

8 phrases that instantly convince people to follow you



Not everyone is a brilliant orator, but it only takes a few words—precisely timed and honestly delivered—to truly command attention and respect. Here are eight phrases totaling less than 40 words. Use them and you'll stick in people's minds long after you've left the room.

“I guarantee it.” When you're absolutely certain of a result, push all your chips to the center of the table. A guarantee says you know what you're talking about and you have a very clear vision of what's ahead.

“I was wrong.” Note that the period cuts this statement off at exactly three words. The temptation to turn that into a semi-colon and provide an explanation is what turns a leader into something weaker. Admitting a mistake without a hint of protest generates admiration.

“That was then, this is now.” Apply this to past success rather than a failure and people think of you as someone who's never going to stop trying to get better.

“I won't accept that.” A sentence that affirms your power and status as someone not only with high standards, but with the gravitas to whip into shape those who won't live up to them.

“We'll make it happen somehow.” The odds seem against you on that lofty deadline, that bold proposal—even that train wreck of a project that desperately needs fixing. But you speak as someone who trusts in the team and yourself to push through all barriers with confidence.

“They were absolutely right.” Your competitors or your detractors, that is. Ears perk up when you give credit where credit is due and admit others are sometimes more clever than you are.

“That was the biggest mistake of my life.” People respect those who have learned big, hard lessons and speak of regret openly. We've all got a total wipeout in our past; few have the guts to admit it in public.

“Let's just do it!” When things have gotten complicated, followers want someone to simplify things—or at least someone brave enough to pick up a sword and shield and charge ahead of the pack into the thick of battle. With this one sentence, that person is you.