

**Executive
Book Summary
LDRS 591
Organizational
Behaviour &
Development**

The Power of Ethical Persuasion

By Tom Rusk, M.D. with D. Patrick Miller

THE POWER OF ETHICAL

Ethical Persuasion = Applied Values

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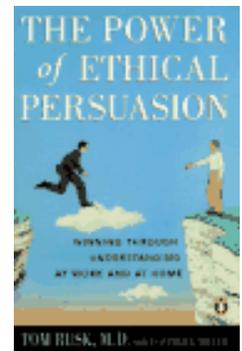
Rusk, T., M.D., & Miller, D. P. (1993). *The power of ethical persuasion: Winning through understanding at work and at home*. New York: Penguin Books.

A Brief Summary:

Tom Rusk explores the philosophy and explains the methodology for using Ethical Persuasion as a means of improving communication. Communication breakdowns generally occur when strong feelings or emotions are involved. Rusk offers the theory behind the process of Ethical Persuasion (part I), a how-to use Ethical Persuasion (EP) instructional section (part II), and practical examples of dialogues with and without the use of EP (part III). The concepts are simple and easy-to-understand. This book is practical and applicable to everyday situations both at the workplace and at home. The book is divided in three main parts: Part I explores the roots of ethical

persuasion; Part II details the three phases of ethical persuasion (exploring the other person's viewpoint, explaining your viewpoint, and creating resolutions); Part III describes applications of ethical persuasion to real-life situations involving friends, lovers, spouses, bosses, managers, coworkers, parents, children and difficult people.

This step-by-step, anecdotal guide illustrates how to use ethical persuasion to repair and deepen relationships by consistently using the values of respect, caring, fairness and understanding in all communication.



"Power is creative influence" (p. 41)

R7

The Golden Rule: Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.



R1

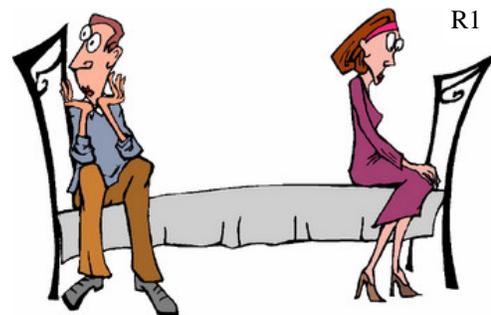
Ethical Persuasion may be able to help you if you can relate to any of these situations:

- Have you ever had a conversation with someone that broke down into an argument where one or both parties left in anger?
- Have you ever had a discussion that ended in the silent treatment? (...think teenagers, spouses, significant others...)
- Have you ever felt "...resentful or righteous, abandoned or abused, vicious or victimized...determined to win the argument...on the defensive...fed up and furious?" (p. 6)
- Do you wish that you could convince someone to really listen to your point of view?

Five Barriers to Human Communication

1. We all live in *unique and private worlds* of personal experience.
2. Nearly everyone is insecure to some extent. Thus, when we feel threatened, hurt, or angry, we tend to react with *blame and self-defense* rather than attempts to improve communication.
3. Everyone has *difficulty handling strong feelings* and maintaining a dynamic balance between mind and heart.
4. *Feelings are facts* to the person experiencing them. Rejecting a person's feelings makes the person feel rejected as a whole.
5. We almost always perceive some kind of power imbalance in difficult communications, but we *rarely discuss issues of power openly*.

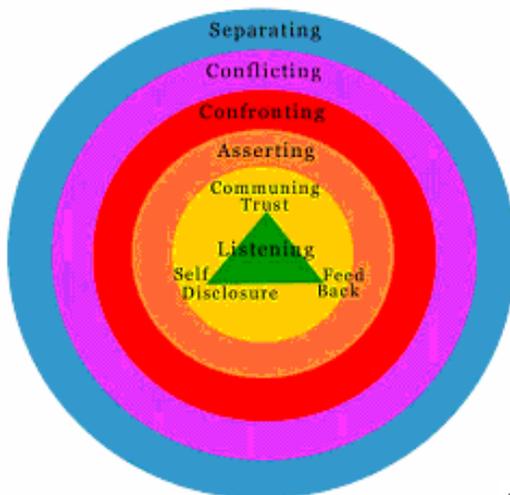
Paradox of the Human Condition: "our survival and security seem to depend on self-defense, but understanding, cooperation, and closeness require that we risk vulnerability" (p. 8-9)



R1

Communication breakdowns are uncomfortable ("silent treatment"); attempting to repair a relationship is also uncomfortable—which solution offers more positive results??

Communication Interaction Patterns



R6

When we apply Ethical Persuasion to our communication, we are entering into the triangle, or "bulls-eye", of communication interaction patterns that involves communicating trust, feedback, and self-disclosure.

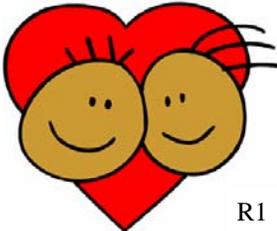
The Familiarity Principle: "You cannot act or be treated in ways that are different from those you are used to—even if those ways are better—without becoming increasingly uncomfortable" (p. 34)

Phase I: Exploring the Other Person's Viewpoint

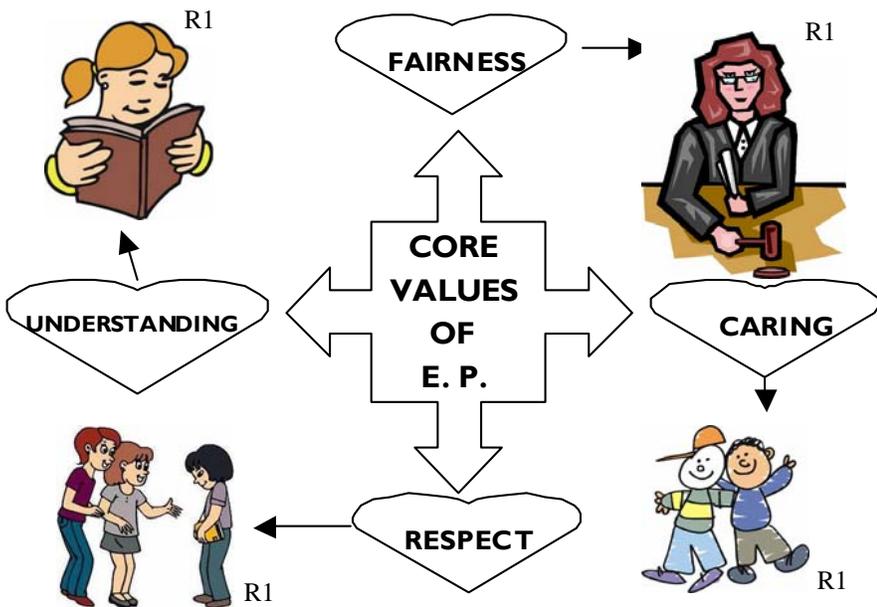
The Seven Steps of Exploring the Other Person's Viewpoint

1. Establish that your immediate goal is mutual understanding, not problem-solving.
2. Elicit the other person's thoughts, feelings, and desires about the subject at hand.
3. Ask for the other person's help in understanding him or her. Try not to defend or disagree.
4. Repeat the other person's position in your own words to show you understand.
5. Ask the other person to correct your understanding and keep restating his or her position.
6. Refer back to your position only to keep things going.
7. Repeat steps 1 through 6 until the other person unreservedly agrees that you understand his or her position.

Ethical Persuasion Golden Rule:
 "Respect others' feelings as you would have them respect your own" (p. 8)



R1



"Relationships are based on feelings...Upset feelings give you an opportunity to deepen a relationship...The key...is to handle them all with caring and respect" (p. 30)

Phase II: Explaining Your Viewpoint

The Five Steps of Explaining Your Viewpoint

1. Ask for a fair hearing in return.
2. Begin with an explanation of how the other person's thoughts and feelings affect you. Avoid blaming and self-defense as much as possible.
3. Carefully explain your thoughts, desires, and feelings as *your truth*, not *the truth*.
4. Ask for restatements of your position—and corrections of any factual inaccuracies—as necessary.
5. Review your respective positions.



R1



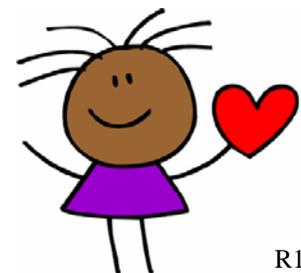
"I think you will agree that it is only fair that I also get a chance to explain what I've been feeling, too."

R4

Respect, Understanding, Caring, Fairness

In The Power of Ethical Persuasion, Tom Rusk & D. Patrick Miller show how to apply the ethical principles of respect, understanding, caring and fairness to communication between co-workers, children and loved ones. By applying these four values in negotiations, strong feelings can be used to everyone's advantage to create solutions that are more satisfying

and better understood by all parties involved. Ethical Persuasion offers a process that can "...help you settle arguments, solve problems, and ease negotiations in the short term, but it will also help you deepen any kind of relationship over the long term..." (p. xi) just by letting the other person know that you care enough about them to hear their point of view first.



R1

Phase III: Creating Resolutions

The Three Steps (plus options) of Creating Resolutions

1. Affirm your mutual understanding and confirm that you are both ready to consider options for resolution.
2. Brainstorm multiple options.
3. If a mutually agreeable solution is not yet obvious, try one or more of the following options:
 - Take time out to reconsider, consult, exchange proposals, and reconvene.
 - Agree to neutral arbitration, mediation, or counseling.
 - Compromise between alternate solutions.
 - “Take turns” between alternate solutions.
 - Yield (for now) once your position is thoroughly and respectfully considered.
 - Assert your positional power after thoroughly and respectfully considering their position.
 - Agree to disagree and still respect each other; then, if you can, go your separate ways on the particular issue.



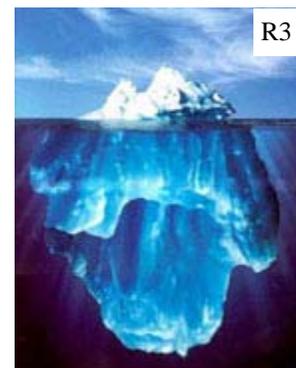
R1

“Bad feelings are messages from your inner spirit about something you need to change or pay attention to in your life. Bad feelings are not evidence of inner badness.” (p. 55)

Author’s Aims and Perspectives

Tom Rusk has written a self-help or “guided self-change” (p. xiii) book that teaches a different type of “persuasion”. It’s a new way to handle difficult communications. The persuasion used is to convince everyone involved to really listen to each other’s point of view. This is achieved by treating each other with respect, caring, fairness and understanding. The Ethical Persuasion (EP) approach is “equally applicable to intimate relationships, friend-

ships, families and professional environments...” (p. xi). The communication between two people is based on what each person *feels* from his/her own point of view, not who holds the *right* point of view. Rusk is a certified psychiatrist who wrote this book because of his own need to be able to communicate better with loved ones, friends and clients. He introduces patients to EP in his guided self-change counseling. The emphasis is on using values-driven behaviour to gain deeper understanding of strong feelings or emotions.



R3

The roots of some feelings go much deeper than they initially appear.

Applications of Ethical Persuasion

The ethical persuasion process can be used to improve or repair relationships in all areas of your life. Communication at home with your spouse or significant other, your child(ren), your relatives, parents, and friends has the potential to become more meaningful with greater respect for all participants. Relationships in your professional life with administration, co-workers, parents, and students can also benefit greatly from the use of EP. Emotionally charged conversations that could potentially erupt

into name-calling and hurt feelings can be rerouted with the constant application of respect, caring, understanding and fairness when listening to the other person's point of view first, communicating your own feelings and opinions next, and attempting to come to a fair resolution or compromise.

Ethical Persuasion does not promise that you will never get into an argument or always get your own way. However, using this method of communicating, especially when strong emotions are involved, will

help both parties to feel respected and understood instead of hurt and defensive. Each participant in this process has the opportunity to hear and be heard, making sure that their viewpoints are clearly understood before moving towards a

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R2



"I love you just the way you are when you're not being just the way you are."



R5

<p><u>Understanding</u> - Mutual comprehension, as of ideas and intentions.</p>	<p><u>Respect</u> - To consider or treat with deference or dutiful regard.</p>
<p><u>Fairness</u> - The treating of both, or all sides alike, without reference to one's own feelings or interests</p>	<p><u>Caring</u> - To feel concern or interest, as in caring about others</p>

Ethical Persuasion can be used to improve communication both at home and at work.

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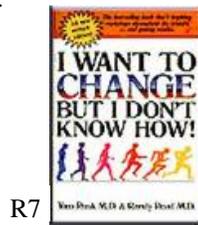
Keith Walker

**Critical
Evaluation by
Student**

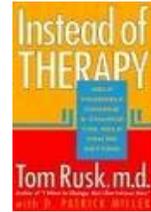
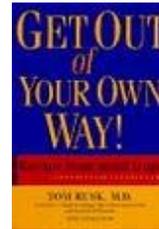
The *Power of Ethical Persuasion* focuses on the art of communication and negotiation. It is applicable for anyone who has ever had an emotion-laden conversation (who can say they haven't?). Rusk's message is delivered in the form of advice and a step-by-step process which hinges on the four ethical principles of respect, caring, fairness and understanding. By focusing on these four values, your communication with other will change for the better. There is no guarantee that a compromise will be reached, or that you are guaranteed to "get your own way", but there will be deeper understanding in your communications when ethical persuasion is applied.

Although no book could ever predict every possible outcome for any scenario, Rusk does provide many examples and anecdotes to illustrate how Ethical Persuasion can be used in any situation: in our personal and professional lives.

If you enjoy self-help books with step-by-step guidelines for self-improvement, then you may want to pick up one of these other books by Tom Rusk.



R7



R8

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"This might not be ethical. Is that a problem for anyone?"
Communication is the key to deeper, more meaningful relationships.

The application of EP is not realistic for every single conversation we have with someone. The time it would take to come to complete understanding and agreement is not a logistical possibility. However, for those discussions that are likely to evoke strong emotions, I would at least try to explore the other person's viewpoint before communicating my own.

Changing ourselves is not an easy task—it is uncomfortable and requires conscious thought and perseverance. But, by letting the other person know that you care about and respect them, you want to understand their point of view, and you are willing to hear them out first, you are a living example of how easy it can be to apply Ethical Persuasion to all areas of your life. If you are willing to try a little Ethical Persuasion to improve your negotiating skills, you are moving towards better communication and deeper, more meaningful relationships in all areas of your life!