

# Leadership Bites: Influencing Others & Difficult Conversations

LEADERSHIP LEARNING IN 20 MINUTES

**NHS**

**Leadership Academy**

**South East**

## Introduction

- *The art of influencing others and the ability to manage challenging conversations effectively are among the qualities that mark out the most effective, engaging and respected leaders. Here are a few simple steps that you can take to help you to build on your skills and refine the art.*

### Key Insight:

“Always let your talent do the talking. Never your tantrums”

– Rasheed Ogunlaru, Coach – Speaker-Author

## Strategy is sovereign

In order to influence you need to understand:

1. Yourself
2. Your goal / objective
3. The game / the stakes
4. The environment and context
5. The key players

So, step 1 is to step back and ensure that you're clear on your role/ goals and the needs, priorities, strategies and circumstances of your organisation, team, stakeholders and anyone you're looking to influence. This may well involve some research but it's likely to involve being ready and willing to listen, learn and understand others. This will help you discover the essential win-win.

## Visibility, credibility, authority

“What people say and feel about you when you've left a room is precisely your job while you are in it.” – Rasheed Ogunlaru

In order to influence others, you yourself need to ensure that you have these three things in place:

**Visible:** in your team, organisation, with target audiences and if possible more widely in your field.

**Credible:** a proven track record, 'walk-the-talk', respected and liked, can-do attitude.

**Authority:** this does about your job role. It comes from your presence, knowledge and confidence.

## Further learning ...

For further information and learning, as well as suggested activities, feel free to visit the [People.NHS.uk](http://People.NHS.uk) website or our [South East Leadership Academy site](#).



## Communications essentials

First you need to be clear about your 1) Goal / outcomes. 2) Audience 3) Timing.  
Then you must be sure to consider these

1. **Message:** Clear, concise / comprehensive, calm, considered and compelling
2. **Medium(s):** These should be relevant to your audience and your goals
3. **Messenger:** Credible, visible, knowledgeable, believable, personable and professional

## Managing difficult conversations

First of all, ensure you always use all the key essentials above... but when things get tough

1. **Pause, breathe, relax:** Do you need to re-act if so where, when, how?
2. **Are you (others) aptly informed, skilled, placed & prepared?** - if not get help
3. **Be strategic, specific** + aligned to your / company goals +values
4. **Scope then swoop** 1) Zoom out to see the big picture 2) zoom act in detail
5. **If apt act, if not re-group**, review, plan, prepare, inform, follow-up & respond
6. **Communication is key:** Be clear, crisp, concise/comprehensive & compelling
7. **Be personable, professional, considered & compassionate** at all times

## Some key qualities and techniques

1. **Active Listening:** be present, interested, open,
2. **Reflecting** – demonstrating understanding
3. **Language / tone:** relevant, avoid jargon – be aware of tone, volume and pace
4. **Body language / appearance:** smart, engaged, appropriate, respectful
5. **Feedback sandwich:** positive feedback, constructive feedback, positive feedback

+ Be mindful of cultural differences and differing learning styles.

## Give it a go

Check out the accompanying *Influencing Others and Difficult Conversations* video on our website. This will help you build on these tools and techniques and will prompt / guide you to develop your own *Influence Map* of key colleagues, stakeholders', staff, seniors, peers and influencers.

### Further learning ...

For further information and learning, as well as suggested activities, feel free to visit the [People.NHS.uk](http://People.NHS.uk) website or our [South East Leadership Academy site](#).



# Time to reflect...



Leadership Academy

South East

Take some time to note down your thoughts on what you've learned;

What resonated?

What has made you curious?

What small changes could you make to start having an impact differently and quickly?

What might you need to share with your team, and commit to 'testing and learning' together?

A large, empty rounded rectangular box with a thin blue border, intended for the user to write their reflections on the questions above.

