

Persuasion or Manipulation?

Persuasion is not manipulation.

If a connection between those words crosses your mind, it is time to eradicate it — and my goal in this short post is to help you do just that.

From the Merriam-Webster online dictionary ...

Persuade

- to move by argument, entreaty or expostulation to a belief, position or course of action

Manipulate

- to control or play upon by artful, unfair or insidious means especially to one's own advantage
- to change by artful or unfair means so as to serve one's purpose

Do you see the difference?

Inherent in the definition of manipulate is the idea that the communication or action is all about the first party — the manipulator. That idea isn't in the definition of persuasion at all.

My personal definition of persuasion extends beyond the dictionary definition to make it clear that it isn't manipulation, but that it is to move others to a position or course of action that is in everyone's (i.e. you and the person/group you are persuading) best interests. When you think about persuasion this way, you can see that it is at the heart of leading successfully.

Until you have this view of persuasion, you might be hampered in your success. You might have some small part of your brain/psyche that is pulling back, not being persistent and ultimately being less persuasive.

When you care about your team members and want them to see your view of the future and how it will benefit them, you are in the best position to start your persuading, because it isn't about you — it is about them and their success.

Yes, they may resist, and yes, they may not see the perspective that you see yet, but that is why we must persuade.

Their success and benefit is worth your effort.

Persuade, not manipulate.