

How To Get What You Want This Holiday Season

We can learn a lot from the words of those who have gone before us. Take Aristotle for example. He was a Greek philosopher, a student of Plato and a teacher of Alexander the Great. Way back in the 4th Century BC, he was accurately classifying living organisms. His work in Optics led to the development of shutters and magnification in modern cameras. He produced an abundance of written work in many different fields on subjects such as causality, motion, ethics and influence. And it's this last one, influence, that we're interested in this holiday season.

Even with all the joy they bring, festive celebrations can be stressful. Everyone is running around trying to get everything done in the moment, and at the same time, making decisions for the future. Invariably, this holiday season, you will need the assistance or agreement of others. Maybe it's a big thing like deciding to move to a new house, or new city, next year. Or maybe it's a small thing, like enlisting help to set the table for the family lunch. Either way, Aristotle may be able to help.

During his life, Aristotle wrote his Rhetoric, better known today as The Art of Persuasion. The premise was simple. He wrote that evidence for claims comes in three forms: Logos, Pathos and Ethos.

- Logos describes logical or rational appeal. The claim simply has to make sense.
- Pathos describes emotional appeal. The claim has to touch the heart of the audience. We have to feel moved in some way.
- Ethos describes ethical appeal. In 'The Rhetoric', Aristotle explained Ethos as the need for the claim to be grounded in credibility. This refers to the authority, reliability and trustworthiness of the person making the claim.

You may be interested to know that each time you're influenced by someone,

it's because they have delivered their message to encompass all three forms of evidence in a way that resonates with you. One of the first steps to increasing your persuasive ability is to develop an understanding of the balance between Logos, Pathos and Ethos.

Importantly, the references to Logos, Pathos and Ethos in The Rhetoric were written to refer specifically to the effect of the message on the audience; the audience being the person or persons we wish to influence. Even Ethos, the section referring to the credibility of the person making the claim or presenting the idea, is referred to in regard to its effect on the audience.

When we think of these three aspects of persuasion, the dynamics of influence becomes clear. We need a balance of Logos, Pathos and Ethos in our message.

To be influential, you need to see things from the other point of view. You have to understand the priorities of those you are hoping to influence. Understanding their priorities helps you frame your message so that it makes sense to the other person. In this way, you tap into their logic to help them identify with the reason behind the idea and the need for the potential outcome. The other part of seeing things from their point of view involves understanding what is important to them... not to you... to them. What message will move them?

What will touch their heart? Finally, you need to have built and maintained the type of credibility that allows you and your opinions to be viewed as of value. It is vital to maintain your credibility. No doubt you have seen good ideas disregarded simply because the person delivering that idea was not respected, trusted or valued.

This holiday season, and throughout the New Year, when you are hoping to gain buy in from those around you, remember Aristotle. Think about Logos, Pathos and Ethos, and frame your message so that the audience can hear and understand it in a way that harnesses their priorities, strengthens their confidence, and has meaning for them. 💡

© Successful Minds – December 2010



e: info@successfulminds.com.au
w: www.successfulminds.com.au