



## Getting Your Needs Met: *Manipulation vs. Persuasion*

- ▶ **Manipulate** – To manage or influence skillfully, especially in an *unfair* manner
- ▶ **Persuade** - to induce to believe by appealing to *reason* or *understanding*

Keep in mind that this is just one perspective on manipulation and persuasion as a way to get one's needs met. One thing that is usually the same when it comes to manipulation and persuasion is this goal. However the ethics and tactics involved with manipulation and persuasion can be quite different. Compare:

<b>MANIPULATION</b>	<b>PERSUASION</b>
<b>Goal</b> – Get what you need accomplished	<b>Goal</b> – Get what you need accomplished
<b>Ethics and Tactics</b> – <i>By any means necessary.</i> If needed, lie, omit information, twist the facts, spin the story, play on others emotions (guilt), use trickery, intimidation, deception, seduction, or exploitation. Surprise, overwhelm, or confuse others if needed	<b>Ethics and Tactics</b> – <i>Honest, fair, and sincere:</i> Carefully use the right (truthful) words to present convincing evidence. Appeal to others sense of reason and understanding by explaining a valid viewpoint in an honest, straightforward manner

Although manipulation and persuasion can appear to be quite similar, manipulation is often seen in a negative light whereas persuasion in this case is much more positive. To put this in perspective consider the following questions for discussion:

- ▶ **Think about the last time someone manipulated you: What happened and how did you feel?** (For example: “ My coworker manipulated me to cover a shift for him on Saturday night so that he could “rest” and I later found out he went to a party that night”
- ▶ **Think about a time when someone honestly persuaded you to do something good for yourself or others: How did that turn out?** (For example: “I am glad that my neighbor persuaded me to go back to school because now that I am graduating I am really appreciative that listened and I didn't quit”)

**Manipulation Alert:**  
**Beware of:**  
Lying  
Shaming  
Blaming  
Hostility  
Guilt Trips  
Seduction  
Diversion  
Confusion  
Charm & Flirtation  
Playing on Emotions  
Gaslighting



**The link between manipulation and victimization:** Manipulation can be very effective but it often requires a willing victim. Some individuals are more susceptible to manipulation than others possibly because they are naïve, overly trusting, desperate, or otherwise prone toward guilt, shame or emotional attachment. At times it is the people who care the most who become the repeated victims of manipulation. Consider the following and discuss if any of these examples sound familiar:

- **Charmer** - An attractive person using his or her charm, good looks and seduction to get as much money, favors, caretaking and other benefits, out of someone else who is infatuated or even who may feel “in love”
- **Guilt tripper** - A person who gets years of financial help, enabling, rescuing and other help from a family member who feels guilty or responsible. For example “You weren’t there enough when I was a kid, so that is why I am addicted to drugs and now you have to take care of me because this is all your fault!” or “If you don’t give me money I’ll go out and do something dangerous and if I get hurt or killed it’s all on you”
- **Rotator** – A person systematically goes through a list of people who care and then begs and borrows from each person one at a time. For example: “Since my parents are getting tired of me asking for money this week I’ll hit up my uncle for money, then next week I’ll ask Grandma”
- **Wheeler Dealer** – This person always has a sweet sounding bargain for his or her victims. For example: “I have my check coming in next week, so if you loan me the money today I will pay you back plus an additional 50 bucks next Tuesday”
- **Other – *What other examples of manipulation come to mind?***

**The downside of being manipulative:** Once again, manipulation can be effective but there are long term negative effects:

- ▶ **Burnt Bridges** – Some people may eventually cut off someone who is repeatedly manipulative
- ▶ **Hurt loved ones** – Often those closest are the most hurt and victimized
- ▶ **Reputation** – It is hard to shake the reputation of being a scammer, liar, or cheat
- ▶ **Boy Who Cried Wolf Syndrome** – Over time people stop listening when you keep tricking them
- ▶ **Other? – *What other negative things can happen to someone who is manipulative?***

### **The Road to Positive Persuasion**

Learning to be persuasive instead of manipulative can take time but it is worth it in the long run. Some ways to be persuasive while still being honest and truthful:

- **Talk the Talk** – An honest persuasive person learns to use the right choice of words to convey to others what they want and need in a non-manipulative and straightforward manner. Developing assertive communication skills is a part of this process. This involves communicating with respect and tactfulness
- **Walk the Walk** – One of the most persuasive things a person can do is let their actions speak for them. As other people see your progress and positive changes, more and more individuals will be inclined to want to help you.
- **Rebuilt Trust and Credibility** – It takes patience but as the cliché goes: trust can definitely be earned with time
- **Integrity** – This also takes time and effort but people are much more inclined to listen to someone who shows a pattern of good moral character, soundness of mind, and who lives by ethical principles



## Closing Exercise: The Manipulation Challenge –

**Directions:** Cut out the boxes on the next page to make 28 small cards. Put the 28 cards face down on a table or other surface in the middle of the group or else put them in a hat that everyone can pass around. Take turns one by one picking a card. When it is your turn, read the card to the group and try to complete the following for your card:

1. GIVE A PERSONAL EXAMPLE - If you can, give an example from your own life of one of the following:
  - Explain how YOU used what is on this card to manipulate someone else **OR:**
  - Explain how SOMEONE ELSE manipulated you using what is on your card
2. SHIFT IT TO SOMETHING POSITIVE TODAY- Try to say something positive that you have learned or changed or are working on today related to this topic

Some examples -

Card picked: “**Tears**”

1. PERSONAL EXAMPLE - “When I was desperate and it looked like my parents wanted me to get out of the house I used to turn on the water works and start crying so that they would feel bad and give me one more chance”
2. SHIFT TO SOMETHING POSITIVE TODAY – “Nowadays I only cry when I am sincerely and truly sad. I no longer used fake tears as a way to try to get myself out of trouble because I am working on being honest today”

Card picked: “**Threats**”

1. PERSONAL EXAMPLE – “Whenever I relapsed in the past, my ex would constantly threaten me that I would no longer be able to see my son”
2. SHIFT TO SOMETHING POSITIVE TODAY – “Now that I am sober today, my ex’s threats no longer concern me as I have nothing to fear and nothing to hide from since I am doing the right thing”



<b>Physical Attraction</b>	<b>Tears</b>	<b>Sweet-talking</b>	<b>Promises</b>
<b>Bargaining</b>	<b>Begging</b>	<b>Guilt</b>	<b>Threats</b>
<b>Schemes</b>	<b>Trust</b>	<b>Family</b>	<b>Friendship</b>
<b>Fear</b>	<b>Fast-talking</b>	<b>Misleading</b>	<b>Deception</b>
<b>Half-truths</b>	<b>Emotional Terrorism</b>	<b>Persistence</b>	<b>Intimidation</b>
<b>Bribery</b>	<b>Playing the Victim</b>	<b>Scamming</b>	<b>False Hope</b>
<b>Pity</b>	<b>Twisting the Facts</b>	<b>Controlling</b>	<b>Bullying</b>