

### **Challenge to the Ego**

Here's another very effective technique. Anytime someone challenges your abilities, especially your abilities to do *your* business, what's your immediate and instinctive reaction? To prove them wrong! You can politely express your doubt in your prospect then watch that people take off! For example, if you said to a supervisor, "I'm not sure you're able to get those reps of yours producing, so I may hire a consultant." Don't worry, that guy will be on it, pronto! What about saying, "Do you really have the power to help me out?" When employing this tactic, however, be careful to avoid damaging the ego. When you cause damage instead of producing a challenge, you will receive an air of indifference from your prospect.

Another challenge to someone's ego is commonplace with coaches and the team environment. During football practice if a player is not putting in 100%, is late for meetings, or keeps making the same mistake, the coach has a perfect ego-based solution. He brings the team together and explains exactly what has happened with that particular player. He then has the whole team, minus the guilty player, run laps. This punishment is a challenge to the ego (and life) of this football player. Such a situation only has to happen once to be persuasive for each member of the team.

There are many messages geared towards our egos. Think of a multi-level marketing meeting, where they say they are looking for "go-getters" and "people who can take action." Or what about a teacher who tells the student, "I'd like you to do these *advanced* assignments."? I have seen sales representatives make a subtle attack on the ego when they were not getting the sale. They simply say, "I guess you don't have the authority to make that decision." You should see the egos take action! Another example is giving people credit for things they don't even know. When we give people credit for knowing something they really know nothing about, they generally will say nothing and allow us to believe them to be smarter or more aware than they really are. The catch is that they will live up to that title that you have bestowed upon them in order to lead you to believe they are smart. You have heard such phrases as, "You probably already know...." or "You will soon realize..." These are direct challenges to our egos.

Have you ever wondered why "road rage" happens so frequently? It is an attack on our egos. We become angry because we weren't "respected." Our next reaction is to see what the culprit looks like to determine if the individual looks like the kind of person who would do this to us on "purpose." A little old lady doesn't enrage us as much as a young man might. This is because we assume that the old lady cut us off by accident and that the young man did it on purpose. The totality of your responses is ego-based. Someone did something to you, and you're angry. Other cases of people going to extremes to defend their egos include the newspaper account of a man strangling a woman for falling asleep while he was talking to her. Remember this important safety tip: Feed the hungry ego and they will quit biting.

### **Respond Instead of React**

In persuasion, we are faced with the difficult task of building the egos of our listeners while placing our own egos on hold. In order to effectively persuade, you have to let go

of your ego and focus on your objective. You don't have time to mend a bruised ego. Check your ego in at the door and remember your overriding purpose. Focus on persuasion, not on yourself.

© 2009 Kurt Mortensen