

Maximise your Influence

In his book 'Human Motivation', the researcher David McClelland identified three main types of motivation:

Achievement motivation – means that a person is motivated by their own achievements. They are competitive, either with themselves or with others and they like to see steady improvements in their achievements.

Affiliation motivation – means that the person is motivated by affiliation with others. They like to belong to a group and to have good relationships with the people around them. They enjoy contributing to other people's happiness and wellbeing.

Power motivation – means that the person is motivated by their own power to make things happen. They want to 'make a difference' and to influence what happens around them. They don't have to succeed at everything, but they do like to be in on the latest developments.

McClelland goes on to say that most of us are motivated by a combination of 2 or 3 of these types of motivation.

With my NLP/LAB Profile hat on, I'd say that we're probably motivated by different things in different contexts.

Whichever way you look at it, there's going to be a majority of us that are motivated by Power - or Influence if you prefer – at least some of the time.

So, how DO you gain influence?

If you're trained in NLP, you're probably already ahead of me. "Easy", you say. "To gain influence with another person, you just need to be in rapport. Then you can lead the other person to do what you want them to do."

That's true, if what you want them to do is slow down, stand up, be quiet or hand you a newspaper. Those kind of simple behavioural leads work very effectively.

But what if you want the other person to give you a pay rise, fund your professional development, vote for you in an election or recommend your services to their network?

If the other person is going to be making a conscious decision, your influence strategy needs to be more comprehensive. This is where your knowledge and expertise comes in:

Expertise + Rapport = Influence

The person you want to influence is much more likely to follow your lead if they believe that you 'know your stuff'. If you are a trusted source of reliable information and guidance, then the other person will follow your lead much more often. And this can only happen if you not only DO know your stuff, but you can also explain your thinking clearly to someone who doesn't share your level of knowledge. Without patronising.

And notice, Influence is not the same as Control.

When you have influence with another person, it doesn't mean that they will ALWAYS follow your lead. It means that they will often do so.

When you have true influence, if the other person doesn't follow your lead, they have clear reason why and those reasons do not detract from your influence at another time.

If you want long-lasting influence, you work at two things.

1. Your knowledge, expertise and ability to communicate your thoughts
2. Your rapport skills

I'm sure you can think of people you know or have seen in the media, who have great rapport skills, great communication skills but very short-lived influence because they didn't know enough or were driven by unusual values.

Equally, you can probably think of people you turn to with complete confidence because they have given good counsel over a number of years.

Which one do you want to be like?

Dianne Lowther
Master Trainer of NLP

Dianne Lowther is a Master Trainer of NLP and Principal of Brilliant Minds. She is the UK's leading strategist on engaging the profitable brainpower of your IT professionals.

Brilliant Minds
Suite 440, 99 Warwick Street
Leamington Spa, CV32 4RB
01926 425244
www.brilliantminds.co.uk