

# THE EIGHT KEY WORDS (“THE PHRASE THAT PERSUADES”)

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## In brief:

Are there really any persuasive phrases that work like magic? Yes, there are. And, in this article, you'll learn, perhaps, the most powerful of them all. "The Phrase That Persuades" - what I call, The Eight Key Words, will absolutely move practically any one-difficult person over to your side of the issue. In this article, you'll learn exactly what that phrase is and, just as importantly, how to set it up.

- by Bob Burg

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All of us face the following situation at one time or another. We need a customer (dis)service rep, (un)civil servant, or similar-type person to help us to do something they don't have to help us to do. It's easier for them to do as little as possible, or even refuse us altogether.

So, what do we do? How do we handle the situation so that we get what we want, while, of course, allowing them to feel good about themselves and helping them learn how to be more helpful to others in the future?

We begin by letting the person have their say. While they tell us why "it can't be done" we simply listen with a polite countenance, without interrupting. If we interrupt, we make them angry, and strengthen their resolve to be un-accommodating.

Next, we agree with them. "What?", you may ask. "What good will that do?" It disarms them. We're not disagreeing with them so there is, in fact, no argument. At least not from our end. And, let's fact it - nobody argues with themselves! (What are they going to say, "No, you're wrong. . . . I'm . . . wrong!" -- I don't think so). Instead, try, "You're absolutely correct. I totally understand what you're saying. Rules are rules and you've got to follow them."

Now, help them to move into the solution by suggesting a way they can do what you need them to do while still feeling as though they are in control. What you say, of course, will depend upon your unique circumstances. It typically isn't very difficult since doing what's needed usually isn't that difficult.

Thus far you've been polite, patient, and courteously persistent (credit Zig Ziglar with the term "courteously persistent"). The person knows you plan to get what you want, but you've been so pleasant to deal with, not only can they not be angry with you, but they'd actually "like" to help you. Of course, they can't "lose face" in front of you, so you need to help them along. Now is when you say the "Eight Key Words", or what I call, "The Phrase that Persuades." Here it is:

"If you can't do it, I'll definitely understand."

What you've done is given that person an "out" - a "backdoor." You haven't painted them into a corner from which he or she cannot escape but, instead, made them feel very comfortable, not pressured. You've also "gently challenged" them to use their power for good, being part of the solution instead of the problem. They now want to do for you, that which they wouldn't do for most others.

The Phrase that Persuades: 'If you can't do it, I'll definitely understand.'

If appropriate, after the "Eight Key Words" you can say, "If you could, I'd certainly appreciate it." Then, while they're checking their computer, you can add what I call the "coup de grace", which is "Hey, don't get yourself in any trouble . . . it isn't 'that' important." Wow! -- talk about moving a person over to your side of the issue.

What you've really done is to reposition the conflict from "you against them" to "you AND them". . . against the system. Utilize this method consistently, and in practically any situation in which you're dealing with an unhelpful person. You'll both come out winners. And, you'll truly master the art of WINNING WITHOUT INTIMIDATION.

About the Author: Bob Burg ([www.burg.com](http://www.burg.com)) is author of "Endless Referrals: Network Your Everyday Contacts into Sales" and "Winning Without Intimidation: How to Master the Art of Positive Persuasion" (each having sold over 150,000 copies). For more information on Bob's books, CDs and other resources, visit [www.burg.com](http://www.burg.com). While there you can also subscribe to his free publications.