

# CONVERSATIONAL INFLUENCE

Cracking the Communication Code by Mastering Your Psychology



FAITH WOOD

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Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION ..... 5

CHAPTER 1: MASTER YOUR STORY ..... 7

CHAPTER 2: THE HEAD AND THE GUT DEBATE ..... 9

CHAPTER 3: BELIEFS ..... 10

CHAPTER 4: HOW TO USE CONVERSATIONAL INFLUENCE TO ALTER BELIEFS..... 12

CHAPTER 5: HOW TO EFFECT CONVERSATIONAL BELIEF-CHANGE..... 14

CHAPTER 6: TIPS FOR CONVERSATIONAL BELIEF-CHANGE ..... 15

CHAPTER 7: CONTROLLING YOUR EMOTION FOR EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION ..... 16

CHAPTER 8: THE THREE POWERFUL WORDS FOR EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION..... 18

CHAPTER 9: THE “CAUSE-EFFECT” STRUCTURE OF BELIEFS..... 22

CHAPTER 10: PRACTICAL QUESTIONS FOR BRINGING ABOUT CHANGE IN BELIEFS ..... 23

CHAPTER 11: GETTING PEOPLE TO ACT ..... 28

SUMMARY..... 29

**Objectives:**

- 1) You will learn one specific strategy that can be used immediately to change limiting beliefs and perform better under pressure.
  
- 2) Discover how to control emotional states (in self and others) while eliminating the impact of self-doubt, fear, negativity and unnecessary conflict.
  
- 3) Discover the power of 3 little words to grab attention, alter perception and create more open mindedness

## INTRODUCTION

You probably already know that effective communication has always been influenced by interpretation and assumptions – on both sides of the conversation.

Imagine if you had the power to ethically influence people’s subconscious minds for better receptivity of your messages and ....

Imagine if you could do it using simple trigger words and phrases to activate not just them, but yourself too.

In a world where we are judged heavily on our communication ability, it pays to master the psychology that affects both the spoken and the written word – *does it not?* So why don’t we get cracking then?

All powerful communication has a hypnotic quality to it. It controls your attention, focus and thoughts. However, if you have ever left a dialogue with the thought “that could have gone better”, then you realize that sometimes communication is not as simple or as easy as we tend to make it seem.

Some people are embarrassed when their communications are not as clear and succinct or as perfect as they planned them to be. For some reason, many of us think that communication skills should be automatic. The reality though, is that it’s a skill and like everything else that matters, it needs to be practiced and finessed.

When we are put on the spot or find ourselves in a potential conflict, we get anxious, our brains dive into a fight, flight or freeze response. Our ability to communicate shuts down. We lose access to all of the information that is so readily available during comfortable conversations. That's why it's possible for you to walk away from a confrontation saying to yourself "I know what I should have said and how I could have reacted – why didn't I?"

Oh, I don't know.... maybe because your sympathetic nervous system was ONLY TRYING TO SAVE YOUR LIFE! It was a little busy.

Evolution happens when we adapt to changes in our environment. There has never been a time in history where we have been put into more tasking situations just to survive economically. So our brains are literally in a race to catch up. If we improve our ability to communicate during high-anxiety situations it will make our lives so much easier and better for the effort.

Effective communication skills are the glue that helps you deepen your connections to others and improve teamwork, decision making and problem-solving strategies. It enables you to communicate even negative or difficult messages without creating conflict or destroying trust. And it is a learned skill.

## CHAPTER 1: MASTER YOUR STORY

Before we felt pressure in our communication, we told ourselves a story about the situation. From the moment we were born, we have been told stories. Stories about who we are, about the world we live in and our relationship within it. In response to these stories, we have built up a self-image. This self-image is like a movie about ourselves, with thousands of details about what we think is possible for us, appropriate and allowable. What we think we are capable of, have permission for, or is possible for anyone. It contains the laws of our lives and our world. Let's call it the script.

The Script has been developed by well-meaning people. It's been passed on from generation to generation and added to along the way.

Here are some of the people and institutions that have worked on The Script:

- Parents
- Teachers
- Politicians
- Religions
- Friends

- Family
- Work colleagues
- Culture
- Society
- Media
- Universities
- Experts

And of course, you!

We have been living that script for so long that we have identified with it. Just like a video game or a movie, we respond automatically and unconsciously as though the SCRIPT is actually who we are. When something isn't in the script, your script tells you it can't be done.

But what if the script got it all wrong?



## CHAPTER 2: THE HEAD AND THE GUT DEBATE

Becoming a great communicator is easy, if you think of the person you're communicating to as being made of two separate parts. These two separate parts, (which, for simplicity's sake), we'll call the Head and the Gut, handle information in very different ways.

The Head makes plans and expresses ideas in words. The Gut provides or withholds the emotional energy necessary to carry out your plans and make your words compelling to others. It expresses itself through the way your words sound and the way you look and move as you say them. Guiding action in accordance with its habits and impulses, it frequently overrides the Head's plans, decisions, and ideas.

To change someone's behavior, you must change the emotions associated with that behavior; that is, you must move the Gut. And the gut response is reacting to your script.

All lasting changes have to happen at the belief level in the subconscious mind if you are going to behave differently and obtain lasting results. You must clear out that doubt and worry and ... quite frankly ... arguing with yourself about the validity of the belief statement is not going to help you, not one little bit.

## CHAPTER 3: BELIEFS

What exactly are beliefs? There are various definitions but we'll be examining two major ones and they will be the focal point of our discussion. Belief can be defined as a state of mind in which an individual accepts that something is true or exists without having a particular tangible evidence as proof.

Simply put, beliefs are examples of learning, generalizations about ourselves and our world that operate as 'rules of thumb' for decision-making. Unlike other rules of thumb, however, beliefs act as 'self-fulfilling prophecies' – when we believe something to be true, we actually filter the information coming from our senses to prove our belief to be true.

*An example of this is the person who can't find their keys. They look around the house saying “I can't find my keys, I can't find my keys” and sure enough, they can't. Then someone else finds the keys in a place where the person is sure they looked. Where were the keys when they looked? Their unconscious mind deleted them to prove the 'belief' true. In this example, there isn't much difference between a belief and a strongly held expectation.*

Beliefs are valuable constructs that help us make our way in the world. In fact, the biggest thing that differentiates the world's most happy, successful people from the rest of the world is their beliefs about themselves and what they're capable of.

However, sometimes the beliefs that serve us at one point in our lives can limit us at other points in life. For this reason, it's imperative that each of us learn how to identify and change outdated or less than useful beliefs.

## CHAPTER 4: HOW TO USE CONVERSATIONAL INFLUENCE TO ALTER BELIEFS

Conversational influence or what I will like to call 'Conversational belief change' refers to the ability to use questions and other patterns of language (both verbal & non-verbal) to identify and transform your own beliefs and the beliefs of others (both individually & in groups). A good example of such technique is referred to as *sleight of mouth*.

Sleight of Mouth refers to a learnable set of patterns that correspond to the structures people use (unconsciously) to build, maintain and validate their beliefs internally.

As it happens, one of the most powerful ways to learn the patterns of conversational belief change is by identifying some of the beliefs which you've been perceiving as limiting you until now, then exploring and transforming them. When it comes to utilizing conversational influence, there are three (3) stages involved:

**Attention:** This is the stage in which the communication is powerful enough to grab the listener's attention and spur the listener's feelings and imagination in directions that the communicator desires.

**Affiliation:** Understand the fact that people will show and tell you everything you need to know about how they prefer to connect with you within the first few

minutes of the exchange. Therefore, this is the stage where you pay attention and listen for the clues.

**Approach:** The final stage in which you determine the manner in which you begin to communicate with someone once you have detected and decoded their preferences.

It should be noted that the language a person uses is a reflection of their maps and models of reality and reveals aspects of those maps and models which the person themselves may not even be aware of. When their models change, their experience of reality changes. Language is a lever for changing those models and it should be a major factor that the communicator should watch out for when trying to reach out to individuals.

## **CHAPTER 5: HOW TO EFFECT CONVERSATIONAL BELIEF-CHANGE**

Identify a belief you've been perceiving as limiting you until now, some “I can't... or it won't”, then run through the following patterns, for example:

- “I can't speak in public. I don't have self-confidence.”
- “If I don't control people then things won't turn out right.”

Now walk through the following patterns to explore the structure of your belief.

## CHAPTER 6: TIPS FOR CONVERSATIONAL BELIEF- CHANGE

- Rapport is absolutely essential!
- Assume the person can actually do (on some level) what they say they can't.
- Assume and uncover the positive intention / purpose of the belief.
- Acknowledge the reality of the situation.
- Determine the belief's structure.
- The belief will be represented in the body in some way.
- Remember that beliefs are self-protective and survival oriented.
- Recognize that beliefs are perceptions of reality.
- Know your outcome, and be present, aware and intuitive. Language patterns are not a substitute for a sense of direction, open sensory channels, and behavioral flexibility but rather an insight as to how such can be changed and effectively utilized.

## CHAPTER 7: CONTROLLING YOUR EMOTION FOR EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

When we are in a high pressure situation where we are nervous (or filled with self-doubt) we really don't hear the words being spoken, we are reacting to what we think might happen. When this happens, we must PAUSE the conversation in our own head and ...

Breathe slowly (Benefit: Relaxes body and mind).

Look directly at the questioner. (Benefit: Increases comprehension.)

Ask questions (Benefit: Increases clarity and shows you are listening).

BREATH is one of the few things that will calm the nerves and interrupt the adrenaline surge. You are going to feel instant serenity when you take deep breaths in the middle of nowhere. If you are feeling very pressured then you might want to take some deep breaths from time to time. This will certainly alleviate the pressure that you are experiencing.

Another tip for keeping our emotions in check is through our posture. It simply involves understanding the way our brain is wired and the fact that there is a connection between the brain and our spine- the part of our body which determines our posture. By the time your body language is dropping down or signifies a feeling



of dejection or impossibility, then it becomes difficult to get the desired result. However, when you adopt an upward posture, there is a different feeling which comes with an immense amount of energy thus allowing you to channel those emotions in the right direction. Truth is, when everything is up be it our thumbs, nose or toes, something changes, we feel different and a host of feel-good chemicals start to flood the brain which makes us feeling ready to go and tackle the problem successfully. And while everything can't be up all the time without us feeling uncomfortable, it is important then to find a balance between being up and being down so that we can manage our emotions very well and keep them in check. And once you're balanced, communicating with others will not be a problem.

## CHAPTER 8: THE THREE POWERFUL WORDS FOR EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

Words are quite powerful more than a lot of us seem to realize and just like broken eggs, once they are spoken, they cannot be taken back which is why it is imperative that we pay attention to our words which is the foremost means of communication anyway.

Here are three (3) common words that garner attention:

**Power**

**Money**

**Sex**

If you're like most people, when you see or hear words like those above, you get a little bit of a jolt. But saying words like power, money and sex isn't the only way to have emotional impact on other people. And you can't likely use them in most business settings anyway.

In fact, when someone knows how to use the other dimensions of human communication—how to coordinate the way he or she talks with what he or she says—that person can grab your attention just as securely as a bouncer pins your arms behind your back.

And not just grab your attention—someone who knows how to speak to your gut instincts, the emotional part of your mind, can make you want what you didn't realize you wanted, and open your mind to possibilities you didn't know you could have. Take a look at these three (3) words below:

**Imagine**

**You**

**Because**

These are 3 powerfully hypnotic words you should begin to incorporate into your language patterns if you want to have greater influence ability.

By asking someone to **imagine** something, you bypass that critical part of the mind that throws up objections and sneaks into the mind through a back door. The fear of loss is far stronger in most people than a desire for gain. By getting someone to imagine owning a new thought, the act of imagining creates an opportunity to experience having it already.

Example: You can dramatically improve your learning ability simply by going into a hypnotic trance and imagining yourself easily understanding what the class is about. Imagine yourself asking incisive questions that give you even more knowledge and

help the rest of the class to understand better too. Imagine your mind storing away all the information that you have learnt in a really tidy, easy-to-access way, so that you can access and make use of that knowledge easily and effortlessly.

You see, the brain doesn't know the difference between fantasy and reality, so imagining something as it is helps the brain to make it more real.

I'm willing to bet **you** have no idea just how hypnotic your name actually is. It's natural to use it in conversation, so you don't need to worry about being heavy handed.

When people talk about us, we tend to be lulled. What they are saying bypasses the critical factor – and all that is left then is to stimulate the unconscious mind. There is nothing as stimulating to us as our own interests, desires, ambitions, goals, yearnings and emotions. Again it's all about stimulating the unconscious mind.

As human beings we crave order. We want to know WHY something is the way it is – what caused something to happen. And we crave it particularly in our own lives. Using the word **because** satisfies the brain's natural search for reasons. When you give a good reason, the brain of your listener says "You are in" so to speak

Every time you communicate effectively and powerfully with another person, several things are taking place.

Assume that people will ‘show & tell’ you everything you need to know within the first few minutes of connecting with them – you just need to stay curious and alert for the signals.

Watch & listen. The person’s unconscious mind is telling you a story, & you need to pay close attention to see & hear its elements.

## CHAPTER 9: THE “CAUSE-EFFECT” STRUCTURE OF BELIEFS

Working with beliefs can be like archaeology – you sometimes need to uncover a certain amount to make progress. It might require stimulating an individual to express their belief about a situation or a widely held opinion after which you can then ask questions that will provide you with more information as to what is going on. This way, you are able to understand why such a person has such belief which will then give you an insight as to how such belief can be modified if need be.

“I can’t learn to converse any differently than I do right now.” *Why is it like that?*

“Because when I tried it, it didn’t sound natural and I felt uncomfortable.”

This gives you both sides of the “Cause-Effect” structure of the belief.

“*How do you know?*” and “*How is this a problem for you?*” are also useful for uncovering the linguistic (and non-linguistic) structure of a belief.

***Belief Change Question:*** *How are they perceiving reality in such a way that this belief makes sense to them? What’s the story behind this belief?*

## CHAPTER 10: PRACTICAL QUESTIONS FOR BRINGING ABOUT CHANGE IN BELIEFS

1. How do you know \_\_\_\_\_, as you sit here right now?

This is a great question for starting to shift a limiting belief.

Take for example,

*“I can’t speak in public. I don’t have self-confidence.” How do you know you can’t speak in public, as you sit here right now?*

*“I can’t use these conversational language patterns because I don’t feel comfortable with them.” How do you know this is true, as you sit here right now?*

When you ask the question, the person runs through the internal process they use to make the belief seem ‘true’. So, what you should do is watch and listen to pick up clues about how they’re doing it (e.g. eye movements, gestures, sensory language etc.) Sometimes they’ll tell you a story, starting with “because...” which can be useful information in its own right.

***Belief Change Question:*** *What internal process do they run to validate this belief? (Where is their evidence?)*

2. What purpose has this belief been serving until now?

Every belief has a positive intention – it was developed for some purpose. It is a resource, and there are contexts where it could be useful. When you acknowledge its purpose and value, you let the belief know that you are “on its side”. If you try to change a belief without acknowledging the belief’s intention, you may trigger defensiveness, which just embeds the belief more deeply thus making it more difficult to change.

“If I don’t control people then things won’t turn out right.” *What purpose has this belief been serving until now?* “It keeps the people I love from getting hurt.”

“I can’t use these conversational language patterns because I don’t feel comfortable with them.” *What purpose has this belief been serving until now?* “It’s been stopping me from making mistakes.”

***Belief Change Question:*** *What are some of the possible purposes for someone having developed this belief? (Intention)*

3. How have you been perceiving \_\_\_\_\_ as until now?

This is a great question for subtly reframing problems, issues and limiting beliefs.

“If I don’t control people then things won’t turn out right.” *How have you been perceiving this as a problem until now?*

This question has several powerful effects:



- a) It paces the experience of people.
- b) It reframes their problem or limiting belief as their perception, not reality.
- c) The combination of time language and “until now” presupposes the possibility that this is already changing.

“I can’t use these conversational language patterns because I don’t feel comfortable with them.” *How have you been perceiving this as having limited you until now?*

**Belief Change Question:** *What are some of the things you can presuppose in your questions and statements that will empower your listener?*

4. \_\_\_\_\_ for what purpose?

Sometimes, when you ask people what they want, they say whatever the opposite of their perceived limitation is.

“I can’t speak in public. I don’t have self-confidence.” *So, what is it that you want?*

“Confidence.”

While that makes sense on one level, it actually reinforces the pattern of limitation.

Direct their attention to the larger outcome and purpose.

*Speak in public for what purpose?* “So, I can reach people, and wake them up to how amazing they are.”

“I can’t use these conversational language patterns because I don’t feel comfortable with them.” *Use conversational language patterns for what purpose?* So, I can help people make the changes they want or need to make.

***Belief Change Question:*** *What is the larger purpose that the “limitation” has been preventing them from fulfilling until now?*

5. How would you know if that wasn’t true?

Beliefs aren't really ‘true’ - they're just ideas. This question is a great way of gently challenging limiting beliefs. Why? Because the person has to start imagining a new belief in order to answer the question.

“If I don’t control people then things won’t turn out right.” *How would you know if that wasn't true?*

“I can’t speak in public. I don’t have self-confidence.” *How would you know if that wasn't true?*

“I can’t use conversational language patterns because I don’t feel comfortable with them.” *How would you know if that weren't true?* “I’d feel excited about experimenting with them.”

*And where would you feel that excitement, now...?*

**Belief Change Question:** *What happens when they imagine doubting this belief?*

6. Isn't it more important to \_\_\_\_\_ than to \_\_\_\_\_?

Everyone has criteria, the things that are important to them in a given situation. If you can get them to evaluate the criteria of a limiting belief against something which is more important to them, the belief can change.

“If I don’t control people then things won’t turn out right.” Isn’t it more important to have satisfying relationships than to be in control? *Isn’t it more important to enjoy the process than to fixate on the result?*

“I can’t use these conversational language patterns because I don’t feel comfortable with them.” *Isn’t it more important to enjoy learning and experimenting with these patterns than to feel entirely comfortable with them right away?*

**Belief Change Question:** *What’s so important to this person that could be affected by this belief?*

## CHAPTER 11: GETTING PEOPLE TO ACT

After asking the above questions from people or your designated recipients, then it is time to get them into action.

Of course, I realize that sometimes you can... [Presuppose they are in the active position]

When someone perceives a belief as limiting them, they are implying that they're passive in relation to it – that the belief is the one in control. But you can use your language to put them back into the active position.

*“I can't use NLP language patterns because I don't feel comfortable with them.” Of course, I realize that sometimes you can feel uncomfortable when you use new language patterns...*

Acknowledging that sometimes they “can feel uncomfortable” when they “use new language patterns” is something the person is likely to agree with. But in the process, they're unconsciously accepting that:

- a) They can use conversational language patterns, and
- b) The uncomfortable feeling is actually an ability. Voila! They're back in the active

position.

***Belief Change Question:*** *How can I presuppose that they are in the active position?*

## SUMMARY

The importance of effective communication cannot be overemphasized considering communication is part of our daily lives and most times, our level of communication depends on our beliefs which is actually a result of the environment we find ourselves in as well as the kind of situations we find ourselves. No matter how we might want to deny it, our beliefs actually limit us or contribute effectively to our progress. The kind of beliefs we have determine the kind of action we take and consequently the kind of results we get in life.

Truth is, the version of reality you're holding in mind at this moment has an effect on the world around you through your actions. It's actually the beliefs embedded in you that determine the reality that you relate to. So, invariably, that which you tell yourself determines your outlook on life and consequently, the way you relate with and communicate to people. If you really want to reach people in your communication from time to time, then you need to be optimistic and stay positive. Ever heard of "What a man fears is what will come upon him". That thing which you

are so scared of usually tends to happen to you because fear is almost like a trigger for negative events while a confident expectation of good most likely brings about positive happenings in one's life.

Example: A man gets it into his head that everyone is talking about him behind his back. In his attempts to catch people in the act, he starts behaving more and more strangely. Before long, people start talking about him. This is often referred to as a self-fulfilling prophecy. What is less commonly understood is the degree to which these self-fulfilling prophecies operate in every area of our lives.

To really get yourself going and put all that we have been saying to test, here are the two things you should do:

- 1) Identify an area in your life where you tend to be pessimistic. What results do you tend to get in this area of your life?
  
- 2) Identify an area in your life where you tend to be optimistic. What results do you tend to get in this area of your life?