

WORKPLACE WISDOM NEWSLETTER

ARE YOU INFLUENCE-ABLE?

What do you do when someone tries to influence you?

**Maybe sell you the top-of-the-line car model?
Maybe your teen-ager trying to convince you stay out all night for prom?
Maybe your spouse wanting to spend big dollars on a favorite hobby?**

Yes, it could be anything!

Are you influence-able? Is it possible at all to influence you?

In the workplace, others try to influence or convince us all the time.
Our responsibility is to weigh the information with our own thoughts.

Psychologist Martin Buber said, "We get stuck in our own rightness."

I like that statement. The idea is at the root of all conflict.
The one thing we know, without a doubt, during a conflict is that **we are right!**

If we didn't hold tight to our own "rightness", we wouldn't be in conflict.

So, I pose this question to you again:

**Are you influence-able? *Influence-able?*
Is it possible at all to influence you?
Will you consider another viewpoint before quickly reacting?**

It takes another dimension of maturity for me to step back, take a deep breath, and say to myself, "*Sue, wait a minute. Consider what this person is saying. If it has merit, then have the emotional maturity to investigate and, possibly, change your position.*"

Did you ever hear the old saying, "She is stuck in her ways."? It simply means that she is "stuck in her rightness"!

In Texas, we say, "Bless your heart" a lot. When I see someone stuck in their own position, and unyielding even to new and better information, I say to myself, "Bless her heart."

However, what I really mean is: *It is pitiful to see a narrow, unyielding position...I don't mean bless her heart at all!*

From where do these challenges to our rightness often come?

- From a person of a younger generation
- From a person who lives outside my neighborhood
- From a person who has different religious perspectives

- From a person who values money, prestige, and position differently
- From a person who is selling their product or service too vehemently.

Here are some basic steps we can take to be more open-minded:

- 1. Take a moment to pause and reflect.** We respond often much too quickly.
- 2. Consider the other person's position.**
- 3. Evaluate your own thinking.** (It does contain biases, you know).
- 4a. Soften and be influenced into newer, better, more comfortable, or more positive thinking...or**
- 4b. After looking inward, reaffirm our own beliefs or position.**

In our western culture, we often deal in polarized, confrontational positions. In eastern cultures, there is a deeply-rooted behavioral preference that encourages the following teaching: *Move yourself toward another person's position as much as you possibly can. And when the other person does the same, you have more opportunity for agreement than for conflict.*

I like that custom. I wish we had a bit more of it here in the west.

The lessons I really want to leave are these:

- Be influence-able when it is merited.
- Deeply consider the position of the other person.
- You could be the huge winner in doing so.

**Have a great week.
Allow someone to influence you.**

And yes... I'm working on it, too!

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