



CHANGE THEIR MIND



**6
Steps
to persuade
anyone anytime**

SIMON HORTON

Praise for **Change Their Mind**

‘Packed with great insights, this will make you think, laugh – and produce great results. It’s such a fun read that you barely notice how much you are actually learning.’

Jack Nasher, Professor of Leadership and Organisation,
Munich Business School; author of *Convinced!*

‘We’re all so busy shouting at each other, we never listen anymore. Who knows, if we did maybe there’s more to agree on than we imagine. Horton’s book gives us some very clear practical steps on how to get our point across better. We’d do well if we gave it a try.’

Iain Dale, presenter of the evening show on LBC Radio;
one of Britain’s leading political commentators; author of
Why Can’t We All Just Get Along...

‘*Change Their Mind* draws on the methods of hostage negotiators, political campaigners and counsellors who work successfully with the toughest of patients. It’s very practical and full of stories that show exactly how these same methods work in everyday life too.’

Lord Daniel Finkelstein OBE, Associate Editor of *The Times*;
author of *Everything in Moderation*

‘This book is so full of wisdom on how to communicate actively for a life full of collective wellbeing – and so engaging – you won’t realise you have absorbed it! Yoda had been my guide on the fact that all our problems and potentials stem from just two emotions: love and fear. Now I have proper references for this and so much else thanks to Simon’s work.’

Dr Victoria Hurth, Fellow of University of Cambridge’s
Institute for Sustainability Leadership

2.7 Clues in the channel

What's your favourite medium? Not who's your favourite psychic, but how do you like to communicate?

Everyone has their favourite channel, and if you want to change the other person's mind it is worth thinking about which channel will be best. A large part of the answer will be the channel *they* like best, whether that's face-to-face or TikTok or messenger pigeon.

We can learn a lot about them from their preference. If it's face-to-face, do they want a formal meeting at the office or would they rather a quick chat at the local coffee shop or the taster menu at a Michelin-starred restaurant? If it's video-conference, do they have the camera on or off? Do they prefer the phone or the latest still-in-exclusive-invite-only-mode platform?

We can learn about them from their communication style too. Many years ago, I was running two different projects with two different friends, both called Alex. One was hard-nosed investment banker Alex and the other was soft, fluffy, hippy Alex. Hard-nosed investment banker Alex would ring and the call would never last more than three minutes. It would be bish-bash-bosh and bye, no time for how are you. Soft, fluffy, hippy Alex would call and it would take an hour and a half whatever it is we were talking about. Before we talked about anything to do with the project, he wanted to know how I was feeling and then he would tell me how he was feeling and then he wanted to know how I was feeling about how he was feeling and so on.

I'm exaggerating, of course, and both Alex's were very good friends and both projects were successful projects, but I did have to bear in mind each other's communication style if I wanted to get my outcome.

Even if it's good old vanilla email there's a lot we can work with. Some people write long emails, some write one-word grunts, some don't even respond at all. Some are bullet-pointed, some start with asking about your weekend and others have lots of emojis and fluffy bunny rabbits.

It's all useful information about who they are and how you can best communicate with them to get your outcome.

In summary

If you want the conversation to go well, you can't beat doing the preparation. It's the same with everything – the results you get are a function of how well you prepare. And if you do that research, you will find clues everywhere to know how to persuade them.

■ Understand their perspective

One thing you can guarantee is they will see it differently to how you see it. You have to put your message or your outcome in terms of how *they* see it. Otherwise, it just won't get through.

■ Become 'one of us'

Human beings are tribal animals and you want to show that you and they are of the same tribe. This is not to fake it; you should be able to find a genuine overlap between who they are as a person and yourself. Once you've done this, they will be much more open to your idea.

■ Know their personality type

Everybody is different but personality profiling can be a quick way to understanding how someone thinks. If you know how they think, you can use this to predict how they are likely to respond to your request and how you might change your approach for greater success.

■ Understand who else is involved

It is never just you and that one other person, there are always other people involved – even if you aren't aware of who they are. But if you can map out everyone involved and identify their drivers, it can help you navigate a route through to success.

■ Understand their culture

Ultimately, everyone is in a culture of one, but understanding the person's broader culture in which they live and work can give clues as to how they might respond.

■ Which channel should you use?

Typically, we default to our favourite, whether that's email, phone or the rooftop restaurant with great views across the city. You might, however, want to choose *their* favourite channel instead. Either way, knowing their choice of channel and how they use it can give interesting pointers to how you can influence them.

So, look for clues everywhere. You have to listen for clues too, but we'll cover that in the next chapter.

3

Listen, listen, listen

3.1 An end to conversational narcissism

It's not all about you

This is perhaps the most important section in the book.

Most people view conversation as an opportunity to talk about themselves. I had a friend who I used to see regularly and she spent the whole time telling me of her latest woes. I put up with it until once when I was going through a difficult period myself. In the space of a month, I left my job, my father died, I broke up with my girlfriend and then found out she was pregnant. When my talkative friend heard this, she said, 'Oh wow, we have to meet up and talk'.

What she meant was, we have to meet up and talk *about her*. As we sat down at the café, I said 'How's things?' in an off-hand way, as you do, and she spent the next 90 minutes telling me all about how terrible her life was.

She's a friend I used to see regularly.

She's not alone. Many people love the sound of their own voice and their favourite topic is themselves. At their most