

## Insights from Underdog Influencers: Advocacy Isn't Persuasion

**W**e always strive to go beyond the existing conversations on grassroots influence and not just move the bar, but raise it relative to grassroots persuasion. Because advocacy is an activity rather than a result, we wanted to focus on what should be the ultimate result of advocacy: persuasion. Is there a pattern of behaviors that "everyday" people use that changes the minds of those "up" the food chain?

No matter your current station in life, all of us will be in the position of having to influence "up" the food chain. I was curious if there is a set of behaviors that tend to result in upward persuasion success. So, I interviewed not just people who "had a good meeting" with their person in power, or who "are good communicators," but they had to achieve the result: winning over their influence prospect.

And, I didn't stop there, I interviewed the powerful people who had their minds changed on a project, proposal, initiative, etc., to find out what the Underdogs did that make them change their views. It's all being compiled for my book on underdog influence. As I am writing the book, I have developed a motivational keynote on the findings that includes a process on how to develop the Underdog influence habits.

What have we found? First, interviewing these stellar people has been a reminder of my often repeated belief that, "If I've learned one thing, it's never one thing." These Underdogs do many things simultaneously to win over their prospect. But, there is a proven process used by these successful underdogs to get what they want.

### What did we find?

- The common advice to "be passionate" is wrong and can doom your request
- How you make your adversary feel, rather than the facts, is more important to gaining agreement
- Why hurting yourself accelerates persuasion
- What decision makers always consider when determining whether to give you access
- How not to be a "yaktivist" (people who shoot off their mouth and shoot themselves in the foot by talking too much and alienating decision makers)
- The one tactic all persuasive Underdogs must execute to change the mind of their adversary (without it, you cannot succeed)
- A surprising character trait of successful Underdogs that makes powerful people give them the "benefit of the doubt" in any persuasion attempt
- How aligning with an adversary can make you a more effective influencer
- Why one person can't make a difference (*and no, that's not a typo*)

Contact me if you would like more information on the research or my keynote speech/workshop options on Underdog Influence: [amy@showaltergroup.com](mailto:amy@showaltergroup.com)/513.762.7668.