comes from the teeth, selfish

7. Which phrase did philosopher John Dewey use for humans' basic psychological hunger?

A) The craving to be appreciated
B) The desire to be important
C) The need for self-actualization
D) The will to power

8. In Carnegie's fishing analogy for persuasion, what should determine the bait used?

A) What the angler personally enjoys
B) What is easiest to find nearby
C) What worked on the last trip
D) What the fish craves

9. Charles Schwab attributed his high value at U.S. Steel to his ability to:

A) Arouse enthusiasm through praise
B) Enforce strict quality-control standards
C) Negotiate lower material costs
D) Design efficient manufacturing processes

10. What did Henry Ford call the single greatest secret of success?

A Cutting costs aggressively
B Working harder than competitors
C Following market trends closely
D Seeing the other person's view

Go deeper

WATCH Lincoln's Unsent Letter 0:29 · YouTube
A general let Robert E. Lee escape after Gettysburg. Lincoln drafted a blistering letter, then left it in a drawer, unsigned.

ONLINE This lesson on the web flashfeedlearningapp.com/study-guides/how-to-win-friends/fundamental-techniques-in-handling-people

STUDY How to Win Friends and Influence People in the FlashFeed app
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LESSON 2 OF 6

Six Ways to Make People Like You

Genuine Interest, Warmth, and the Power of Names · Active Listening, Other-Focused Interests, and Sincere Importance

WHAT YOU'LL BE ABLE TO DO

- Demonstrate genuine interest in others, cultivate a sincere smile, and remember that a person's name is their sweetest sound.
- Practice active listening by encouraging others to talk about their achievements and framing dialogue around their interests.

This study guide examines the six psychological practices for establishing immediate rapport, building authentic friendships, and cultivating genuine social influence.

Genuine Interest, Warmth, and the Power of Names

The quickest path to social affection is exemplified by humanity's oldest companion: the dog. A hen must lay eggs, a cow must give milk, and a canary must sing, but a dog makes its living solely by pouring out unconditional love and joyous attention upon its human friends. As Roman author **Publilius Syrus** observed: *"We are interested in others when they are interested in us."*

Carnegie emphasizes a mathematical reality of human nature: **You can make more friends in two months by becoming genuinely interested in other people than you can in two years by trying to get other people interested in you.** People are not inherently interested in you or me; they are interested in themselves—morning, noon, and after dinner. When the New York Telephone Company conducted a study of 500 telephone conversations to determine the most frequently used word, the personal pronoun **"I"** appeared 3,900 times.

President **Theodore Roosevelt** was celebrated for winning the deep devotion of everyone who crossed his path, from foreign ambassadors to the White House domestic staff. When Roosevelt visited the White House during the Taft administration, he greeted every maid, butler, and kitchen servant by name, asking personal questions about their families and health. He saw a kitchen maid named Alice and asked if she still made corn bread. True charisma is grounded in authentic, outward-facing empathy.

The first rule: **Become genuinely interested in other people.**

The second practice is the power of a **Sincere Smile**. An authentic smile radiates warmth and transmits an unmistakable psychological signal: *"I like you. You make me happy. I am glad to see you."* In corporate training, telephone representatives are instructed to smile while speaking because vocal cadence, pitch, and warmth directly reflect the facial expression.

Psychologist **William James** demonstrated that while action appears to follow feeling, action and feeling actually move in tandem. By consciously regulating outer physical action (smiling, standing erect, speaking warmly), one directly modulates the internal emotional state. An ancient Chinese proverb cautions: *"A man without a smiling face must not open a shop."*

The second rule: **Smile.**

The third practice centers on the emotional resonance of a **Person's Name**. To every individual on earth, their own name is the sweetest and most important sound in any language. Remembering and honoring a person's name pays them a subtle and deeply effective compliment.

Industrialist **Andrew Carnegie** understood this from boyhood. When he raised pet rabbits in Dunfermline, Scotland, he had more bunnies than food; he promised local neighborhood children that if they gathered clover and dandelions, he would name the rabbits after them. Later in life, when competing against **George Pullman** for the Union Pacific sleeping car contract, Carnegie proposed merging their interests into the **Pullman Palace Car Company**, yielding the presidency and naming rights to Pullman and securing the multimillion-dollar deal.

Emperor Napoleon III of France was famous for remembering the name of every person he met. His technique was disciplined: if he did not hear a name clearly, he asked the person to repeat and spell it; during the conversation, he repeated the name several times; afterwards, for people of importance, he wrote the name on a slip of paper once alone, studied it, and then tore the paper up to fix it in memory.

The third rule: **Remember that a person's name is to that person the sweetest and most important sound in any language.**

Active Listening, Other-Focused Interests, and Sincere Importance

At a dinner party hosted by a New York book publisher, Dale Carnegie was seated beside a renowned botanist. Carnegie knew nothing of botany, but sat completely absorbed for hours, asking thoughtful questions about exotic plants, soil chemistry, and greenhouse cultivation. At the end of the evening, the botanist approached the host and enthusiastically described Carnegie as a *"most interesting conversationalist."* Carnegie had spoken almost not at all; he had simply provided what every human being desperately seeks: **an active, deeply attentive, sympathetic listener**.

Most chronic complainers, angry customers, and difficult colleagues do not need debate; they need an emotional release valve. By listening patiently without interruption, their hostility dissolves and their defensive posture melts away.

The fourth rule: **Be a good listener. Encourage others to talk about themselves.**

The fifth practice is **Talking in Terms of the Other Person's Interests**. Whenever **Theodore Roosevelt** anticipated a visit from a distinguished guest, he sat up late into the night reading books on the visitor's specific hobby or professional domain—whether it was cattle ranching, forestry, Greek literature, or naval architecture. Roosevelt recognized that the royal road to a person's heart is to converse about the subjects they hold most dear.

When Boy Scout executive **Edward L. Chalif** needed funding to send a boy to an international Jamboree in Europe, he approached a notoriously cold Wall Street tycoon. Learning that the executive had once written a cheque for a million dollars and, after it was cancelled, had it framed, Chalif opened the meeting by asking to see the famous cheque. The delighted executive not only funded the trip but sent five boys and Chalif himself to Europe for seven weeks, with a letter of credit and introductions to his branch offices.

The fifth rule: **Talk in terms of the other person's interests.**

The sixth practice represents the apex of interpersonal ethics: **Making the Other Person Feel Important**. The universal **Golden Rule** (*"Do unto others as you would have them do unto you"*) reflects humanity's deep yearning for unfeigned recognition.

When James Adamson, president of a seating company, visited Kodak founder **George Eastman** to bid on a contract for theater seating, Adamson noticed and praised the magnificent English oak paneling in Eastman's office. Eastman, glowing with pride, gave Adamson a personal tour, reminisced about his early hardships, and awarded the $90,000 contract on the spot.

British Prime Minister **Benjamin Disraeli** famously counseled: *"Talk to people about themselves and they will listen for hours."* Small courtesies—*"I'm sorry to trouble you," "Would you be so kind as to," "Thank you"*—lubricate the machinery of daily life.

The sixth rule: **Make the other person feel important—and do it sincerely.**

Key terms

James-Lange Theory of Emotion

The psychological principle that regulating physical bodily expressions (like smiling) directly modulates internal emotional states.

Active Attentive Listening

The practice of listening with total absorption, asking encouraging questions, and allowing others to fully express their thoughts and feelings.

Key facts

> **The Canine Relationship Model**
>
> The dog thrives in human society by giving unconditional affection and exuberant, spontaneous interest to humans.

Make Friends by Being Interested

Roman writer **Publilius Syrus** observed two thousand years ago: "We are interested in others when they are interested in us." Carnegie turns this into a striking claim: you can make more genuine friends in two months by becoming sincerely interested in other people than in two years trying to get people interested in you. People are naturally absorbed in their own lives; a New York Telephone Company study once found the word "I" used 3,900 times in 500 phone conversations.



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Principle 4: Genuine Interest

President **Theodore Roosevelt** was famous for winning over everyone he met, from foreign ambassadors to White House kitchen staff; he greeted maids and butlers by name and asked after their families, once checking in with a kitchen maid named Alice about her corn bread. That warmth wasn't a trick; it was Principle 4 in action: become genuinely interested in other people.

Principle 5: Smile

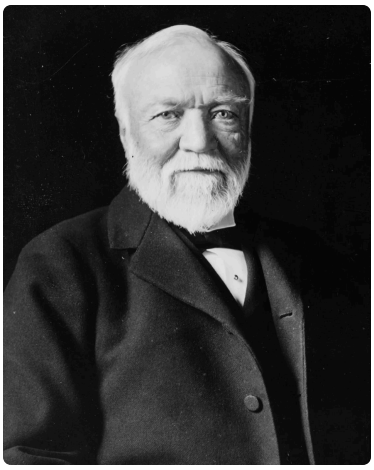
A genuine smile sends an unmistakable signal: "I like you, you make me happy, I'm glad to see you." Psychologist **William James** showed that action and feeling move together, not one after the other, so consciously smiling while speaking, even on the phone, measurably warms your vocal tone, which is why telephone reps are trained to smile as they talk. An old Chinese proverb sums up the stakes: "A man without a smiling face must not open a shop."

Principle 5: Smile

The second rule for making people like you is simple, profound, and universally effective: Smile.

Principle 6: Remember Their Name

To every person on earth, Carnegie insists, their own name is the sweetest and most important sound in any language. Forgetting or mangling someone's name is a small but real insult; remembering it, and using it warmly, pays a quiet compliment most people never forget. Principle 6: remember that a person's name is to that person the sweetest and most important sound in any language.



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Andrew Carnegie's Power of Names

As a boy in Dunfermline, Scotland, **Andrew Carnegie** kept more pet rabbits than he could feed, so he promised the neighborhood children that if they gathered clover and dandelions for the rabbits, he'd name the bunnies after them. Decades later, competing with **George Pullman** for the Union Pacific's sleeping-car contract, Carnegie used the same instinct at industrial scale: he proposed merging their companies as the Pullman Palace Car Company, handing Pullman the presidency and naming rights, and won the deal.



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Napoleon III's Name-Memory Method

French emperor **Napoleon III** was renowned for remembering the name of virtually everyone he met, using a disciplined method. If he didn't catch a name clearly, he asked the person to repeat and spell it. He repeated it several times during the conversation, mentally linked it to the person's face and appearance, and for important people, wrote the name on a slip of paper once alone, studied it, and then tore the paper up to fix it in memory.

> ### Principle 7: Be a Good Listener
>
> Most chronic complainers, angry customers, and difficult colleagues don't need to be argued with, they need someone to listen patiently until the anger drains out of them. Carnegie is blunt about the opposite habit: a person who talks only about themselves thinks only about themselves, and such people are fundamentally uncultivated no matter how they dress it up. Active listening means total absorption, encouraging questions, and letting the other person do the talking.

> ### The Dinner Party Botanist Incident
>
> Dale Carnegie was hailed as an extraordinary conversationalist by a botanist simply because Carnegie listened attentively for hours without speaking.

Talk About What They Love

Before meeting any guest, **Theodore Roosevelt** sat up late into the night reading about that visitor's specific passion, whether cattle ranching, Greek literature, or naval architecture. Boy Scout executive **Edward L. Chalif** used the same instinct on the president of a large corporation: instead of pitching for funds, Chalif asked to see the man's famous million-dollar cheque, which he had framed after it was cancelled. The delighted executive not only funded the trip but sent five boys, plus Chalif, to Europe for seven weeks.

The Royal Road to the Heart

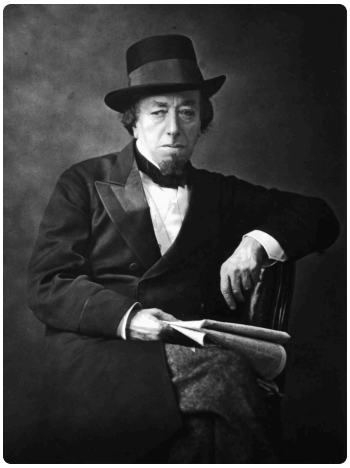
The surest path to an individual's goodwill is to converse about the topics, passions, and accomplishments they value most.



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The Golden Rule at Work

Carnegie roots his sixth rule for making people like you in the Golden Rule: treat others as you would want to be treated. When James Adamson, president of a seating company, toured Kodak founder **George Eastman**'s office to bid on a contract, he admired Eastman's English oak paneling; Eastman lit up with pride, gave a personal tour, and awarded the $90,000 contract on the spot. Even the smallest courtesies, "Would you be so kind," "Thank you," quietly tell people their importance is recognized.



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Disraeli's Conversational Secret

British Prime Minister **Benjamin Disraeli** counseled: "Talk to people about themselves and they will listen for hours." To put this into practice, Carnegie suggests a simple sequence: notice a genuine quality or achievement worth praising, deliver a specific and honest compliment warmly, and expect nothing immediate in return. Watch as the other person's sense of self-worth visibly brightens.

Principle 9: Sincere Importance

The sixth rule for making people like you is: Make the other person feel important—and do it sincerely.

Matched pairs

Each item on the left goes with the one on the right.

Theodore Roosevelt's Staff Relations
→ Greeting domestic servants by name and asking about their families and health

Dunfermline Boyhood Rabbit Incentive
→ Promising to name baby rabbits after local children who gathered clover feed

Theodore Roosevelt's Visitor Preparation
→ Reading late into the night on the visitor's specific domain of interest

Phrases like 'Would you be so kind' and 'Thank you'
→ Oiling the gears of daily human interaction and showing sincere respect

Step by step

Napoleon III's Protocol for Mastering and Retaining Names

1. Listen attentively when introduced; if the name is unclear, ask the person to repeat and spell it.
2. Repeat the person's name several times during the ensuing conversation.
3. Associate the name mentally with the person's distinctive facial features and profession.
4. Write the name down on a slip of paper immediately afterward (for people of importance), study it to fix the image in memory, then tear up the paper.

Cultivating Sincere Importance in Everyday Interactions

1. Observe the person carefully to identify genuine qualities, achievements, or efforts worthy of praise.
2. Formulate a specific, honest compliment that recognizes their contribution or craftsmanship.
3. Deliver the appreciation warmly without expecting any immediate favor or transaction in return.
4. Observe the brightening of their demeanor as their fundamental craving for importance is met.

Self-test

Answer each question from memory, then check your work against the answer key.

1. Which Roman writer originated the idea that people are interested in you only when you're interested in them?

(A) Cicero
(B) Seneca
(C) Publilius Syrus
(D) Marcus Aurelius

2. Per Carnegie, in what timeframe can you make more friends by becoming genuinely interested in others than in two years trying to get others interested in you?

A Six months
B One year
C Three months
D Two months

3. Which historical figure was famous for greeting domestic staff by name and asking after their families?

A Napoleon III
B Theodore Roosevelt
C George Eastman
D Benjamin Disraeli

4. What did psychologist William James demonstrate about the relationship between action and feeling?

A Action and feeling move together
B Feeling requires conscious decision
C Feeling always precedes action
D Action has no effect on feeling

5. Which step was NOT part of Napoleon III's method for remembering names?

A Testing the person on their own name later
B Repeating the name several times in conversation
C Asking the person to repeat and spell it
D Writing the name down and studying it

6. At a dinner party, Carnegie was praised as a great conversationalist despite doing which of these?

A Sharing detailed botany knowledge
B Listening intently, staying quiet
C Debating the botanist's theories
D Telling humorous personal stories

7. Who prepared for guest visits by reading late into the night about each visitor's own hobby or field?

A Benjamin Disraeli
B Edward L. Chalif
C George Eastman
D Theodore Roosevelt

8. How did Boy Scout executive Edward L. Chalif get a Wall Street tycoon to fund a boy's trip to Europe?

A By describing the tycoon's past donations
B By explaining his own investment strategy
C By asking to see his famous framed million-dollar cheque
D By discussing the tycoon's stamp collecting

9. Which phrase is NOT one of Carnegie's small courtesies that ease daily interactions?

A You're very welcome
B Thank you
C Would you be so kind as to
D I'm sorry to trouble you

10. Which figure advised: 'Talk to people about themselves and they will listen for hours'?

A George Eastman
B Napoleon III
C Benjamin Disraeli
D Publilius Syrus

Go deeper

WATCH Three Thousand Nine Hundred Times 0:30
In 500 phone calls, the word "I" came up 3,900 times.

ONLINE This lesson on the web flashfeedlearningapp.com/study-guides/how-to-win-friends/six-ways-to-make-people-like-you

STUDY How to Win Friends and Influence People in the FlashFeed app
flashfeedlearningapp.com/packs/how-to-win-friends

LESSON 3 OF 6

Winning People to Your Way of Thinking

Conflict De-escalation, Disarming Arguments, and Admitting Mistakes · Socratic Agreement, Friendly Openings, and Co-Ownership of Ideas

WHAT YOU'LL BE ABLE TO DO

- Apply conflict de-escalation by avoiding arguments and admitting your own mistakes quickly, openly, and emphatically.
- Deploy the Socratic method to secure immediate 'Yes, yes' agreement and let the other person feel the idea is theirs.

This study guide examines the psychological mechanisms of persuasion, conflict de-escalation, intellectual humility, and Socratic alignment.

Conflict De-escalation, Disarming Arguments, and Admitting Mistakes

Dale Carnegie's first law of intellectual persuasion is unequivocal: **There is only one way under high heaven to get the best of an argument—and that is to avoid it.** Avoid arguments as you would avoid rattlesnakes and earthquakes.

Nine times out of ten, an argument concludes with each contestant more fiercely convinced than ever of their original position. You cannot win an argument: if you lose it, you lose; and if you triumph by obliterating the other person's logic with superior facts, you have humiliated their intellect, wounded their pride, and created an enduring enemy. As the timeless proverb warns: **"A man convinced against his will is of the same opinion still."**

Consider the transformation of **Patrick J. O'Haire**, an aggressive Irish truck salesman who entered Carnegie's course. O'Haire loved debate; whenever a customer knocked the White trucks he sold and praised a rival brand instead, O'Haire would launch into an aggressive counter-argument until he silenced the customer—and lost the sale. O'Haire learned to reverse his tactic: when a prospect knocked White trucks and praised a rival, O'Haire agreed enthusiastically that the rival truck was a good one, leaving the prospect nothing left to argue about. Only then would he pivot to touting White's own merits. This immediate concession left the prospect with nothing to argue against, completely disarmed their resistance, and allowed O'Haire to smoothly highlight his truck's unique merits. He became one of the star salesmen for the White Motor Company.

The first rule: **The only way to get the best of an argument is to avoid it.**

The second principle warns against telling others: **"You're Wrong."** Telling someone they are mistaken attacks their judgment, intelligence, and pride. It invites a counter-attack rather than a change of mind.

As astronomer **Galileo Galilei** noted: *"You cannot teach a man anything; you can only help him find it within himself."* English statesman **Lord Chesterfield** advised his son: *"Be wiser than other people if you can; but do not tell them so."*

In his autobiography, **Benjamin Franklin** described how he systematically eradicated all dogmatic language from his vocabulary:

> *"I made it a rule to forbear all direct contradiction to the sentiments of others, and all positive assertion of my own. I even forbade myself the use of every word or expression in the language that imported a fix'd opinion, such as 'certainly', 'undoubtedly', etc., and I adopted, instead of them, 'I conceive', 'I apprehend', or 'I imagine' a thing to be so or so; or 'it so appears to me at present'."*

This single behavioral habit transformed Franklin into one of the most persuasive diplomats in Western history.

The second rule: **Show respect for the other person's opinions. Never say, "You're wrong."**

When you make a mistake, the most powerful psychological tactic is to **Admit It Quickly and Emphatically**. Proactively confessing your errors deprives your opponent of ammunition, shifts their psychological posture from aggression to magnanimity, and preserves your personal dignity.

When Carnegie was caught walking his puppy without a leash in Forest Park by a strict mounted policeman, Carnegie did not offer excuses. Instead, he preempted the officer's anger by declaring: *"Officer, you caught me red-handed. I am guilty. I have no excuses. You warned me, and I broke the law."* The officer, having nothing left to combat, immediately softened and granted a gentle dismissal.

Commercial artist **Ferdinand E. Warren** defused an irate client who found fault with his illustrations by eagerly agreeing with every single criticism and insisting on redoing the art at his own expense. The client, touched by Warren's humility, insisted on paying for the revisions and awarded him ongoing work.

The third rule: **If you are wrong, admit it quickly and emphatically.**

Socratic Agreement, Friendly Openings, and Co-Ownership of Ideas

Persuasion begins with warmth. Carnegie recounts Aesop's ancient fable of the **Sun and the Wind**: the wind blew furiously to strip a traveler of his cloak, but the harder it blew, the tighter the traveler wrapped the cloak around himself. Then the sun emerged, gently beaming warm rays, and within minutes the traveler happily removed his coat. Kindness and friendliness are always stronger than fury and bluster.

During the bloody 1913–1914 **Ludlow coal strike** in Colorado, **John D. Rockefeller Jr.** faced intense public hatred. In 1915, rather than issuing corporate threats, Rockefeller spent weeks visiting the coal camps, touring miners' homes, and meeting their wives and children before addressing the strikers' representatives: *"we meet here not as strangers, but as friends."* His friendly, respectful opening defused decades of labor animosity. As Lincoln observed: *"A drop of honey catches more flies than a gallon of gall."*

The fourth rule: **Begin in a friendly way.**

The fifth practice is the **Socratic Method**. When an individual utters the word "No," their entire physiological apparatus—muscles, nervous system, and glandular secretions—contracts into a defensive posture. By contrast, securing an affirmative **"Yes"** opens the neural pathways to acceptance. By structuring inquiries so that the counterpart is led to say "Yes, Yes" repeatedly, psychological momentum is established in the direction of agreement.

Bank teller **James Eberson** secured vital information from a suspicious depositor by asking: *"If you should have money in this bank when you die, wouldn't you want the bank to transfer it to your next of kin immediately without legal delay?"* The customer said "Yes," and willingly completed every requested form.

The fifth rule: **Get the other person saying "yes, yes" immediately.**

The sixth practice is **Letting the Other Person Do the Talking**. When people have grievances or complex proposals, allowing them to speak without interruption vents their emotional pressure and builds mutual trust. As French moralist **La Rochefoucauld** wrote: *"If you want enemies, excel your friends; but if you want friends, let your friends excel you."*

The sixth rule: **Let the other person do a great deal of the talking.**

The seventh practice is **Letting the Other Person Feel Ownership of Ideas**. Human beings naturally trust ideas they discover themselves far more than concepts dictated by external authorities.

An X-ray manufacturer won an elusive hospital contract by delivering an unfinished prototype to the chief radiologist, asking for his clinical advice on how to improve it. The physician felt total creative ownership over the machine and purchased it immediately. In politics, **Colonel Edward M. House** guided **President Woodrow Wilson** by casually dropping ideas in casual conversations, allowing Wilson to absorb them and champion them as his own executive policies.

The seventh rule: **Let the other person feel that the idea is his or hers.**

Key terms

Lord Chesterfield's Counsel
The diplomatic rule: 'Be wiser than other people if you can; but do not tell them so.'

Yielding vs Fighting Proverb
The timeless observation: 'By fighting you never get enough, but by yielding you get more than you expected.'

The Socratic 'Yes, Yes' Method
The technique of asking a series of questions that secure affirmative answers, creating psychological momentum toward agreement.

Key facts

You Cannot Truly Win an Argument

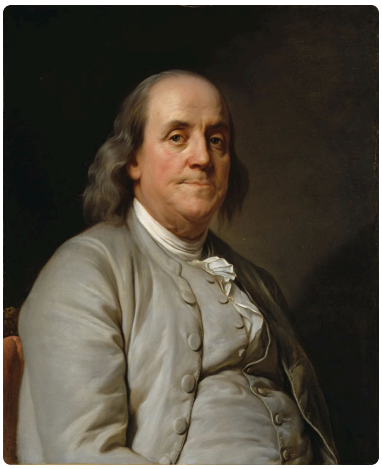
Carnegie's rule is blunt: the only way to get the best of an argument is to avoid it. If you lose, you lose; and if you win by demolishing someone's logic, you've wounded their pride and made a lasting enemy: "a man convinced against his will is of the same opinion still." Truck salesman **Patrick O'Haire** proved it in reverse: selling White trucks, he responded to customers who praised a rival brand by agreeing enthusiastically that the rival truck was good, which disarmed their resistance — then pivoted to praising White's own merits, becoming one of his company's top salesmen.

Principle 10: Avoiding Arguments

The first rule for winning people to your way of thinking is: The only way to get the best of an argument is to avoid it.

Principle 11: Never Say 'You're Wrong'

Telling someone "you're wrong" attacks their judgment and pride, provoking a fight rather than a change of mind, which is why Principle 11 instead says to show respect for the other person's opinions. Astronomer **Galileo Galilei** put it this way: "You cannot teach a man anything; you can only help him find it within himself." And **Lord Chesterfield** advised his son to "be wiser than other people if you can; but do not tell them so."



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Franklin's Diplomatic Language

In his autobiography, **Benjamin Franklin** describes deliberately scrubbing dogmatic words from his vocabulary: he banned "certainly" and "undoubtedly," replacing them with "I conceive," "I apprehend," or "it appears to me." This single habit, trading flat assertions for modest, provisional language, helped make Franklin one of the most persuasive diplomats in American history, because it left no dogmatic claim for anyone to fight against.

Principle 12: Admit Mistakes Fast

Admitting a mistake quickly and emphatically disarms an opponent completely, leaving them nothing to fight, often shifting them from aggression to generosity, and it builds credibility rather than destroying it. Commercial artist **Ferdinand E. Warren** proved this when an irate client attacked his illustrations: Warren agreed with every criticism and offered to redo the work at his own expense. Touched, the client insisted on paying for the revisions and kept sending him work.

The Unleashed Dog Case Study

Carnegie avoided a police citation by immediately confessing his guilt before the officer could reprimand him.

Confess Before You're Accused

Carnegie sums up the payoff of owning your errors in a single proverb: "by fighting you never get enough, but by yielding you get more than you expected." The practical protocol: notice your own mistake before anyone else points it out, approach the affected person directly without excuses, confess clearly and accept full blame, then offer to make it right.

Aesop's Sun and Wind Allegory

Kindness and friendliness achieve cooperation where aggression and force fail completely.

Kindness Beats Force

During the bloody 1913–1914 Ludlow coal strike in Colorado, **John D. Rockefeller Jr.** faced intense public hatred; in 1915, instead of threats, he visited the mining camps, met workers' families, and told strikers' representatives, "we meet here not as strangers, but as friends," defusing years of animosity. As **Abraham Lincoln** put it: "A drop of honey catches more flies than a gallon of gall." Principle 13: begin in a friendly way.

Principle 13: Begin in a Friendly Way

The fourth rule for winning people to your way of thinking is: Begin in a friendly way.

Principle 14: Get an Early 'Yes'

Saying "No" triggers a defensive physiological contraction, while a "Yes" opens the path to agreement, so Carnegie's Socratic method builds momentum toward acceptance by asking questions that get an early, repeated yes. Bank teller **James Eberson** used it on a suspicious depositor, asking, "wouldn't you want the bank to transfer your money to your next of kin without delay?": the customer said yes and filled out every form. Principle 14: get the other person saying "yes, yes" immediately.

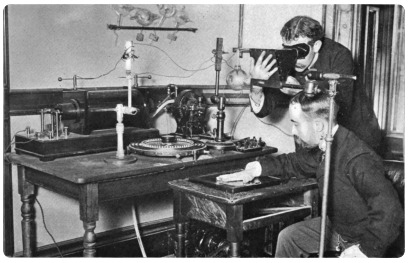
La Rochefoucauld: Let Friends Win

French moralist **La Rochefoucauld** offered a sharp warning about outshining the people around you: "If you want enemies, excel your friends; but if you want friends, let your friends excel you." Carnegie uses this to support Principle 15, letting the other person do the talking and take the credit builds trust, while constantly needing to win or shine breeds quiet resentment.

Principle 15: Letting Others Talk

The sixth rule for winning people to your way of thinking is: Let the other person do a great deal of the talking.

> **Principle 16: Let Them Own the Idea**
>
> People trust ideas they discover for themselves far more than proposals handed down by an outside authority; a directive feels imposed, but a self-discovered conclusion feels owned. To foster that ownership: present the problem and invite input, ask guiding questions that lead the other person toward the desired solution, then enthusiastically credit them with the insight and let them run with it. Principle 16: let the other person feel that the idea is his or hers.



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Two Ways to Plant an Idea

An X-ray equipment manufacturer won a stalled hospital sale not by pitching harder, but by handing the chief radiologist an unfinished prototype and asking for his advice on improving it; the physician felt total ownership of the machine and bought it immediately. In politics, **Colonel Edward M. House** guided **President Woodrow Wilson** the same way: he dropped ideas casually into conversation and let Wilson adopt and champion them as his own.

Matched pairs

Each item on the left goes with the one on the right.

Patrick O'Haire's Sales Breakthrough
→ Ceasing arguments with customers, agreeing their preferred rival truck was excellent, then pivoting to praise his own White trucks

Galileo Galilei on Education
→ You cannot teach a man anything; you can only help him find it within himself

Ferdinand E. Warren's Art Client
→ Eagerly agreeing with every criticism and offering to redo drawings at his own expense

Abraham Lincoln's Proverb on Persuasion → A drop of honey catches more flies than a gallon of gall

La Rochefoucauld's Maxim on Friends
→ If you want enemies, excel your friends; if you want friends, let your friends excel you

Colonel House and Woodrow Wilson
→ Planting ideas casually in conversation so the President would adopt them as his own

Step by step

Carnegie's Protocol for Emphatic Error Admission

1. Recognize the error or fault immediately before others bring it up.
2. Approach the affected party proactively without offering rationalizations or excuses.
3. Confess the mistake clearly and state that you deserve full blame.
4. Offer constructive restitution while acknowledging the other party's rightful authority.

Fostering Psychological Co-Ownership of an Idea

1. Present the broad problem and invite the counterpart's input on possible solutions.
2. Ask guiding questions that lead the counterpart to suggest the desired core strategy.
3. Enthusiastically validate their insight and publicly credit them with the idea.
4. Support their execution while letting them enjoy the full status of leadership.

Self-test

Answer each question from memory, then check your work against the answer key.

1. According to Carnegie's first rule for winning an argument, what should you do?

- A Let a neutral mediator decide
- B Avoid the argument entirely
- C Compromise on every point
- D Win it with superior facts

2. How did truck salesman Patrick O'Haire turn his sales around when a customer praised a competitor's trucks?

- A Agreed the trucks were excellent
- B Argued his trucks were superior
- C Refused to discuss competitors
- D Offered a steep discount

3. Which of these does Carnegie explicitly warn against when someone disagrees with you?

- A Admitting your own mistake
- B Beginning in a friendly way
- C Telling them 'You're wrong'
- D Asking agreement-building questions

4. What phrase did Benjamin Franklin adopt to replace dogmatic words like 'certainly'?

- A I know for a fact
- B I insist
- C I guarantee
- D I conceive

5. How did commercial artist Ferdinand E. Warren respond to a client's harsh criticism of his illustrations?

- A Agreed and offered to redo the work free
- B Ignored the feedback
- C Refunded and ended the deal
- D Defended his artistic choices

6. What happens physiologically when a person says 'No' to you?

- A Heart rate slows down
- B No physical reaction occurs
- C Body contracts defensively
- D Body relaxes and opens up

7. What technique did bank teller James Eberson use to get a suspicious depositor's information?

- A Admitting a bank error upfront
- B Opening with a friendly greeting
- C Letting the depositor talk without interruption
- D Asking a question he could only answer 'yes' to

8. Which scenario best shows letting someone feel an idea is their own?

A. Rockefeller's friendly visit to Ludlow miners
B. Asking a radiologist for advice on a prototype
C. La Rochefoucauld's advice on letting friends talk
D. Eberson's yes-yes question to a depositor

9. Which proverb does Carnegie use to illustrate the power of a friendly opening?

A. Fighting you never get enough
B. A drop of honey catches more flies
C. Excel your friends, make enemies
D. Convinced against his will still

10. How did Colonel Edward M. House influence President Woodrow Wilson's policies?

A. Debated Wilson until he conceded
B. Publicly lobbied Congress
C. Issued formal written directives
D. Casually dropped ideas in conversation

Go deeper

ONLINE This lesson on the web flashfeedlearningapp.com/study-guides/how-to-win-friends/winning-people-to-your-way-of-thinking

STUDY How to Win Friends and Influence People in the FlashFeed app flashfeedlearningapp.com/packs/how-to-win-friends

LESSON 4 OF 6

Advanced Persuasion and Human Motivation

Empathetic Perspective-Taking, Nobler Motives, and Dramatization · Constructive Challenges, Competitiveness, and Behavioral Priming

WHAT YOU'LL BE ABLE TO DO

- Adopt empathetic perspective-taking, appeal to nobler motives, and dramatize ideas to make proposals compelling.
- Stimulate constructive motivation and healthy achievement by throwing down a friendly challenge.

This study guide examines the advanced psychological dynamics of empathetic perspective-taking, appealing to nobler motives, visual dramatization, and constructive challenge.

Empathetic Perspective-Taking, Nobler Motives, and Dramatization

Every human action is driven by a hidden psychological rationale. Rather than judging or condemning irrational behavior, the master communicator seeks to uncover the root cause. As advertising strategist **Kenneth M. Goode** noted in *How to Turn People into Gold*: *"Stop a minute to contrast your keen interest in your own affairs with your mild concern about anything else. Realize then, that everybody else in the world feels exactly the same way!"*

Carnegie reveals the universal **Magic Phrase** that neutralizes hostility, eliminates friction, and generates immediate rapport:

> *"I don't blame you one bit for feeling as you do. If I were you, I would undoubtedly feel just as you do."*

This statement is completely truthful. If you possessed the counterpart's identical genetics, childhood environment, temperament, and life experiences, you would act and feel exactly as they do. Offering genuine sympathy fulfills a universal human craving.

The eighth rule: **Try honestly to see things from the other person's point of view.** The ninth rule: **Be sympathetic with the other person's ideas and desires.**

When appealing to human motivation, recognize what financier **J. Pierpont Morgan** observed: **A person usually has two reasons for doing something—a reason that sounds good, and the real reason.** While individuals are privately motivated by self-interest (the real reason), they desperately desire to see themselves as noble, upright, and fair (the reason that sounds good).

When **John D. Rockefeller Jr.** wanted to halt newspaper photographers from publishing photos of his own children, he did not threaten legal action or corporate retaliation. Instead, he appealed to their

nobler paternal instincts: *"You know how it is, boys. You've got children yourselves, some of you. And you know it's not good for youngsters to get too much publicity."* The photographers immediately ceased publication.

The tenth rule: **Appeal to the nobler motives.**

In an era of sensory overload, merely reciting factual data is insufficient: **Ideas must be dramatized**. Television, cinema, and modern advertising rely entirely on visual and emotional showmanship.

NCR salesman Jim Yeamans dramatized the cost of an outdated cash register for a skeptical grocer by throwing a handful of pennies onto the floor, showing at a glance how the old machine was "literally throwing away pennies" with every sale — and closed the sale on the spot. Window displays, before-and-after demonstrations, and tangible physical props transform abstract concepts into unforgettable psychological impressions.

The eleventh rule: **Dramatize your ideas.**

Constructive Challenges, Competitiveness, and Behavioral Priming

When logical arguments, emotional appeals, and administrative authority fail to move underperforming teams, the ultimate lever of human performance is **Constructive Challenge**.

Industrialist **Charles Schwab** faced a persistent problem with a steel mill whose manager could not hit production quotas despite bonuses and warnings. Schwab visited the plant at the conclusion of the day shift, asked the foreman how many heats of steel had been poured, took a piece of chalk, and drew a large **"6"** on the factory floor without a word.

When the night shift arrived and learned that the number represented the day shift's output, their competitive pride was ignited. By the following morning, the night shift had rubbed out the "6" and written a bold **"7"**. The day shift responded by pouring **"10"**, transforming the mill into the most productive plant in the entire steel empire.

Schwab summarized the insight:

> *"The way to get things done is to stimulate competition. I do not mean in a sordid, money-getting way, but in the desire to excel."*

Every high achiever loves the game—the opportunity for self-expression, the chance to prove their competence, and the thrill of victory. Behavioral scientist **Frederick Herzberg** validated this empirically in his two-factor motivation theory: while salary and working conditions prevent dissatisfaction, genuine motivation springs from the work itself, responsibility, and personal achievement.

Governor **Al Smith** deployed the same challenge framework to recruit an experienced but reluctant prison official, Lewis E. Lawes, to the daunting Sing Sing wardenship, framing the job as a test of courage and character; tire magnate **Harvey Firestone** made a parallel point about pay, insisting that money alone never brought together or held good people — it was "the game" itself that mattered.

The twelfth rule: **Throw down a challenge.**

Key terms

The Universal Sympathy Formula

The disarming phrase: 'I don't blame you one bit for feeling as you do. If I were you, I would undoubtedly feel just as you do.'

The Desire to Excel

The intrinsic human drive for self-expression, mastery, and proving personal worth through competitive achievement.

The Psychological Peak of Mastery

The profound pride and elevated self-efficacy experienced when surmounting a daunting challenge through dedicated effort.

Key facts

Uncovering Root Causes of Behavior

Understanding the hidden emotional rationale behind irrational actions unlocks effective persuasion.

Everyone Feels Like the Main Character

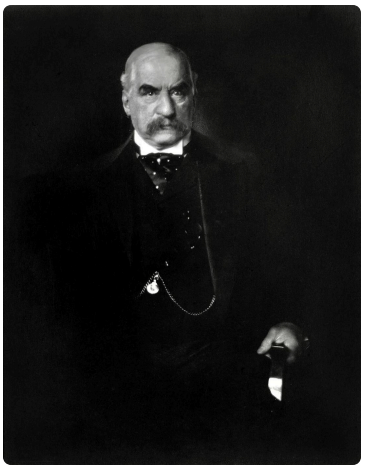
Advertising strategist **Kenneth M. Goode** offered a blunt exercise for empathy: "Stop a minute to contrast your keen interest in your own affairs with your mild concern about anything else. Realize then, that everybody else in the world feels exactly the same way!" Carnegie uses this to ground Principle 17: before you can persuade anyone, you have to genuinely accept that their problems feel as urgent to them as yours feel to you.

Principle 17: Perspective-Taking

The eighth rule for winning people to your way of thinking is: Try honestly to see things from the other person's point of view.

Principle 18: The Magic Sympathy Phrase

Carnegie offers a single sentence that neutralizes hostility on contact: "I don't blame you one bit for feeling as you do. If I were you, I would undoubtedly feel just as you do." It works because it's completely true: with someone else's exact genetics, upbringing, and life experience, you would feel exactly as they do. Most people are hungry for this kind of validation, which is why Principle 18 says: be sympathetic with the other person's ideas and desires.



Edward Steichen · Public domain

Two Reasons for Everything We Do

Financier **J. Pierpont Morgan** observed that "a person usually has two reasons for doing something: a reason that sounds good, and the real reason." People are privately driven by self-interest, but they desperately want to see themselves as honorable, upright, and fair, which is exactly why Principle 19 works: appeal to the nobler motive, and people will often act on it rather than admit the self-interested one.

Rockefeller Appeals to Fatherly Pride

When **John D. Rockefeller Jr.** wanted newspaper photographers to stop publishing photos of his own children, he didn't threaten lawsuits or use his enormous leverage. Instead, he appealed to their nobler instincts as fathers: "You know how it is, boys. You've got children yourselves, some of you. And you know it's not good for youngsters to get too much publicity." The photographers stopped immediately.

Principle 19: Appealing to Nobler Motives

The tenth rule for winning people to your way of thinking is: Appeal to the nobler motives.

Principle 20: Dramatize Your Ideas

Bare facts are dry; ideas that are dramatized, made vivid, visual, and tangible, stick. NCR salesman **Jim Yeamans** dramatized the cost of an outdated cash register for a skeptical grocer by throwing a handful of pennies onto the floor, showing at a glance how the old machine was "literally throwing away pennies" with every sale — and closed the sale on the spot. The same logic explains why dropping a weighted package to prove its durability convinces skeptical buyers more than reciting tensile-strength numbers ever could, and why even a marriage proposal traditionally happens on bended knee.

How to Dramatize a Business Idea

Carnegie lays out a repeatable sequence for turning a dry point into a memorable one: identify the single core benefit or problem you need your audience to feel, then invent a tangible, visual, or physical demonstration of it. Execute the demonstration with genuine showmanship and emotional resonance, then bridge directly from that dramatic moment to your actual proposed solution.

Charles Schwab's Mill Floor '6'

Schwab stimulated an underperforming steel mill by drawing a chalk '6' on the floor to represent the day shift's output.



Wikimedia Commons · Pirie MacDonald · Public domain

The Mill Floor Challenge, Continued

After **Charles Schwab** chalked a plain "6" on the factory floor to mark the day shift's output, the night shift couldn't stand seeing themselves outdone: they rubbed it out and wrote a bold "7." The day shift fired back the next morning with a "10." Within days, a mill that bonuses and warnings couldn't budge had become the top-producing plant in the entire steel empire, using nothing more than a piece of chalk and healthy pride.

Compete to Excel, Not for Money

Schwab summarized his method: "the way to get things done is to stimulate competition... not in a sordid, money-getting way, but in the desire to excel." Psychologist **Frederick Herzberg**'s two-factor theory backs this up: pay prevents dissatisfaction, but real motivation comes from the work itself. Governor Al Smith used the same lever, recruiting Lewis E. Lawes to the Sing Sing wardenship by framing it as a test of courage; Firestone likewise held people with "the game itself," not money. The boundary: healthy challenges push people to beat a shared standard, never to sabotage a rival.



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Al Smith and the Sing Sing Challenge

Governor **Al Smith** needed to fill the wardenship of Sing Sing Prison, one of the most notoriously difficult jobs in the state, and the experienced prison official he wanted, Lewis E. Lawes, was reluctant to take it. Rather than offering more money or pleading, Smith framed the post as a daunting, high-stakes challenge that would require an exceptional leader to conquer, and the appeal to courage and capability worked where persuasion by salary would have failed.

Principle 21: Throw Down a Challenge

The twelfth rule for winning people to your way of thinking is: Throw down a challenge.

High Expectations Become Reality

Setting clear, demanding standards signals confidence in someone's ability, and that confidence tends to become a self-fulfilling prophecy of better performance. There's a reward built into the process, too: surmounting a genuinely difficult challenge produces a distinct psychological payoff, a surge of pride and self-efficacy that comes only from proving your own competence to yourself.

> **Peer Benchmark Rivalry**
> Transparent benchmark challenges allow underperforming teams to self-correct without executive micromanagement.

> **Gamify the Grind**
> Turning routine work into a structured challenge, a benchmark to beat, a score to improve, taps into a natural human love of play rather than deadening it. Contrary to the fear that gamifying work makes employees less serious, Carnegie's examples suggest the opposite: framing production as a game raises both engagement and output, because people who are having fun competing rarely need to be told to try harder.

> **How to Launch a Team Challenge**
> To deploy a constructive challenge with a lagging team, Carnegie's method runs in four steps: establish a clear, objective metric for the current baseline; communicate that benchmark transparently, without scolding or threats; frame beating it as an exciting test of skill and team pride; and celebrate the achievement lavishly when the team rises to meet it.

Matched pairs

Each item on the left goes with the one on the right.

Kenneth M. Goode's Persuasion Formula
→ Contrast your keen interest in your own affairs with your mild concern about anything else

Rockefeller and the Newspaper Editors
→ Appealing to editors' protective paternal instincts to stop publishing photos of his own children

Jim Yeamans at NCR
→ Throwing a handful of pennies onto a grocer's floor to dramatize the cost of an outdated cash register

Harvey Firestone on Motivation
→ Financial compensation alone cannot retain great talent; the work must present a stimulating challenge

Frederick Herzberg's Motivation Theory
→ The primary driver of enduring motivation is the work itself and the opportunity for achievement

Step by step

Dramatizing an Idea in Business Presentations

1. Identify the central core benefit or problem you need the audience to feel.
2. Create a tangible, visual, or physical metaphor that demonstrates the point directly.
3. Execute the demonstration smoothly with showmanship and emotional resonance.
4. Bridge from the dramatic impression directly to your proposed practical solution.

Deploying a Constructive Challenge to a Lagging Team

1. Establish a clear, objective metric representing current baseline output.
2. Communicate the benchmark transparently without issuing angry scoldings or threats.
3. Frame surpassing the benchmark as an exciting test of skill, character, and team pride.
4. Celebrate the achievement lavishly when the team rises to the occasion.

Self-test

Answer each question from memory, then check your work against the answer key.

1. Who observed that people have 'a reason that sounds good, and the real reason' for their actions?

A Kenneth M. Goode
B Charles M. Schwab
C J. Pierpont Morgan
D John D. Rockefeller Sr.

2. To stop photographers from publishing photos of his own children, Rockefeller Jr. appealed to their:

A Desire for compensation
B Fear of a lawsuit
C Corporate advertising leverage
D Nobler paternal instincts

3. What does Kenneth M. Goode's contrast exercise ask you to realize about other people?

A They care intensely about their own affairs, too
B They value logical arguments over emotional appeals
C They are indifferent to their own success and failures
D They secretly want financial rewards more than praise

4. How did NCR salesman Jim Yeamans dramatize the cost of an outdated cash register to a grocer?

A Delivering a lecture on accounting
B Throwing a handful of pennies onto the floor
C Handing out printed financial reports
D Posting profit-loss charts on the wall

5. Which example demonstrates 'appeal to the nobler motives' rather than dramatization or perspective-taking?

A Rockefeller's appeal to paternal pride
B Goode's self-interest exercise
C Yeamans's penny-throwing demonstration
D Schwab's chalk '6' on the mill floor

6. What number did Schwab chalk on the factory floor to mark the day shift's output?

A 7
B 10
C 8
D 6

7. Who said 'the way to get things done is to stimulate competition... in the desire to excel'?

A Frederick Herzberg
B Al Smith
C Charles Schwab
D Harvey Firestone

8. Per Herzberg's two-factor theory, what actually drives genuine motivation beyond preventing dissatisfaction?

A Job security
B The work itself and achievement
C Salary increases
D Nicer overall working conditions

9. Al Smith used the challenge framework to recruit a reluctant Lewis E. Lawes for which daunting position?

A Head of National Cash Register
B Warden of Sing Sing Prison
C Manager of a steel mill
D Director of a newspaper syndicate

10. Which is NOT one of Carnegie's four steps for launching a constructive team challenge?

A Framing the goal as a test of skill
B Celebrating the achievement publicly
C Threatening termination for missing targets
D Establishing a clear baseline metric

Go deeper

ONLINE This lesson on the web flashfeedlearningapp.com/study-guides/how-to-win-friends/advanced-persuasion-and-human-motivation

STUDY How to Win Friends and Influence People in the FlashFeed app flashfeedlearningapp.com/packs/how-to-win-friends

LESSON 5 OF 6

Leadership: Changing People Without Giving Offense

Praise Before Critique, Indirect Correction, and Vulnerability · Inquisitive Guidance, Face-Saving, and Elevating Reputation

WHAT YOU'LL BE ABLE TO DO

- Begin critique with honest praise, call attention to mistakes indirectly, and share your own past errors first.
- Ask questions instead of issuing direct orders, save the other person's face, and give them a fine reputation to live up to.

Be a Leader: How to Change People Without Offense

This study guide examines the executive and managerial leadership toolkit for correcting mistakes, elevating performance, and inspiring behavioral transformation while preserving human dignity.

Praise Before Critique, Indirect Correction, and Vulnerability

When a leader must address deficiencies or deliver corrective feedback, the psychological entry point is paramount. Just as a barber applies soothing, warm lather before shaving a client to soften the beard and eliminate friction, an effective leader **begins with genuine praise and honest appreciation**.

When **President William McKinley** needed to reject a poorly conceived campaign speech written by a prominent political ally, he did not criticize the text. Instead, he praised its literary eloquence and rhetorical brilliance lavishly, before gently explaining why current political strategy required a different emphasis, asking the author to draft a replacement. The author departed inspired and complied eagerly.

The first leadership rule: **Begin with praise and honest appreciation.**

When transitioning from praise to corrective feedback, many managers fall into the **"But" Trap**. Saying: *"We are so proud of your progress, John, BUT your sales numbers are lagging"* instantly negates the praise, making it feel like a manipulative preamble to an attack. By simply substituting the word **"AND"**, the feedback is transformed: *"We are so proud of your progress, John, AND by applying your focus to sales outreach next month, your revenue will climb alongside your other achievements."*

Leaders also excel at **Calling Attention to Mistakes Indirectly**. When **Charles Schwab** walked through one of his steel mills and noticed workers smoking directly beneath a "No Smoking" sign, he did not shout or point to the sign. Instead, he handed each worker an expensive cigar and said warmly: *"I'd appreciate it, boys, if you'd smoke these outside."* The men loved Schwab because he corrected them with courtesy and respect. Department store magnate **John Wanamaker** used the same approach: when

he saw an unattended customer while clerks chatted in a corner, Wanamaker quietly stepped behind the counter, served the customer himself, and handed the wrapped package to the clerks without a single reprimand.

The second leadership rule: **Call attention to people's mistakes indirectly.**

Corrective guidance is far easier to accept when the leader exhibits humility by **Talking About Their Own Mistakes First**. Acknowledging past errors demonstrates empathy and bridges the gap between authority and subordinate.

When Dale Carnegie mentored his nineteen-year-old niece **Josephine** as his secretary, he found himself frustrated by her clerical errors. He checked his temper by reflecting: *"Dale, you are twice as old as Josephine and have had ten thousand times as much business experience. How could you expect her to possess your judgment? You made far worse mistakes at nineteen."* By opening his coaching with his own youthful blunders, Josephine accepted guidance without resentment.

The third leadership rule: **Talk about your own mistakes before criticizing the other person.**

Inquisitive Guidance, Face-Saving, and Elevating Reputation

Authoritarian leaders issue blunt commands; transformative leaders guide through **Thoughtful Questions**. Industrialist **Owen D. Young**, chairman of General Electric, never issued a direct order. He invariably framed guidance as inquiries: *"Do you think this would work?"* or *"What do you think of this approach?"*

Questions stimulate creative collaboration, make instructions palatable, and allow team members to feel that they are active co-creators of policy rather than mere cogs executing orders.

The fourth leadership rule: **Ask questions instead of giving direct orders.**

The fifth principle is the inviolable rule of **Face-Saving**. French aviator and philosopher **Antoine de Saint-Exupéry** captured this profound truth:

> *"I have no right to say or do anything that diminishes a man in his own eyes. What matters is not what I think of him, but what he thinks of himself. Hurting a man in his dignity is a crime."*

When General Electric needed to replace electrical genius **Charles Steinmetz** as department head due to administrative disorder, they did not demote him. Instead, they bestowed upon him the prestigious title of *Consulting Engineer of the General Electric Company*, preserving his dignity while freeing his brilliance for research.

The fifth leadership rule: **Let the other person save face.**

To cultivate excellence, leaders must **Praise the Slightest Improvement**. In behavioral psychology, **Operant Shaping** reinforces incremental progress toward a desired objective. Praise acts like sunlight to the human spirit.

The sixth leadership rule: **Praise the slightest improvement and praise every improvement. Be "hearty in your approbation and lavish in your praise."**

When seeking to elevate performance, apply the psychological principle of **Giving a Dog a Good Name**. If you want a person to cultivate a specific virtue, treat them as though that trait were already one of their defining characteristics. Quoting Shakespeare: *"Assume a virtue, if you have it not."*

The seventh leadership rule: **Give the other person a fine reputation to live up to.**

Finally, leaders must use encouragement to **Make the Fault Seem Easy to Correct**, and ensure the other party is genuinely happy about carrying out the requested action.

The eighth leadership rule: **Use encouragement. Make the fault seem easy to correct.** The ninth leadership rule: **Make the other person happy about doing the thing you suggest.**

Key terms

Indirect Behavioral Modeling

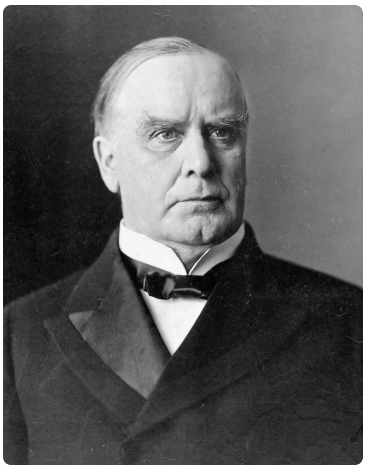
Teaching correct behavior through personal demonstration or a considerate corrective gesture, rather than a verbal reprimand.

Operant Behavioral Shaping

The psychological method of praising tiny, early improvements to build behavioral momentum toward full mastery.

Key facts

> **The Barber's Lather Metaphor**
>
> Just as warm lather softens the beard before shaving, sincere praise softens the ego before constructive critique.



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McKinley's Diplomatic Rejection

When President **William McKinley** needed to reject a poorly conceived campaign speech written by a close political ally, he didn't criticize the writing. He praised its eloquence and rhetorical brilliance lavishly first, then gently explained why the current strategy called for a different emphasis, and asked the author to try a new draft. The author left inspired, not wounded, and happily complied.

Principle 22: Praise Before Critique

The first leadership rule for changing people without offense is: Begin with praise and honest appreciation.

The 'But' Trap

Saying "We're proud of your progress, John, BUT your numbers are lagging" instantly cancels the praise: the word "but" tells the listener the compliment was just a setup for the real attack. Swap in "and" instead: "We're proud of your progress, John, AND by focusing on outreach next month, your results will climb alongside your other wins." The praise stays intact, and the feedback lands as encouragement rather than a reversal.

Schwab's Cigars, Wanamaker's Counter

When **Charles Schwab** caught mill workers smoking directly under a "No Smoking" sign, he didn't shout, he handed each man an expensive cigar and said, "I'd appreciate it, boys, if you'd smoke these outside." Department store magnate **John Wanamaker** used the same instinct: seeing an unattended customer while clerks chatted nearby, he quietly stepped behind the counter and served the customer himself, without a word of reprimand. Both are examples of indirect behavioral modeling: teaching the right behavior by demonstration rather than verbal correction.

Principle 23: Indirect Correction

The second leadership rule for changing people without offense is: Call attention to people's mistakes indirectly.

Vulnerability Builds Trust

Leaders who admit their own mistakes before correcting someone else build trust rather than losing authority; pretending infallibility only breeds resentment. When Carnegie caught himself losing patience with the clerical errors of his 19-year-old secretary-niece **Josephine**, he calmed himself by remembering: "You made far worse mistakes at nineteen." Leading with his own youthful blunders let Josephine accept his coaching without resentment.



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Prince von Bülow Calms the Kaiser's Fury

When Kaiser Wilhelm II's indiscreet interview in Britain's *Daily Telegraph* caused an international uproar, the Kaiser turned his fury on **Prince von Bülow**, his chancellor, for having let the remarks be published. Von Bülow's first instinct — protesting that no one would believe the Kaiser had said such things — only enraged the Kaiser further. Von Bülow then reversed course: he praised the Kaiser's superior knowledge of military, naval, and scientific matters, modestly admitting his own expertise lay only in diplomacy and history. The Kaiser's anger melted into warmth.

Principle 24: Own Mistakes First

The third leadership rule for changing people without offense is: Talk about your own mistakes before criticizing the other person.

A 4-Step Feedback Script

Carnegie's leadership chapters distill into one repeatable feedback script. Begin with sincere, specific praise for something genuinely done well. Connect that praise to future improvement using "and," never "but." Share a relevant mistake of your own to establish shared fallibility, then model the standard you want and express real confidence the person can meet it.



Bain · CC BY-SA 4.0

Owen D. Young's Question Leadership

Owen D. Young, chairman of General Electric, reportedly never issued a direct order: he framed guidance as questions instead, "Do you think this would work?" or "What do you think of this approach?" Questions stimulate creative collaboration, make instructions easier to accept, and let people feel like active co-creators of a plan rather than cogs simply executing someone else's orders.

Principle 25: Ask Questions

The fourth leadership rule for changing people without offense is: Ask questions instead of giving direct orders.



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Saint-Exupéry and Steinmetz's Title

French aviator and author **Antoine de Saint-Exupéry** wrote: "I have no right to say or do anything that diminishes a man in his own eyes… hurting a man in his dignity is a crime." General Electric lived this out with its brilliant but administratively chaotic engineer **Charles Steinmetz**: rather than demote him, the company created the prestigious title "Consulting Engineer," preserving his dignity while freeing him for research.

Principle 26: Saving Face

The fifth leadership rule for changing people without offense is: Let the other person save face.

Praise Is Sunlight

Constant criticism doesn't keep people sharp, it withers their enthusiasm and breeds performance anxiety, while praise acts like sunlight to the human spirit. This works through what psychologists call operant shaping: praising tiny, early improvements builds momentum toward full mastery step by step. Principle 27: praise the slightest improvement, and praise every improvement.

Principle 27: Praising Every Improvement

The sixth leadership rule for changing people without offense is: Praise the slightest improvement and praise every improvement.

Giving a Dog a Good Name

If you want a person to develop a specific virtue, act as though that trait were already one of their defining strengths.



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Shakespeare: Assume a Virtue

In *Hamlet*, **William Shakespeare** wrote: "Assume a virtue, if you have it not." Carnegie turns this line into a leadership tool: if you want someone to develop a specific strength, treat them as though that trait were already one of their defining qualities. People tend to live up to the reputation they're given, Principle 28, give the other person a fine reputation to live up to.

Principle 28: Fine Reputation

The seventh leadership rule for changing people without offense is: Give the other person a fine reputation to live up to.

Principle 29: Make Faults Easy to Correct

The eighth leadership rule for changing people without offense is: Use encouragement. Make the fault seem easy to correct.

Make the Task Something They Want

To make someone genuinely happy about doing what you ask, Carnegie lays out a sequence: align the request with the person's own talents and interests, attach an honorary title or specific responsibility that signals status, and clearly explain why the contribution matters to the larger effort. Finish by expressing sincere gratitude and celebrating the completed work — the ninth and final leadership rule in this part of Carnegie's system.

Matched pairs

Each item on the left goes with the one on the right.

President McKinley's Speech Rejection
→ Praising the draft's eloquence before explaining why strategy required a rewritten version

Charles Schwab's Cigar Diplomacy
→ Handing cigars to mill workers under a 'No Smoking' sign and politely asking them to smoke outside

John Wanamaker's Counter Service
→ Quietly stepping behind the counter to serve an ignored customer himself without scolding clerks

Prince von Bülow and the Kaiser
→ Praising the Kaiser's superior military and scientific knowledge to defuse his fury after the Daily Telegraph scandal

Owen D. Young's Question Leadership
→ Never issuing direct orders, but asking: 'Do you think this would work?'

Antoine de Saint-Exupéry on Human Dignity
→ I have no right to say or do anything that diminishes a man in his own eyes

Shakespeare's Counsel in Hamlet → Assume a virtue, if you have it not

Step by step

Delivering Feedback with Vulnerability and Indirect Framing

1. Begin with sincere, specific praise for genuine contributions.
2. Connect the praise to future improvement using the conjunction 'and' rather than 'but.'
3. Share a relevant personal mistake or early blunder to establish shared fallibility.
4. Model the desired standard and express total confidence in their ability to master it.

Making Others Happy About Suggested Tasks

1. Align the requested task with the individual's personal talents, interests, and ambitions.
2. Bestow an honorary title or specific responsibility that conveys professional status.
3. Communicate the broader organizational importance of the contribution clearly.
4. Express sincere gratitude and celebrate the successful completion of the assignment.

Self-test

Answer each question from memory, then check your work against the answer key.

1. Before rejecting a poorly written campaign speech from a political ally, what did President McKinley do first?

- A Praised its eloquence and brilliance
- B Publicly criticized its weak strategy
- C Rejected it without any comment
- D Sent it to another writer to edit

2. Which of these does NOT reflect calling attention to a mistake indirectly?

- A Handing cigars to smokers under the sign
- B Quietly serving an ignored customer himself
- C Praising ability, then noting a misunderstanding
- D Publicly reprimanding an employee at a meeting

3. A manager avoids saying 'BUT' and instead says 'AND' when giving feedback. This illustrates avoiding what?

- A Indirect Behavioral Modeling
- B Operant Behavioral Shaping
- C The 'But' Trap
- D Giving a Dog a Good Name

4. How did Prince von Bülow respond when a furious Kaiser Wilhelm II blamed him for the Daily Telegraph scandal?

- A Ignored the controversy until it faded
- B Praised the Kaiser's superior knowledge to defuse his anger
- C Publicly contradicted the Kaiser's statements
- D Demanded the Kaiser issue a formal apology

5. What did Dale Carnegie remind himself of when frustrated by his niece Josephine's clerical mistakes?

- A That she needed more formal training
- B That her errors would cost the company money
- C That he'd made far worse mistakes at her age
- D That criticism was the fastest way to improve her

6. How did Owen D. Young, chairman of General Electric, typically give guidance to his team?

- A By issuing direct written memos
- B By framing guidance as questions
- C By delegating all decisions to supervisors
- D By publicly announcing strict quotas

7. How did General Electric let engineer Charles Steinmetz save face when replaced as department head?

- A Reassigned him to an unrelated department
- B Quietly reduced his salary without explanation
- C Publicly announced his administrative failures
- D Gave him a prestigious new title while quietly replacing him as department head

8. Carnegie's 'Giving a Dog a Good Name' principle, echoing Shakespeare's 'assume a virtue,' means leaders should:

- A Treat a person as if a desired trait is already theirs
- B Withhold praise until the goal is fully achieved
- C Assign the most difficult tasks to top performers
- D Reward top performers with bigger titles only

9. Who wrote the line 'I have no right to say or do anything that diminishes a man in his own eyes'?

- A William Shakespeare, sonneteer
- B Dale Carnegie
- C Antoine de Saint-Exupery
- D Owen D. Young

10. Which of these is NOT one of this objective's leadership rules (questions, face-saving, reputation)?

- A Give the other person a fine reputation to live up to
- B Begin with praise and honest appreciation
- C Let the other person save face
- D Ask questions instead of giving direct orders

Go deeper

ONLINE This lesson on the web flashfeedlearningapp.com/study-guides/how-to-win-friends/leadership-changing-people-without-giving-offense

STUDY How to Win Friends and Influence People in the FlashFeed app flashfeedlearningapp.com/packs/how-to-win-friends

LESSON 6 OF 6

Practical Persuasion and Relationship Mastery

The Miracle Letters and Psychological Appeals · Domestic Harmony, Everyday Courtesy, and Lifelong Mastery

WHAT YOU'LL BE ABLE TO DO

- Apply psychological appeals and the Miracle Letter technique by asking for small, honorable favors that make people feel valued.
- Maintain domestic harmony and relationship longevity through daily courtesy, sincere appreciation, and avoiding nagging.

This study guide examines the applied mechanics of persuasive correspondence ("The Miracle Letters"), domestic human relations, and the nine foundational suggestions for lifelong behavioral mastery.

The Miracle Letters and Psychological Appeals

Written correspondence provides a demanding test of human relations principles. In this section, Dale Carnegie dissects business inquiry letters that achieved extraordinary response rates — one pulled 42.5% against a typical 5–8% baseline, another pulled nearly 50% against a typical 1–3% baseline — from busy dealers and architects across the country. The secret of these **"Miracle Letters"** lies in a precise psychological architecture:

1. **Requesting a Small, Low-Friction Favor**: Opening with a modest request disarms suspicion and invites cooperation.
2. **Appealing to the Recipient's Superior Expertise and Status**: Acknowledging the recipient as an authoritative leader in their industry flatters their professional pride without resorting to transparent sycophancy.
3. **Framing the Inquiry as an Opportunity to Bestow Mentorship**: Positioning the sender as an earnest student seeking guidance triggers the recipient's natural desire to demonstrate benevolence and competence.

This methodology directly leverages the famous **Benjamin Franklin Effect**. In his autobiography, **Benjamin Franklin** describes how he neutralized a hostile political rival in the Pennsylvania Assembly. Rather than debating or currying favor, Franklin sent a courteous note asking to borrow a rare book from the rival's library. Flattered by the request, the rival sent the book immediately. When they next met, the gentleman initiated conversation with utmost civility and remained Franklin's devoted ally for life. As Franklin observed:

> *"He that has once done you a kindness will be more ready to do you another than he whom you yourself have obliged."*

Marketing executive **Ken R. Dyke** of Johns-Manville applied this exact dynamic to survey busy building material dealers across the United States. While standard corporate questionnaires yielded dismal 5% response rates, Dyke's letter—requesting veteran wisdom to prevent advertising mistakes—achieved an unprecedented 40% response rate and forged enduring industry partnerships.

The core rules of written influence:

- Never make arrogant demands; frame requests as polite appeals for assistance.
- Acknowledge and respect the recipient's time and status.
- Follow up with prompt, sincere gratitude and report tangible results.

Domestic Harmony, Everyday Courtesy, and Lifelong Mastery

The principles of human relations are nowhere more critical—nor more frequently neglected—than in domestic and family partnerships. Dale Carnegie outlines **Seven Rules for Making Your Home Life Happier**:

1. **Don't nag, nag, nag.** The tragic marriage of **Count Leo Tolstoy** and Countess Sophia illustrates how constant recriminations and domestic nagging can destroy love, genius, and peace of mind.
2. **Don't try to make your partner over.** Respect individuality and allow family members their distinct eccentricities.
3. **Don't criticize.** Domestic criticism wounds more deeply than public reproach.
4. **Give honest appreciation.** Regularly express verbal gratitude for domestic efforts, companionship, and shared responsibilities.
5. **Pay little attentions.** Small acts of thoughtfulness—bringing flowers, sending affectionate notes, remembering anniversaries—sustain romantic bonds.
6. **Be courteous.** Rudeness is "the cancer that devours love," in Carnegie's words; treat spouses and children with the same elegance and respect shown to clients and strangers.
7. **Read a good book on the sexual side of marriage.** Address the physical and psychological dimensions of marital partnership with mature understanding.

To integrate Carnegie's principles into daily reflex, apply the **Nine Suggestions for Getting the Most Out of This Book**:

1. **Develop a Deep, Driving Desire**: A passionate commitment to master interpersonal relations is the prerequisite for transformation.
2. **Spaced Repetition**: Read each chapter twice before advancing to ensure deep comprehension.
3. **Pause and Reflect**: Frequently stop and ask how you can apply each specific suggestion in your immediate daily life.
4. **Active Annotation**: Underscore every vital concept and principle.

5. **Monthly Review**: Re-read the book on a regular monthly cadence.
6. **Apply Principles at Every Opportunity**: Use the text as a living, operational manual for resolving conflict and building rapport.
7. **The Penalty Game**: Accelerate behavioral change by agreeing to pay a small fine to colleagues or family whenever caught violating a principle.
8. **Weekly Self-Audit**: Conduct a weekly retrospective reviewing errors made, techniques utilized, and progress achieved.
9. **Keep a Diary**: Maintain a written record detailing practical applications and measurable outcomes.

Carnegie's human relations canon is not a system of superficial tricks or manipulative tactics; it is a profound, lifelong philosophy that honors human dignity, nurtures empathy, and enriches every dimension of human life.

Key terms

The Benjamin Franklin Effect

The psychological phenomenon where performing a favor for someone increases cognitive liking and commitment toward that person.

The Sincere Inquirer Posture

Positioning oneself as an earnest, respectful learner seeking guidance from an established authority.

The Psychological Foot-in-the-Door

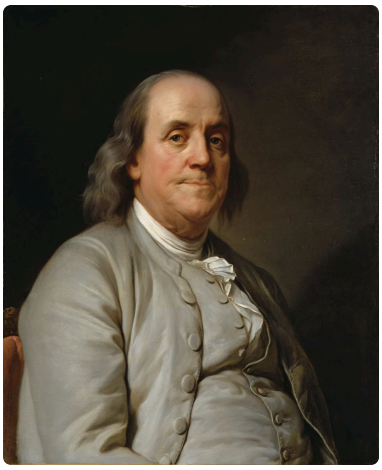
Securing initial small cooperation creates psychological commitment, facilitating larger agreements in the future.

Active Spaced Review

The learning practice of reading chapters twice, highlighting key ideas, and reviewing the book monthly to build reflex.

Key facts

> **The Miracle Letter Psychology**
>
> Written persuasion achieves extraordinary response rates by asking for small favors and honoring the recipient's expertise.



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The Benjamin Franklin Effect

In his autobiography, **Benjamin Franklin** describes neutralizing a hostile rival in the Pennsylvania Assembly not by debating him, but by asking to borrow a rare book from his library. Flattered, the rival sent it at once, and became a devoted friend for life. The psychology behind it is cognitive dissonance: having done someone a favor, we unconsciously conclude "I helped this person, so I must value and respect them," a pattern now known as the Benjamin Franklin Effect.

Ken Dyke's 42.5% Response Rate

Standard corporate surveys typically pulled a dismal 5–8% response rate from busy building-material dealers. Marketing executive **Ken R. Dyke** of Johns-Manville flipped the approach: instead of demanding a survey be filled out, his letter asked veteran dealers to share their hard-won wisdom to help prevent advertising mistakes. The reframe, from demand to request for mentorship, achieved an unprecedented 42.5% response rate.

The Small Favor Wedge

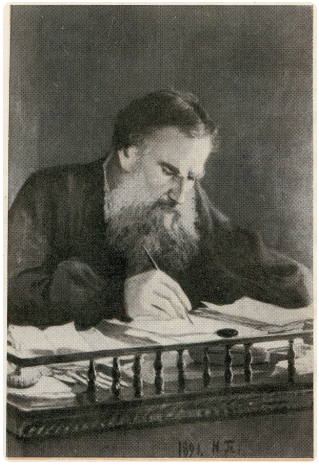
Securing a low-friction, easily granted initial favor opens the door for substantial long-term collaboration.

Writing a Carnegie 'Miracle Letter'

Carnegie's high-response "miracle letters" follow a precise architecture. Open with a small, low-friction favor rather than a demand. Acknowledge the recipient's expertise and respect their busy schedule, making the response mechanism effortless. Explain briefly how their guidance helps you avoid mistakes, and always close with sincere, unfeigned thanks.

Warmth in Business Writing

Injecting genuine human warmth and personal details into correspondence distinguishes it from cold corporate boilerplate.



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The Tolstoy Marital Tragedy

Count Leo Tolstoy's marriage devolved into constant misery due to ceaseless nagging, criticism, and emotional warfare.

> **Rule 1 for Home Happiness**
>
> The first rule for making your home life happier is: Don't nag, nag, nag.

> **Rule 2 for Home Happiness**
>
> The second rule for making your home life happier is: Don't try to make your partner over.

> **Rule 3 for Home Happiness**
>
> The third rule for making your home life happier is: Don't criticize.

> **Rule 4 for Home Happiness**
>
> The fourth rule for making your home life happier is: Give honest appreciation.

> **Rule 5 for Home Happiness**
>
> The fifth rule for making your home life happier is: Pay little attentions.



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Rule 6 for Home Happiness

The sixth rule for making your home life happier is: Be courteous.

> **Rule 7 for Home Happiness**
>
> The seventh rule for making your home life happier is: Read a good book on the sexual side of marriage.

Rudeness Is "The Cancer That Devours Love"

Carnegie calls rudeness "the cancer that devours love": small, repeated discourtesies erode a relationship far more effectively than any single big fight. His sixth rule for home happiness is disarmingly simple: treat your spouse and children with the same courtesy and elegance you'd show a stranger or a client, since strangers rarely get away with the rudeness family members routinely tolerate from each other.

How to Actually Master This

Reading about human relations once changes nothing on its own; Carnegie insists mastery requires a deep, driving desire to improve, not passive interest. His method for making it stick: read each chapter twice before moving on, underline the vital ideas, and reread the whole book every month until the principles become reflex rather than effort.

Three Habits That Make It Stick

Carnegie offers three concrete habits for turning knowledge into behavior. The Penalty Game: agree to pay a small cash fine to a colleague or family member every time you're caught violating a principle. The Weekly Self-Audit: review the week's conversations and conflicts, asking what you did right, what you got wrong, and how to improve. And keep a written diary tracking real applications and their results, the record itself reinforces the habit.

The Carnegie Ethos

Dale Carnegie's principles are not superficial tricks, but a way of living that honors human dignity and enriches connection.

Matched pairs

Each item on the left goes with the one on the right.

Ken R. Dyke at Johns-Manville
→ Achieving a 42.5% response rate from lumber dealers by asking for veteran wisdom to guide advertising

Gratitude in Written Persuasion
→ Following up promptly with sincere, unfeigned thanks for the advice given

The Penalty Game Method
→ Paying a small cash fine to colleagues or family whenever caught violating a principle

Step by step

Crafting a Carnegie 'Miracle Letter'

1. Open with a polite, low-friction request for a small favor.
2. Acknowledge the recipient's preeminent standing, expertise, or veteran experience.
3. Explain briefly how their specific guidance will help you avoid serious mistakes.
4. Make the response mechanism effortless and express sincere, unfeigned appreciation.

Weekly Human Relations Self-Audit

1. Review interpersonal conversations and conflicts from the preceding week.
2. Ask: What mistakes did I make? What did I do right? How could I improve performance?
3. Identify specific Carnegie principles that could have resolved friction smoothly.
4. Commit to applying the adjusted approach in upcoming interactions.

Self-test

Answer each question from memory, then check your work against the answer key.

1. What does the Benjamin Franklin Effect describe?

- A Doing a favor increases liking for the recipient
- B Small favors create escalating commitment
- C Posing as an eager student flatters experts
- D A low-friction ask opens bigger collaboration

2. Whose autobiography describes neutralizing a rival by borrowing a rare book?

- A Ken R. Dyke
- B Count Leo Tolstoy
- C Benjamin Franklin
- D Dale Carnegie

3. Which opening most closely follows the Miracle Letter technique?

- A A blunt request for a meeting
- B A free product sample offer
- C A formal demand for survey data
- D A small, low-friction favor request

4. Which is NOT part of the Miracle Letter's three-part psychological approach?

- A Appealing to the recipient's expertise
- B Transparent, obvious flattery
- C Framing the ask as seeking mentorship
- D A small, honorable favor request

5. What response rate did Ken Dyke's letter achieve, versus the standard 5–8%?

- A 42.5%
- B 60%
- C 80%
- D 25%

6. What is the first of Carnegie's Seven Rules for Home Happiness?

A Give honest appreciation
B Don't criticize
C Be courteous
D Don't nag, nag, nag

7. Carnegie calls which behavior "the cancer that devours love"?

A Criticism
B Trying to change your partner
C Rudeness
D Nagging

8. A spouse never says thanks for years of housework. Which rule is being ignored?

A Pay little attentions
B Give honest appreciation
C Be courteous
D Don't nag, nag, nag

9. Which is NOT one of Carnegie's Seven Rules for Home Happiness?

A Be courteous
B Pay little attentions
C Plan a family budget together
D Always give honest appreciation

10. What is Rule 6 for making your home life happier?

A Pay little attentions
B Don't try to make your partner over
C Read a book on marriage's sexual side
D Be courteous

Go deeper

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STUDY How to Win Friends and Influence People in the FlashFeed app flashfeedlearningapp.com/packs/how-to-win-friends

Answer key

Lesson 1: Fundamental Techniques in Handling People

1. C Meade would turn defensive, maybe resign

Carnegie offers this only as his guess: the letter would have eased Lincoln's feelings but made Meade justify himself and perhaps forced him to resign, the same dynamic as any sharp criticism.

2. B Rewarded for good behavior

Skinner showed animals rewarded for good behavior learn faster and retain it longer than animals punished for bad behavior, which is why punishment/criticism backfires on people too.

3. D Al Capone

Al Capone reflected that he had given people 'the lighter pleasures' and only got abuse in return, illustrating how even hardened criminals rationalize their conduct.

4. A Near-fatal duel over a satirical letter

Lincoln's satirical letter mocking James Shields led to a near-fatal duel; the shock cured him of ever mocking or insulting anyone again.

5. C It builds trust in the critic

Carnegie says criticism wounds pride, triggers self-justification, and arouses resentment that can last decades — it never builds trust in the critic.

6. A Comes from the heart, unselfish

Carnegie says sincere appreciation originates from the heart and is unselfish, while flattery comes 'from the teeth out' and is selfish and transactional.

7. B The desire to be important

Dewey called it 'the desire to be important'; William James separately called the same hunger the 'craving to be appreciated'.

8. D What the fish craves

Carnegie says an angler baits the hook with what the fish wants, not strawberries and cream he personally loves — persuasion works the same way.

9. A Arouse enthusiasm through praise

Schwab said his greatest asset was arousing enthusiasm through appreciation and encouragement, being 'anxious to praise but loath to find fault'.

10. D Seeing the other person's view

Ford said success lies in getting the other person's point of view and seeing things from their angle as well as your own.

Lesson 2: Six Ways to Make People Like You

1. C Publilius Syrus

Carnegie opens Principle 4 by quoting Roman writer Publilius Syrus's observation about mutual interest.

2. D Two months

Carnegie's claim contrasts two months of genuine interest in others with two years spent trying to attract interest to yourself.

3. B Theodore Roosevelt

Roosevelt greeted staff like kitchen maid Alice by name, exemplifying genuine interest in others.

4. A Action and feeling move together

James showed action and feeling are reciprocal, so consciously smiling can directly shift how you feel.

5. A Testing the person on their own name later

Napoleon III's real method involved asking for repetition and spelling, repeating the name, and writing it down—not quizzing the person.

6. B Listening intently, staying quiet

Carnegie barely spoke; he simply listened with total absorption, and the botanist called him a wonderful conversationalist.

7. D Theodore Roosevelt

Roosevelt studied topics like cattle ranching or naval architecture in advance so he could talk about a guest's own interests.

8. C By asking to see his famous framed million-dollar cheque

Chalif asked to see the executive's famous framed million-dollar cheque, which led to full funding for the boy's trip.

9. A You're very welcome

Carnegie specifically quotes 'I'm sorry to trouble you,' 'Would you be so kind as to,' and 'Thank you'; 'You're very welcome,' though polite, isn't among his named courtesies.

10. C Benjamin Disraeli

British Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli is credited with this counsel about framing conversation around others' interests.

Lesson 3: Winning People to Your Way of Thinking

1. B Avoid the argument entirely

Carnegie's first rule says the only way to get the best of an argument is to avoid it; winning by facts only wounds pride and creates enemies.

2. A Agreed the trucks were excellent

O'Haire, who sold trucks for the White Motor Company, disarmed customers by agreeing enthusiastically that the rival truck they praised was excellent, leaving nothing to argue against, then pitched his own White truck.

3. C Telling them 'You're wrong'

Carnegie's second rule warns that telling someone 'You're wrong' attacks their pride and provokes resistance; the other options are recommended tactics.

4. D I conceive

Franklin replaced flat assertions like 'certainly' with tentative phrases such as 'I conceive,' softening his opinions and reducing pushback.

5. A Agreed and offered to redo the work free

Warren admitted his mistakes quickly and emphatically, offering to redo the illustrations for free, which won the client's trust and more work.

6. C Body contracts defensively

Carnegie notes that saying 'No' triggers a defensive physiological contraction, while a 'Yes' opens the path toward agreement.

7. D Asking a question he could only answer 'yes' to

Eberson asked a question the depositor could only answer 'Yes' to, building momentum via the Socratic yes-yes method; the others describe different Carnegie tactics.

8. B Asking a radiologist for advice on a prototype

The X-ray manufacturer let the radiologist advise on an unfinished prototype, so he felt ownership and bought it; the others illustrate friendly openings, yes-yes, and letting others talk.

9. B A drop of honey catches more flies

Carnegie cites Lincoln's line that a drop of honey catches more flies than a gallon of gall to show friendliness beats force.

10. D Casually dropped ideas in conversation

House planted ideas casually so Wilson would absorb them and champion them as his own, illustrating the idea-ownership persuasion tactic.

Lesson 4: Advanced Persuasion and Human Motivation

1. C J. Pierpont Morgan

J. Pierpont Morgan made this observation, which underlies Principle 19: appeal to the nobler motive rather than the real, self-interested one.

2. D Nobler paternal instincts

Rockefeller reminded the photographers they were fathers too, appealing to nobler motives instead of threatening legal or financial pressure.

3. A They care intensely about their own affairs, too

Goode's exercise shows everyone is as absorbed in their own affairs as you are in yours, the foundation of genuine perspective-taking (Principle 17).

4. B Throwing a handful of pennies onto the floor

Yeamans threw a handful of pennies on the floor to show the grocer his old cash register was "literally throwing away pennies" on every sale, making the point vivid and tangible instead of a dry sales pitch.

5. A Rockefeller's appeal to paternal pride

Rockefeller's appeal to editors as fathers illustrates nobler motives; Yeamans's pennies dramatize an idea, Goode's exercise builds empathy, and Schwab's chalk mark is a challenge.

6. D 6

Schwab chalked a plain '6' for the day shift's heats poured; the night shift then wrote '7', and the day shift answered with '10'.

7. C Charles Schwab

Charles Schwab summarized his own mill-floor method with this quote, framing competition as a route to excellence rather than money.

8. B The work itself and achievement

Herzberg found that pay and conditions only prevent dissatisfaction; real motivation springs from the work itself, responsibility, and achievement.

9. B Warden of Sing Sing Prison

Smith framed the notoriously difficult wardenship of Sing Sing Prison as a high-stakes test of character rather than pleading or offering more money.

10. C Threatening termination for missing targets

Carnegie's method uses transparent benchmarks and pride, explicitly without scolding or threats; threatening termination contradicts the approach.

Lesson 5: Leadership: Changing People Without Giving Offense

1. A Praised its eloquence and brilliance

McKinley praised the speech's eloquence before gently explaining why a different emphasis was needed, illustrating 'begin with praise and honest appreciation.'

2. D Publicly reprimanding an employee at a meeting

Schwab, Wanamaker, and von Bulow all corrected mistakes without direct confrontation; publicly reprimanding someone is direct, not indirect.

3. C The 'But' Trap

Swapping 'but' for 'and' avoids the 'But' Trap, where 'but' cancels out the praise that came before it.

4. B Praised the Kaiser's superior knowledge to defuse his anger

Von Bülow calmed the Kaiser's fury by praising his superior military, naval, and scientific knowledge rather than arguing back — flattery, not confrontation, saved the moment.

5. C That he'd made far worse mistakes at her age

Carnegie recalled his own worse mistakes at nineteen, which let him coach Josephine without resentment, per 'talk about your own mistakes first.'

6. B By framing guidance as questions

Young never issued direct orders; he framed guidance as questions, letting people feel like co-creators of policy.

7. D Gave him a prestigious new title while quietly replacing him as department head

GE preserved Steinmetz's dignity with a prestigious title rather than an outright demotion, exemplifying letting someone save face.

8. A Treat a person as if a desired trait is already theirs

Treating someone as though they already have a virtue encourages them to live up to that reputation, per 'assume a virtue, if you have it not.'

9. C Antoine de Saint-Exupery

Saint-Exupery's words on human dignity underlie Carnegie's face-saving principle applied to Steinmetz's title change.

10. B Begin with praise and honest appreciation

Ask questions, save face, and give a fine reputation are this objective's rules; beginning with praise is a separate rule about giving feedback.

Lesson 6: Practical Persuasion and Relationship Mastery

1. A Doing a favor increases liking for the recipient

The Franklin Effect is cognitive dissonance: doing someone a favor makes the doer like them more. Foot-in-the-door describes escalating commitment, a different concept.

2. C Benjamin Franklin

Franklin's autobiography describes borrowing a rare book from a hostile rival, which turned the rival into a lifelong ally.

3. D A small, low-friction favor request

Miracle Letters open with a small, easy-to-grant favor rather than a demand, which disarms suspicion and invites cooperation.

4. B Transparent, obvious flattery

Carnegie's method flatters expertise without resorting to transparent sycophancy, which does not build real partnerships.

5. A 42.5%

Ken Dyke's letter to building-material dealers pulled a 42.5% response rate, versus the usual 5–8% for standard surveys.

6. D Don't nag, nag, nag

Carnegie's first rule for a happier home life is simply: don't nag, nag, nag.

7. C Rudeness

Carnegie calls rudeness "the cancer that devours love," since small discourtesies erode intimacy more than any single big fight.

8. B Give honest appreciation

Rule 4 calls for honest, spoken appreciation of domestic effort, distinct from small gestures like flowers or notes.

9. C Plan a family budget together

Budgeting isn't among Carnegie's seven rules; the real rules cover nagging, criticism, appreciation, attentions, and courtesy.

10. D Be courteous

Rule 6 for home happiness is: be courteous, treating family with the same elegance shown to clients and strangers.

Sources

Lesson sources: How to Win Friends and Influence People — Dale Carnegie

- How to Win Friends and Influence People — Dale Carnegie
- Carnegie, Part 1, Ch. 1 and 57 more references — https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/How_to_Win_Friends_and_Influence_People

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The book

- *How to Win Friends & Influence People* by Dale Carnegie — flashfeedlearningapp.com/packs/how-to-win-friends

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