

Persuasive Interviewing

Persuasive Interviewing

A Forensic Case Analysis

Second Edition

Don Rabon

Tanya Chapman



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To the people without whom this would not have been possible:
Don and Rachel; Bill and Nancy.

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Getting Started

If interviewing were golf, questioning would be the long game, detecting deception would be the navigation of the sand traps and persuasion would involve the short game. As is often referenced in golf, “you drive for show and you putt for dough.” This analogy can most certainly apply to the persuasive phase of the interviewing process. An interviewer can question like Socrates, or detect deception like Diogenes, but if the interviewer cannot persuade as articulated by Aristotle, the round of interviewing may not have a positive outcome.

This text is designed to assist the interviewer in working on their persuasion *short game*. Continuing with our analogy, mastering the fundamentals of persuasion can take strokes off of the process.

Arduously working your way through the text can help to provide you with the basic concepts and dynamics of how persuasion is applied to the overall interviewing process. But at the end of the day, it is going to come down to you taking the information provided and spending time practicing on the persuasive putting green—learning from each and every encounter. No one else can do that for you.

Keep in mind, the persuasion process is not a “one size fits all,” lock-step endeavor. As you address the questions and exercises, don’t find *the* answer and stop thinking. Find *an* answer and then *another* answer. There is no other interviewer exactly like you. There is no other interviewee exactly like the one before you. There is no other circumstantial context exactly like the one in which you find yourself endeavoring to gain compliance. The more options you develop, the more flexibility you will have.

Lastly, in Appendix D, there are three advanced exercises. Once you have worked your way meticulously through the text and have gained what you see as an adequate level of understanding of the applications, try your hand at these. If you are so inclined, please feel free to share your progress with us. We are most eager to see that which you develop.

Now, tee up and let’s do it.

Preface

This text is designed for a broad-based application and utilization. The experienced interviewer and those new to the persuasion process, as it relates to interviewing and interrogation, will find the opportunity to develop and enhance their persuasive skills. The content presentation is designed to lend itself to the presentation of the materials in a self-study, practitioner training setting, as well as an academic environment. Lastly, for the experienced interviewer, working through all the elements of the materials will allow for enhanced knowledge, skills and abilities.

The text contains content related exercises and an examination for each chapter. A familiarization with the material found in the texts *Interviewing and Interrogation, Second Edition*, and *Investigative Discourse Analysis, Second Edition*, written by Don Rabon and Tanya Chapman, Carolina Academic Press, would be of benefit but is not preclusive.

The primary concentration of the text is the breakdown, examination and evaluation of the last eighteen minutes of an eighty minute homicide related interview. We will study specifically what the interviewer incorporated into his verbal—involving words—and vocal, including sounds and silence, communication to persuade the interviewee to acquiesce. The goal is to learn not just what transpired but also why and how.

The chapters include explanatory notes within the examined transcript designed to allow the reader to understand what has transpired from the interviewee. The responding linguistic persuasive strategy taken by the interviewer allows the reader the opportunity to incorporate the skills into their own persuasive communication devices.

There are application questions and an “Application Exercise” allowing the reader to stop, pause and reflect on the material and how it can relate to their own persuasive responsibilities. The related activities are designed to reinforce the material presented. These exercises are designed to allow the reader to relate what has previously been presented into a broader application in order to enhance the learning process and lay the foundation for greater persuasive communication skill abilities.

As a result the experienced persuader may traverse the text and supporting materials rather quickly without needing to pause, contemplate and apply, but rather moving steadily to the end of the journey picking up any interesting and applicable pieces of information along the way. However, the apprentice may want to slow down, reflect and even backtrack along the trails and take a look at some of the elements more than once. For the experienced traveler it is the destination that is most important. For those new to the experience it is the journey itself that is most important. Hopefully for both, this text will serve as a useful vehicle and the excursion will be of benefit to one and all. Lastly, persons responsible for the delivery of information and the development of skills in others will find this material a valuable resource. The level of delivery can range from basic to advanced.

As always when conducting interviews of this nature, follow the prescribed legal parameters within your jurisdiction, organizational policy and procedure related to interviewing and the preferential criteria of the local prosecuting authority.

