



PERSUADOLOGY

PSY · FIELD GUIDE 02

60 Tactics of Persuasion

What each tactic is, why it works on the human mind, and exactly how to use it, ethically.

FILE NO.

PSY-0602

SUBJECT

Influence

CONTENTS

60 tactics · 8 sections

ISSUED TO

CLASSIFIED

Sixty ways the human mind says yes

These sixty tactics are grounded in psychology, from cognitive biases to social dynamics.

The key to mastery is not just knowing them. It is understanding why they work, and using them to create outcomes where both sides win.

Each tactic is filed the same way: what it is, why it works, and how to use it in real conversations.

How to use this field guide

1. **Start with Section A.** The Cialdini Six are the foundation every other tactic builds on.
2. **Pick three, not sixty.** Choose three tactics that fit a conversation you have coming up this week.
3. **Run them for real.** Then note what happened in the field log at the back.

Rules of engagement

1. **Intent decides.** The same tactic can build a bridge or manipulate. Ask whether the other person would thank you if they saw exactly what you were doing.
2. **Truth only.** Scarcity, proof and authority work best when they're real. Never invent a deadline, a number or a credential.
3. **Both sides win.** Aim for agreements people are glad they made a week later, not just today.

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A

SECTION A · TACTICS 1-6

The Foundational Principles

The Cialdini Six

The six pillars of persuasion, first set out by Dr Robert Cialdini. Everything else in this guide builds on them.

01

The Principle of Reciprocity

TACTIC

THE TACTIC

Give something of value first, before you ask for anything in return.

WHY IT WORKS

Humans are wired to repay debts. When someone gives us a gift or does us a favour (even an unsolicited one), we feel a powerful social obligation to give something back.

HOW TO USE IT

Buy a colleague a coffee before asking for their help on a project. Provide a potential client with a free, valuable piece of insight before you even begin your pitch.

02

The Principle of Commitment & Consistency

TACTIC

THE TACTIC

Get someone to agree to a small, simple request first. This makes them far more likely to agree to a larger, related request later.

WHY IT WORKS

We have a deep need to be consistent with our past decisions and statements. Once we've publicly committed to something (even small), we feel pressure to act in a way that aligns with that commitment.

HOW TO USE IT

This is the "Foot-in-the-Door" technique. Ask a neighbour to keep an eye on your house for a day (small request) before later asking them to water your plants for a week (large request).

03 The Principle of Social Proof

TACTIC

THE TACTIC

Show that other people (especially people similar to your target) are already doing what you want them to do.

WHY IT WORKS

We are social creatures who look to others for cues on how to behave, especially in situations of uncertainty. If “everyone” is doing it, it must be the right thing to do.

HOW TO USE IT

Instead of saying “Our product is great,” say “Over 200 companies in your industry use our product to increase efficiency.” Customer testimonials and reviews are pure social proof.

04 The Principle of Liking

TACTIC

THE TACTIC

People are more easily persuaded by those they know and like. Build genuine rapport.

WHY IT WORKS

We trust people we like. Liking is built on similarity (common interests), compliments (genuine praise), and cooperation (working together on a goal).

HOW TO USE IT

Before a negotiation, take a moment to find a common interest – a favourite sports team, a shared hometown, a similar hobby. Give sincere compliments and smile.

05 The Principle of Authority

TACTIC

THE TACTIC

Demonstrate your credibility and expertise before you try to persuade.

WHY IT WORKS

We are conditioned to defer to people who are perceived as experts or authority figures. Uniforms, titles, and credentials all signal authority.

HOW TO USE IT

Have someone else introduce you and your accomplishments before you give a presentation. Display your diplomas or awards in your office. Use data and expert quotes to back up your claims.

06 The Principle of Scarcity

TACTIC

THE TACTIC

People want more of what they can have less of. Highlight genuine scarcity, such as limited time, limited quantity, or exclusive information.

WHY IT WORKS

We associate scarcity with value. Furthermore, the fear of missing out (FOMO) is a powerful motivator that pushes us to act quickly.

HOW TO USE IT

“This is the last one in stock.” “The special pricing is only available until Friday.” “I’m only sharing this opportunity with a few select partners.”

B

SECTION B · TACTICS 7-20

Advanced Tactics & Cognitive Biases

The mental shortcuts that shape how people respond to requests, numbers, stories and familiar faces.

07

The "Because" Justification

TACTIC

THE TACTIC

When you make a request, always give a reason – even if it seems obvious.

WHY IT WORKS

A well-known Harvard study by Ellen Langer showed that people were far more likely to let someone jump the queue to use a photocopier if they gave a reason. The simple word “because” triggers a mental shortcut of compliance.

HOW TO USE IT

Instead of “Can I go first?” try “Can I go first because I’m in a huge rush?”
The reason doesn’t even have to be spectacular.

08

The Door-in-the-Face Technique

TACTIC

THE TACTIC

Start by making a very large request that you know will likely be rejected. Then, retreat to the smaller, more reasonable request you actually wanted.

WHY IT WORKS

This engages the Reciprocity principle. The other person feels you have made a concession, so they feel obligated to make a concession in return (by agreeing to your smaller request).

HOW TO USE IT

“Would you be willing to lead this entire six-month project?” (They say no).
“Okay, I understand. In that case, could you at least handle the initial research phase for me?”

09 The Anchoring Bias

TACTIC

THE TACTIC

The first piece of information offered (the “anchor”) heavily influences all subsequent judgments and negotiations.

WHY IT WORKS

Our brain latches onto the first number it hears and uses it as a reference point, adjusting from there.

HOW TO USE IT

In a salary negotiation, be the first one to state a number. Make it ambitious but defensible. That number will “anchor” the entire rest of the conversation.

10 The Framing Effect

TACTIC

THE TACTIC

Frame your proposal in terms of what they stand to lose if they don't agree, rather than what they will gain.

WHY IT WORKS

The pain of losing something is psychologically twice as powerful as the pleasure of gaining the exact same thing (Loss Aversion).

HOW TO USE IT

Instead of “You'll gain 20% efficiency with this software,” try “Can you afford to keep losing a full day of work each week to inefficiency?”

11 The Benjamin Franklin Effect

TACTIC

THE TACTIC

Ask someone for a small favour.

WHY IT WORKS

It's counter-intuitive. We assume we do favours for people we like, but the psychology works in reverse too: we come to like people for whom we do favours. It resolves cognitive dissonance – “Why would I help this person if I didn't like them?”

HOW TO USE IT

Ask a colleague you want to build rapport with, “Hey, could you spare a moment to give me your opinion on this slide?”

12 The Labelling Technique

TACTIC

THE TACTIC

Assign a positive trait, attitude, or label to a person. Then, make a request that is consistent with that label.

WHY IT WORKS

It plays on their desire to be consistent with the positive label you've given them.

HOW TO USE IT

"You are such a generous person. That's why I wanted to ask if you'd be willing to contribute to the team gift." "You have such a great eye for detail; would you mind looking this over?"

13 The Illusion of Choice

TACTIC

THE TACTIC

Frame a request as a choice between two options, both of which lead to the outcome you want.

WHY IT WORKS

It gives the other person a sense of autonomy and control, which makes them far more likely to comply.

HOW TO USE IT

Instead of asking a child "Will you please put your shoes on?" ask, "Do you want to put on your red shoes or your blue shoes?" For a client: "Are you free to meet on Tuesday at 3 or Thursday at 10?" (not "When are you free?").

14 Mirroring and Matching

TACTIC

THE TACTIC

Subtly and respectfully mimic the other person's body language, speech rate, and tone of voice.

WHY IT WORKS

This creates a deep, subconscious feeling of rapport. It sends the signal "I am like you," which builds trust and likability.

HOW TO USE IT

If they lean forward, you lean forward. If they speak slowly and softly, you match their pace. Don't be an obvious mime; be subtle.

15 Using Their Name

TACTIC

THE TACTIC

Periodically use the other person's name in conversation.

WHY IT WORKS

As Dale Carnegie put it, a person's name is, to them, the sweetest sound in any language. Hearing it makes them feel seen, respected, and more engaged.

HOW TO USE IT

"That's a really interesting point, Sarah." "What are your thoughts on this, Tom?" Don't overdo it, or it will sound strange.

16 Strategic Nodding

TACTIC

THE TACTIC

When you are speaking and want them to agree with you, nod your head. When they are speaking, nod your head to show you're listening.

WHY IT WORKS

Nodding is a contagious social cue. When they see you nodding as you speak, they are more inclined to start nodding (and feeling agreeable) themselves. It also makes them feel heard, which lowers their defences.

HOW TO USE IT

As you're making a key point, nod slightly. "This is the best path forward, don't you think?" (while nodding).

17 Narrative Transportation

TACTIC

THE TACTIC

Tell a compelling story.

WHY IT WORKS

Stories bypass the logical, argumentative part of the brain and engage the emotional centres. When someone is "transported" into a narrative, they are less likely to counter-argue and more likely to internalise the story's message.

HOW TO USE IT

Don't just list facts about your product's success. Tell the story of a specific client who was struggling, how they found your product, and how it transformed their business.

18 The Pacing and Leading Technique

TACTIC

THE TACTIC

First, match the person's current reality and mood ("pacing"). Then, once you've established rapport, you can gently guide them to a different state ("leading").

WHY IT WORKS

It validates their feelings and shows you understand them. By meeting them where they are, you earn the right to lead them somewhere else.

HOW TO USE IT

If a customer is angry, start with "I can see you are incredibly frustrated, and you have every right to be. It's not acceptable." (Pacing). Once they calm down, you can say, "Let's work together to find a solution that will fix this for you." (Leading).

19 Ask for Advice, Not Feedback

TACTIC

THE TACTIC

When you want someone's buy-in on an idea, don't ask for "feedback." Instead, ask for "advice."

WHY IT WORKS

"Feedback" positions them as a critic. "Advice" positions them as a collaborator and a wise mentor. It flatters them and makes them a partner in the process, making them invested in the idea's success.

HOW TO USE IT

Instead of "Can I get your feedback on my proposal?" try "I'd love to get your advice on this proposal; I'm feeling a bit stuck on the marketing section."

20 The Mere-Exposure Effect

TACTIC

THE TACTIC

People develop a preference for things merely because they are familiar with them.

WHY IT WORKS

Familiarity creates a sense of comfort and safety. Our brains interpret familiar things as low-risk.

HOW TO USE IT

This is a long-term strategy. Don't be discouraged if an idea is rejected at first. Gently re-introduce it over time in different contexts. The more people see and hear your name, your brand, or your idea, the more they will subconsciously grow to like it.

C

SECTION C · TACTICS 21-27

Cognitive & Behavioural Tactics

How effort, memory and attention change what people value and what they remember.

21

The IKEA Effect

TACTIC

THE TACTIC

Get the other person to invest even a small amount of effort into your idea, project, or solution.

WHY IT WORKS

We irrationally overvalue things that we have helped create. The effort we put in makes us feel ownership and pride, leading to a much stronger commitment.

HOW TO USE IT

Don't present a fully finished plan. Instead, present an 85% solution and ask for their input on the final 15%. "I've drafted a proposal, but I'd love your expertise to help refine the implementation timeline."

22

The Zeigarnik Effect

TACTIC

THE TACTIC

People have a much better memory for uncompleted tasks or unresolved issues. Use cliffhangers.

WHY IT WORKS

Our brain craves closure. An incomplete story or idea creates a mental tension that keeps it top-of-mind, making the person eager to hear the resolution.

HOW TO USE IT

In a presentation or sales pitch, end a meeting by saying, "Next time, I'm going to show you exactly how we can apply this to your biggest challenge." This ensures they will be thinking about you and looking forward to the next meeting.

23 The Pratfall Effect

TACTIC

THE TACTIC

If you are already seen as competent and credible, admitting a small, relatable mistake or flaw can increase your appeal.

WHY IT WORKS

It humanises you and makes you seem more approachable and trustworthy. Perfection can be intimidating; a small blunder (the “pratfall”) makes you more relatable.

NOTE This only works if you've already established competence.

HOW TO USE IT

After a great presentation, you might say with a laugh, “I’m great with data, but as you can all see, my handwriting is terrible.”

24 The Rhyme-as-Reason Effect

TACTIC

THE TACTIC

Statements that rhyme are perceived as more truthful and accurate than non-rhyming statements.

WHY IT WORKS

Rhyming phrases have higher “processing fluency” – they are simply easier for our brains to process. We mistake this ease of processing for truthfulness.

HOW TO USE IT

While it can sound cheesy if overused, a memorable, rhyming tagline or summary can stick in someone's mind and feel more true. Think of Johnnie Cochran's famous line: “If it doesn't fit, you must acquit.”

25 The Contrast Principle

TACTIC

THE TACTIC

Our judgment of something is heavily influenced by the thing we saw or experienced just before it.

WHY IT WORKS

We don't make judgments in a vacuum. We perceive things in relation to one another.

HOW TO USE IT

An estate agent will often show a buyer an overpriced, undesirable property first. In contrast, the next (fairly priced, decent) property seems like an amazing deal. When presenting options, present the most expensive or extreme option first.

26 The Curiosity Gap

TACTIC

THE TACTIC

Highlight a specific gap between what your audience knows and what they could know.

WHY IT WORKS

Curiosity is a powerful drive. When we are aware of a gap in our knowledge, we feel a strong urge to fill it. This is the engine behind all “clickbait.”

HOW TO USE IT

“Most businesses in your field make one common mistake that costs them thousands. I'm going to tell you what it is.” Frame your message as a revelation or a secret.

27 The Recency & Primacy Effect

TACTIC

THE TACTIC

People best remember the first (primacy) and last (recency) things they hear.

WHY IT WORKS

These are quirks of our memory retention. The first item sets the stage, and the last item is freshest in our minds.

HOW TO USE IT

Place your most powerful point at the very beginning of your argument. Then, summarize it and make your final call to action the very last thing you say. Bury weaker points in the middle.

D

SECTION D · TACTICS 28-32

Linguistic & Framing Tactics

Small changes in wording that change how a request feels to the person hearing it.

28

The "But You Are Free" Technique

TACTIC

THE TACTIC

After making your request, explicitly tell the person that they are free to say no.

WHY IT WORKS

This simple phrase removes the feeling of being pressured or cornered. It affirms their autonomy, which paradoxically makes them feel more comfortable and more likely to say yes. Studies show it can double compliance rates.

HOW TO USE IT

"I'd really appreciate your help on this, but of course, you are free to refuse." "It would be great if you could donate, but please don't feel obligated."

29

The "Yes Ladder"

TACTIC

THE TACTIC

Ask a series of questions that you know the person will say "yes" to. This builds a momentum of agreement before you ask your real request.

WHY IT WORKS

It leverages the Commitment & Consistency principle. Saying "yes" repeatedly creates a psychological state of compliance. It becomes harder to break the pattern and say "no."

HOW TO USE IT

(Salesperson): "You're looking for a car that's safe, correct?" (Yes). "And one that is fuel-efficient for your commute?" (Yes). "And something reliable?" (Yes). "Well, I have the perfect car for you right here."

30 Using Presuppositions

TACTIC

THE TACTIC

Use language that assumes a certain condition is already true or agreed upon.

WHY IT WORKS

It frames the conversation around the details of the outcome, not whether the outcome will happen at all. It bypasses the initial “yes/no” decision.

HOW TO USE IT

Instead of asking, “Do you want to meet?” ask, “When would be a good time to meet, Tuesday or Thursday?” Instead of “Will you sign the contract?” ask, “Will you be using a blue or black pen to sign?”

31 The Power of "We"

TACTIC

THE TACTIC

Whenever possible, use collaborative language like “we,” “us,” and “our” instead of “you” and “I.”

WHY IT WORKS

It instantly frames the interaction as a partnership rather than a confrontation. It fosters a sense of shared identity and purpose, making the other person feel like a teammate, not an opponent.

HOW TO USE IT

Instead of “You need to fix this, and I need the report,” try “We need to figure out how we can get this report finalised.”

32 Disrupt-then-Reframe

TACTIC

THE TACTIC

Make a slightly strange or confusing statement to disrupt someone's automatic thought patterns, and then immediately follow it with a clear, persuasive request.

WHY IT WORKS

The brief moment of confusion makes the brain more open to suggestion. It short-circuits their reflexive “no” and makes them consider the reframed request.

HOW TO USE IT

A classic study had researchers selling note cards door to door, saying: “The price is 300 pennies... that's \$3. It's a bargain!” The “300 pennies” part disrupts, and the “bargain” reframes.

E

SECTION E · TACTICS 33-40

Social & Emotional Tactics

Influence through belief, belonging, emotion and first impressions.

33

The Pygmalion Effect (Self-Fulfilling Prophecy)

TACTIC

THE TACTIC

Express your high expectations of someone. Tell them you believe they have the skills and intelligence to do what you're asking.

WHY IT WORKS

People subconsciously strive to live up to the positive expectations placed upon them. Your belief in them can become a self-fulfilling prophecy of their success.

HOW TO USE IT

"I'm assigning this crucial task to you because I know you have the attention to detail to get it right." "I wanted your advice on this because you're the best strategic thinker I know."

34

The Shared Identity Advantage

TACTIC

THE TACTIC

Identify and emphasise a common identity you share with the person you are trying to persuade, even if it's a temporary one.

WHY IT WORKS

We are far more likely to be influenced by people we consider part of our "in-group." This taps into our tribal instincts.

HOW TO USE IT

"As fellow parents, we both know how important this is..." "We're both new to this team, so let's help each other out."

35 Emotional Contagion

TACTIC

THE TACTIC

Emotions are contagious. If you want your audience to feel a certain way (e.g., excited, confident, concerned), you must genuinely embody that emotion yourself.

WHY IT WORKS

Through mirror neurons and other subconscious processes, we automatically pick up on and begin to feel the emotions of those around us.

HOW TO USE IT

Don't just say your idea is exciting; deliver the news with genuine energy and passion in your voice and body language. If the situation calls for calm confidence, embody that yourself.

36 The Power of Vulnerability

TACTIC

THE TACTIC

Share a genuine, relevant moment of vulnerability or personal struggle.

WHY IT WORKS

Strategic vulnerability signals high trust and self-confidence. It creates a powerful human connection and makes others feel safe to be open and honest with you, which is the foundation of true persuasion.

HOW TO USE IT

"I'll be honest, I struggled with this at first too. Here's what I learned that finally made it click for me..."

37 The Power of Strategic Silence

TACTIC

THE TACTIC

After you make a key point or ask a tough question, stop talking and get comfortable with the silence.

WHY IT WORKS

Most people are uncomfortable with silence and will rush to fill it. This often means they will answer their own questions, reveal their true objections, or even make a concession just to break the tension. It also makes you appear confident and in control.

HOW TO USE IT

In a negotiation, state your price and then fall silent. Let them be the next one to speak.

38 The Halo Effect

TACTIC

THE TACTIC

Your first impression in one area will positively (or negatively) influence how people judge you in other areas.

WHY IT WORKS

Our brain likes shortcuts. If we see someone is well-dressed and articulate (positive halo), we are more likely to assume they are also intelligent, competent, and trustworthy.

HOW TO USE IT

Pay attention to your appearance, your communication etiquette (e.g., a well-written email), and your punctuality. Nail the first impression, and you'll be given the benefit of the doubt later on.

39 Leveraging Confirmation Bias

TACTIC

THE TACTIC

Frame your argument in a way that confirms your audience's pre-existing beliefs about themselves or the world.

WHY IT WORKS

People actively seek out information that confirms what they already believe and tend to ignore information that challenges it. It's more persuasive to go with the grain than against it.

HOW TO USE IT

If you know your boss sees herself as an innovator, frame your proposal not as a risk, but as "the next logical step in our path of innovation."

40 Visual Dominance

TACTIC

THE TACTIC

Use strong visuals – diagrams, charts, images, or even physical prototypes – to make your point.

WHY IT WORKS

We take in images far faster than we read text. A powerful image can create an emotional impact and be understood more quickly and memorably than words alone.

HOW TO USE IT

Don't just tell your team that morale is low; show them the anonymous survey results on a graph. Don't just describe your architectural vision; show them the 3D rendering. Show, don't just tell.

F

SECTION F · TACTICS 41-47

Advanced Cognitive & Self-Persuasion Tactics

Techniques that let people persuade themselves, which is the most durable persuasion there is.

41 The Devil's Advocate Ploy

TACTIC

THE TACTIC

Instead of arguing for your idea, bring up a few (weak) counter-arguments yourself and then easily dismantle them. Or, even better, encourage the other person to play devil's advocate against your idea.

WHY IT WORKS

When a person argues for your position (even if it's just to defeat a weak counter-argument), they engage in self-persuasion. They are convincing themselves of the merits of your idea by vocalizing its strengths. It's far more powerful than hearing it from you.

HOW TO USE IT

"I'm confident in this plan, but let's poke holes in it. What's the biggest risk you see? Let's say, for argument's sake, that our main supplier pulls out. What would we do then?" (As they solve the problem, they become more invested).

42 The Peak-End Rule

TACTIC

THE TACTIC

People don't judge an experience based on the average of every moment, but on how they felt at its most intense point (the peak) and at its very end.

WHY IT WORKS

Our memory is selective and prioritises emotional peaks and final moments. A negative experience can be remembered as positive if it ends on a high note.

HOW TO USE IT

In a long negotiation or presentation, ensure you end on a moment of agreement, a shared joke, or by giving them something of value. Even if the middle was tense, the final positive moment will disproportionately colour their memory of the entire interaction.

43 The Effort Heuristic

TACTIC

THE TACTIC

People judge the value of an outcome based on the perceived effort that went into achieving it.

WHY IT WORKS

We have a mental shortcut that equates effort with quality. If something looks too easy, it can be perceived as less valuable.

HOW TO USE IT

When presenting a solution, don't just show the final, elegant answer. Briefly mention the extensive research, the different options you considered and discarded, or the complex data you synthesised. This "showing your work" increases the perceived value of your conclusion.

44 The Choice Paradox (Less is More)

TACTIC

THE TACTIC

Reduce the number of choices you offer. Instead of overwhelming someone with options, present only two or three curated choices.

WHY IT WORKS

While we think we want more choice, too many options lead to "analysis paralysis" and anxiety, causing people to choose nothing at all. Limiting choices makes the decision easier and increases the likelihood of action.

HOW TO USE IT

Instead of saying, "Here are the 15 marketing packages we offer," say, "Based on your needs, most of our clients choose either Package A for growth or Package B for brand stability. Which one aligns better with your current goals?"

45 The Self-Prophecy Effect

TACTIC

THE TACTIC

Ask someone to predict their future behaviour.

WHY IT WORKS

If someone states an intention to do something positive (e.g., "Yes, I think I will vote"), they feel a stronger internal pressure to be consistent with that prediction. They have, in effect, made a commitment to themselves.

HOW TO USE IT

Instead of "Please consider donating," ask, "Do you see yourself as someone who might be willing to support a cause like this in the future?" If they say yes, they are far more likely to donate when you make the actual request.

46 The Socratic Method

TACTIC

THE TACTIC

Instead of stating facts, ask a series of guided questions that lead the person to your desired conclusion on their own.

WHY IT WORKS

An idea someone develops “on their own” is an idea they will fully own and defend. It prevents them from feeling lectured and empowers them, making them a partner in the discovery process rather than a passive recipient of your opinion.

HOW TO USE IT

Instead of “This project deadline is unrealistic,” ask: “How much time do we normally allocate for testing? What new complexities does this project have? Given those factors, what's a realistic timeline for us to deliver a high-quality result?”

47 The Handwritten Commitment

TACTIC

THE TACTIC

Ask the person to physically write down the details of a commitment (an appointment time, a goal, a key takeaway).

WHY IT WORKS

The physical act of writing something down makes it more concrete and memorable than simply saying it. It engages motor skills and deepens the mental processing of the commitment, creating a stronger psychological bond to it.

HOW TO USE IT

At the end of a meeting, say, “So we're agreed on Tuesday at 2pm. Could you just jot that down so neither of us forgets?”

G

SECTION G · TACTICS 48-52

Linguistic & Framing Masterclass

Advanced control of context, objections and the exact words you choose.

48

Frame Control

TACTIC

THE TACTIC

Define the context and assumptions of the conversation from the outset. The person who controls the frame controls the conversation.

WHY IT WORKS

Every conversation operates within an unspoken frame (e.g., is this a negotiation, a brainstorming session, a plea for help?). By consciously setting the frame, you guide the other person's responses and interpretations.

HOW TO USE IT

If you're about to be criticised, you can set the frame by starting with: "Thank you for meeting with me. I'm looking to learn from our recent challenges, and I really value your perspective on what we can improve." The frame is now "collaborative learning," not "being disciplined."

49

Embedded Commands

TACTIC

THE TACTIC

Hide a soft command within a larger sentence to plant a suggestion in the subconscious mind.

WHY IT WORKS

The conscious mind processes the whole sentence, but the subconscious mind picks up on the embedded command, making the idea feel more natural and self-generated.

HOW TO USE IT

Instead of "Buy this now," you might say, "I'm not going to tell you to buy this now, but just imagine the benefits..." or "You can begin to feel more confident about this decision as we walk through the details."

50 The "Feel, Felt, Found" Method

TACTIC

THE TACTIC

When addressing an objection, validate their feelings, align with them, and then guide them to a new conclusion.

WHY IT WORKS

It's a three-step empathy formula. 1) Feel: "I understand how you feel." (This validates them). 2) Felt: "Many of our other clients initially felt the same way." (This normalises their concern with Social Proof). 3) Found: "But what they found was..." (This pivots them to your solution).

HOW TO USE IT

(Objection: "It's too expensive.") "I understand how you feel. The initial investment can seem high, and a lot of our best customers felt the same way. But what they found was that the efficiency gains paid for the system within six months."

51 Re-framing (Turning a Weakness into a Strength)

TACTIC

THE TACTIC

Take a negative attribute and describe it in a way that makes it a positive.

WHY IT WORKS

Most attributes are context-dependent. By changing the frame of reference, you change the value judgment.

HOW TO USE IT

"It's not expensive; it's premium and built to last." "I'm not stubborn; I'm principled and have high conviction." "We're not a small company; we're agile and give our clients personalized attention."

52 Using "Can" Instead of "Should"

TACTIC

THE TACTIC

Frame suggestions and requests with words of possibility ("can," "could," "might") rather than words of obligation ("should," "must," "have to").

WHY IT WORKS

"Should" triggers psychological reactance – our innate aversion to being told what to do. "Can" or "could" feels like an invitation or an opportunity, preserving the other person's sense of autonomy.

HOW TO USE IT

Instead of "You should really look at this report," try "If you have a moment, you can look at this report for some interesting insights."

H

SECTION H · TACTICS 53-60

Subtle Social & Environmental Cues

The quiet signals around a conversation: shared enemies, touch, warmth, timing and tone.

53

The Common Enemy Heuristic

TACTIC

THE TACTIC

Unify your side by framing your goal in opposition to a common adversary or external challenge.

WHY IT WORKS

Having a shared “enemy” (e.g., a competitor, a market trend, a difficult problem, inefficiency) is one of the fastest ways to build rapport and a “we’re in this together” mindset. It focuses all energy outward, not inward.

HOW TO USE IT

“Both our companies are struggling against these new regulations. If we pool our resources on this, we can both overcome it.” “The real enemy isn’t us disagreeing on a budget; it’s the wasted time we’re losing every day.”

54

The Power of Touch (The Midas Touch)

HANDLE WITH CARE

TACTIC

THE TACTIC

A light, brief, non-threatening touch on the arm or shoulder can increase compliance and positive feelings.

WHY IT WORKS

Appropriate physical touch builds a subconscious human connection and rapport. It has been shown in studies to make people more likely to help, sign a petition, or leave a bigger tip.

CAVEAT This is highly context-dependent. Use with extreme caution and awareness of social norms, relationships, and cultural differences.

HOW TO USE IT

When asking a colleague for a favour, a brief, light touch on the upper arm while saying “Thanks, I really appreciate it” can amplify their positive feelings. Never use this in a tense or formal hierarchical situation. If in doubt, don’t.

55 Transference of Credibility

TACTIC

THE TACTIC

If you lack credibility, associate yourself or your idea with something or someone that already has high credibility.

WHY IT WORKS

It's the "Halo Effect" by proxy. The credibility and trust of the established source are "transferred" to you.

HOW TO USE IT

"As the Harvard Business Review study pointed out..." "I was modelling this approach on how Google solves similar problems." "Our lead investor, a very successful entrepreneur, is extremely excited about this direction."

56 The Hot Beverage Effect

TACTIC

THE TACTIC

Give someone a hot drink (like coffee or tea) to hold.

WHY IT WORKS

The physical sensation of warmth is subconsciously associated with emotional warmth. Studies by psychologist John Bargh showed that people who held a warm cup of coffee were more likely to judge a target person as having a "warmer" personality (generous, caring). Later attempts to repeat these studies have had mixed results, so treat this as a gentle extra rather than a lever.

HOW TO USE IT

When you want to have a collaborative, friendly discussion, offer the person a cup of coffee or tea to hold at the beginning of the meeting. It subtly primes them for cooperation.

57 Strategic Inaction

TACTIC

THE TACTIC

When faced with a difficult or emotionally charged request, sometimes the most persuasive move is to do nothing for a calculated period.

WHY IT WORKS

Time allows emotions to cool down, giving logic a chance to surface. It can also make the other party anxious and more willing to compromise when you finally re-engage. It signals that you are not desperate and have other options.

HOW TO USE IT

After receiving an unreasonable demand, instead of reacting immediately, reply with, "Thank you for the proposal. I need some time to review this properly and will get back to you next week."

58 Sensory Language Acuity

TACTIC

THE TACTIC

Pay attention to the type of sensory words a person uses (visual, auditory, or kinesthetic) and match them.

WHY IT WORKS

People have preferred ways of processing the world. If someone says, “I see what you mean,” they are likely a visual thinker. Matching their predicates builds deep rapport.

HOW TO USE IT

If they say, “That looks good to me,” respond with “Great, let's focus on the big picture.” If they say, “That sounds right,” you say, “Glad we're in harmony on this.” If they say, “I can't quite grasp it,” you say, “Let's work through it until you feel comfortable with the handle on it.”

59 The Power of Simplicity (Cognitive Fluency)

TACTIC

THE TACTIC

Make your idea as simple and clear as possible. Use simple language and clean visuals.

WHY IT WORKS

Ideas that are easy for the brain to process (high cognitive fluency) are perceived as more truthful, intelligent, and likable. We mistake the ease of understanding for the inherent quality of the idea.

HOW TO USE IT

Instead of using complex jargon to sound smart, explain your proposal in language a 12-year-old could understand. As the old line goes, “If you can't explain it simply, you don't understand it well enough.”

60 The Authority Statement

TACTIC

THE TACTIC

When you need to take control of a situation or demonstrate leadership, make a calm, simple, declarative statement of fact or intent.

WHY IT WORKS

It cuts through confusion and debate. It's not aggressive, but it is definitive. It signals that you are a stable anchor point and that you have a plan, which makes others feel secure and willing to follow.

HOW TO USE IT

When a meeting is descending into chaos, a simple, calm “Okay. Here is what we are going to do next,” can instantly re-centre the group and establish you as the leader.

CLOSING NOTE

A crucial final thought: the ethical dimension

These tools are powerful. They can be used to build bridges or to manipulate. The difference lies in your intent.

True mastery of persuasion isn't about winning at all costs. It's about effective communication that leads to mutual benefit.

Use these tactics to help others see a different perspective, to build consensus and to create positive outcomes, and you will build a reputation as a trusted and influential person, not a manipulator.

DECLASSIFIED

Field log

The three tactics you used this week, where you used them, and what happened:

YOUR NEXT ASSIGNMENT

Knowing the tactics is the map.
Practising them is the training.

Persuadology's case files turn ideas like these into briefings, worked examples and field missions you run in real conversations.

- 01 Pick three tactics from this guide and use them in one conversation this week.
- 02 Grab the free Field Manual, The Hidden Codex of Copy, at the site below.
- 03 Ready for every case file? Choose your clearance level and become a Field Agent.

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