

64 COMPLIANCE GAINING STRATEGIES: WAYS TO GET OTHER PEOPLE TO DO WHAT YOU WANT THEM TO DO

(Source: Kellermann, K. & Cole, T. (1994). Classifying compliance gaining messages: Taxonomic disorder and strategic confusion. *Communication Theory*, 1, pp. 3-60.)

STRATEGY

- 1. Actor Takes Responsibility:** Try to get others to comply by stating your willingness to help them or even work on the request yourself. That is, try to gain their compliance by *offering to do it yourself as a means of getting them* to do what you want.
- 2. Altercasting (Negative):** Try to get others to comply by pointing out that *only a bad person would not* do what is wanted. That is, try to gain their compliance by noting that only a person with negative qualities wouldn't comply.
- 3. Altercasting (Positive):** Try to get others to comply by pointing out that *a good person would* do what is wanted. That is, try to gain their compliance by noting that any person with positive qualities would comply.
- 4. Altruism:** Try to get others to comply by asking them to *give you a hand* out of the goodness of their heart. That is, try to gain their compliance by asking them to be altruistic and just do it for you.
- 5. Assertion:** Try to get others to comply by *asserting (forcefully stating)* what you want. That is, try to gain their compliance by demanding (commanding) them to comply.
- 6. Audience-Use:** Try to get others to comply by having a group of other people present when you make your request. That is, try to gain their compliance by *asking them in front of other people* as a way to back up your request.
- 7. Authority Appeal:** Try to get others to comply on the basis of the *authority* that you or other people have. That is, try to gain their compliance by using or relying on a position of power over them to get them do to what you want.
- 8. Aversive Stimulation:** Try to get others to comply by *doing things they don't like until they agree* to comply. That is, try to gain their compliance by bothering them until they do what you want.

EXAMPLES

- I get Howard to do what I want by telling him that I would be willing to do it for him.
I said: 'Is there anything I can do to help you overcome the problems that are preventing you from coming to work on time?'
I got Randy to look for a job by saying I'd look through the want ads for him.
- You tell the Smiths that only an inconsiderate person would carry through with this plan to cut down the tree and construct a garage in its place.
You tell your friend that only an immature person would expect someone to take an unrewarding job.
The mark of a bad person is someone who steals, so quit doing it.
- You tell Dick that since he is a mature and intelligent boy he will naturally want to study more and get good grades.
She said: 'A good friend would do this.'
You tell the Smiths that a considerate person would want to preserve the beauty of the property.
She said: 'Can't you just go along for my sake?'
I said: 'I am in big trouble, so please help me. Please have pity on me. I need help.'
- She said: 'Play with me now!'
I just gave him a command and he did it.
I said: 'Don't ask me any questions. Just do it and do it now!'
- She put me on the spot by asking me in front of the whole family.
I had everyone announce to the group what their contribution to the United Way would be. We usually get more donations that way.
I waited until she was with her parents before asking her to pay her part of the phone bill.
- He said: 'We're going to do it my way because I'm the one who's in charge, not you.'
My commander told me to do 100 situps so I did.
As your supervisor, I would strongly urge you to get your report in on time.
- I became a nuisance and kept bugging her until she did what I wanted.
I keep making Sammie's life miserable until he does what I want.
I pout, sulk, and whine until Max does what I want.

STRATEGY

9. Bargaining: Try to get others to comply by *striking a bargain* with them. That is, try to gain their compliance by negotiating a deal where you each do something for the other so everyone gets what they want.

10. Benefit (Other): Try to get others to comply by telling them people other than themselves would benefit if they do what you want. That is, try to gain their compliance by pointing out how *it helps people other than themselves* if they comply.

11. Benefit (Self): Try to get others to comply by telling them you personally would benefit if they do what you want. That is, try to gain their compliance by pointing out how *it helps oneself* if they comply.

12. Benefit (Target): Try to get others to comply by telling them they personally would benefit if they do what you want. That is, try to gain their compliance by pointing out how *it helps them* if they comply.

13. Challenge: Try to get others to comply by *challenging them* to do what you want. That is, try to gain their compliance by provoking, stimulating, tempting, goading, and/or galvanizing them to comply.

14. Compliment: Try to get others to comply by *complimenting them* on their abilities or accomplishments. That is, try to gain their compliance by praising them to get them to do what you want.

15. Compromise: Try to get others to comply by offering to compromise with them. That is, try to gain their compliance by *making a concession* to them so they'll make their concession to you and do what you want.

16. Cooperation: Try to get others to comply by being cooperative and collaborating with them. That is, try to gain their compliance *not by telling* the other person what to do but by offering to *discuss things and work them out* together.

17. Criticize: Try to get others to comply by *criticizing them*. That is, try to gain their compliance by attacking them on a personal level to get them to do what you want.

18. Debasement: Try to get others to comply by *acting pitiful and pleading*. That is, try to gain their compliance by debasing, demeaning, degrading, devaluing, humiliating, and/or lowering yourself so as to deprive yourself of esteem or self-worth to get them to do what you want.

EXAMPLES

I offered an exchange. I said: 'If you do this for me, I will do something for you.'

I said: 'I'll give you a priority on vacation time if you'll do this. She wanted seafood; I wanted Mexican. So we went to this brand new Seafood Mexican restaurant.'

He said: 'If you do this, it will help others.'

I told Wayne to do it for the benefit of others, not for my benefit.

Go spend some time with your grandparents. They could use the company.

I got my parents to help finance medical school by telling them how it would benefit me.

I said: 'It would help me if you do this.'

It would really help me out if you watched my place while I was out of town.

I got Tony to start running five days a week by pointing out that it was for his own good.

You point out to your friend that if he accompanies you to the Midwest then he will have the opportunity to explore a part of the country with which he is unfamiliar.

To get Ben to comply I said: You will benefit if you do.

I said: 'Why don't you just go on and do it? Huh? Huh?'

To get Larry to paint the house, I bet him that he couldn't. I dared Mark to ask Susan out for a date.

I said: 'I would like your advice on making up with Tanya because I think you handle these situations well.'

I compliment him so he'll do it.

I would like your help because you are so capable.

I got Sue to do the laundry by finally agreeing to do the dishes.

To get my parents to pay for my college tuition, I finally agreed to work for my father during the summer (even though I didn't want to).

We compromised.

What Alice did really bothered me and I wanted her to stop doing it. So we discussed it and worked it out.

We talk about it. We discuss our differences and needs.

I'm having trouble with your coming home late. Why don't we get together and work something out?

He said: 'You're so lazy, you never want to do anything. Why don't we go out for a change?'

Aaron started showing up on time because I criticized him for not doing it.

John told me I was such a fat cow, that I really ought to eat less.

I said: 'Oh come on, please try it. Oh please, please.'

To get her to marry me, I got down on my knees and begged.

I begged and I pleaded. I made myself pathetic. And I got him to comply.

STRATEGY

19. Debt: Try to get others to comply by reminding them they are *in debt* to you because of things you have done for them in the past. That is, try to gain their compliance by indicating that *they owe* it to you to do what you want.

20. Deceit: Try to get others to comply by misleading them. That is, try to gain their compliance by lying to or *deceiving them*.

21. Direct Request: Try to get others to comply by just making a *direct request*. That is, try to gain their compliance by simply asking or stating what you want *without giving any reasons* for them to comply.

22. Disclaimer (Norms/Rules): Try to get others to comply by *downplaying or disavowing restrictions and constraints that might prevent them from doing what you want* them to do. That is, try to gain their compliance by pointing out that otherwise applicable procedures, rules, norms, and/or expectations should be broken in this instance.

23. Disclaimer (Other): Try to get others to comply by *downplaying or disavowing the ability of anyone else to do so*. That is, try to gain their compliance by pointing out that other people can't help you or do what is needed.

24. Disclaimer (Self): Try to get others to comply by *downplaying or disavowing your reasons for asking*. That is, try to gain their compliance by indicating that: (a) you don't want to make a bad impression nor do you have bad intentions, (b) you don't really want to make the request and you are only doing so reluctantly, and/or (c) you simply have no choice but to make the request.

25. Disclaimer (Target): Try to get others to comply by *acknowledging and sympathizing with why they may not want to do so*. That is, try to gain their compliance by indicating that: (a) you understand and are aware of their reasons, feelings, and abilities, and/or (b) that you are sensitive to their needs and concerns even though you must ask them to do what you want.

26. Disclaimer (Task): Try to get others to comply by *downplaying what you are asking them to do*. That is, try to gain their compliance by indicating that what you want them to do isn't what they think it is and shouldn't pose a problem; it isn't awful, effortful, difficult, or dumb.

EXAMPLES

I said: 'Think about all the things I have ever done for you. He said: 'Remember how I helped you move last year, well now's your chance to pay me back.

I would recall past favors I've done and say my roommate owes me a few hours of quiet.

To keep Todd from asking Bill to move in I would lie by implying the landlord has suggested raising the rent for additional roommates.

We misled the new buyer into believing that the house was worth more than it really was.

I got John to buy the computer by telling him I had close ties with the service department, although this wasn't the case.

Pete asked Bob: 'Could I borrow your notes?'
I would just ask the Smiths not to cut down the tree.
I simply tell Bob what I want.

She said: 'I know I'm not supposed to mix business with pleasure, but you should return Mr. Mavis's phone call now.

I said: 'I know this is against the rules, but let's go nude sunbathing anyway.

You know, all those rules and regulations are pretty irrelevant. Let's just blow them off.

She said: 'There is no one else that can do it.
She said: 'You are the only one who knows how to get there.
Can't you drive?
It just isn't possible for anyone else to do what I am asking you.

He said: 'Don't think I'm a bad person or anything, but could you do this?'

I said: 'I don't want to ask you this, but could you do it anyway?'

I really don't want to impose, but could you give me a ride to the airport tomorrow morning?'

I said: 'I can see why you feel the way you do but I still need you to do this.'

I said: 'I know you were under pressure and had difficulty with the report, but I need to ask you to work on it again.

I sympathized with Danielle about the added problems that my request has caused.

I said: 'The project shouldn't take too much of your time.'
I downplayed what I was asking Paul to do by saying it wouldn't get in his way or anything.
Help me out with this. It's no big deal.

STRATEGY

27. Disclaimer (Time): Try to get others to comply by *downplaying or disavowing being busy as a reason to refuse* your request. That is, try to gain their compliance by pointing out that presently there is or shortly there will be enough time for them to do what you want.

28. Duty: Try to get others to comply by pointing out it is *their duty* to do so. That is, try to gain their compliance by stating they should fulfill obligations, responsibilities, and commitments that they have.

29. Equity: Try to get others to comply on the grounds that it is *equitable* to do so. That is, try to gain their compliance by pointing out that being fair, just, and impartial means they should do what you want.

30. Esteem (Negative) by Others: Try to get others to comply by pointing out that, if they do not do so, other people will think worse of them. That is, try to gain their compliance by noting that in the eyes of others they will be *viewed more negatively* if they don't do what you want.

31. Esteem (Positive) by Others: Try to get others to comply by pointing out that, if they do so, other people will think better of them. That is, try to gain their compliance by noting that in the eyes of others they will be *viewed more positively* if they do what you want.

32. Esteem (Negative) by Actor: Try to get others to comply by pointing out that, if they do not do so, you will think worse of them. That is, try to gain their compliance by noting that in your eyes they will be *viewed more negatively* if they don't do what you want.

33. Esteem (Positive) by Actor: Try to get others to comply by pointing out that, if they do so, you will think better of them. That is, try to gain their compliance by noting that in your eyes they will be *viewed more positively* if they do what you want.

34. Expertise (Negative): Try to get others to comply by pointing out that because of the way the world works, *unfavorable things will happen* if they don't change their behavior. That is, try to gain their compliance by noting that in the natural course of things, bad outcomes will occur if they don't do what you want.

35. Expertise (Positive): Try to get others to comply by pointing out that because the way the world works, *favorable things will happen* if they change their behavior. That is, try to gain their compliance by noting that in the natural course of things, good outcomes will occur if they do what you want.

EXAMPLES

She said: 'You can probably watch the show some other time, so play with me now.'

I said: 'Now that your finals are over, I really want you to help out more around the house.'

Come to the pub with us. You can finish your paper later.

I said: 'As parents of these two kids, you are the ones who should get them under control.'

She said: 'You need to be there tonight. You gave your word.' It is your duty to service your country.

I said: 'Look at all those pizza coupons you have. Why don't you pass them around so we can all have some.'

He said: 'Everyone has to do their fair share or the project won't get done.'

For things to be even and fair, you need to fill out this application form just like everyone else has to.

You tell your friend that his other friends will think worse of him if he refuses to accompany you to the Midwest to live.

You tell Dick that the whole family will be very disappointed in him if he gets poor grades.

If you don't apologize, others will think worse of you.

She said: 'People you care about will think well of you if you pick yourself up and keep trying.'

John told me all the girls would admire me more if I started working out.

You tell Dick that the whole family will be very proud of him if he gets good grades.

I said: 'You will look selfish to me if you don't offer to pay for our guests.'

He said: 'I will be so ashamed of you if you don't take care of your problem.'

I will lose all respect for you if you lie to me.

I said: 'I will think more highly of you if you apologize.'

I said: 'I will really admire you if you are able to get through law school.'

If you join the Peace Corps, you will gain my respect and admiration.

Kathy said: 'You're likely to get lung cancer if you don't quit smoking.'

You point out to Dick that if he does not get good grades he will not be able to get into a good college or get a good job.

Can't you eat somewhere other than McDonald's? If you don't eat right and take care of yourself, you know what will happen; you'll get sick.

I wanted Troy to buy some stocks and bonds, so I told him that buying a bond would be an investment in the future. Bob told me: 'If I worked harder I would get ahead, because that's the way things work.'

You point out to Dick that if he gets good grades he will be able to get into a good college and get a good job.

STRATEGY

36. Hinting: Try to get others to comply by *hinting around* at what you want them to do. That is, try to gain their compliance by indicating indirectly what you want, hoping they will figure it out and comply even though you never come out and really say it.

37. I Want: Try to get others to comply for no reason other than *you want them to*. That is, try to gain their compliance by telling them to do what you want because you desire it.

38. Invoke Norm: Try to get others to comply by indicating they would be *out of step with the norm if they didn't* do what you want. That is, try to gain their compliance by *prodding them to conform* to what others have, do, or desire.

39. It's Up to You: Try to get others to comply by telling them the decision is theirs to make and it's up to them. That is, try to gain their compliance by telling them *the choice to comply is up to them*.

40. Logical Empirical: Try to get others to comply by making *logical arguments*. That is, try to gain their compliance through the use of reasoning, evidence, facts, and data.

41. Moral Appeal: Try to get others to comply by *appealing to their moral or ethical standards*. That is, try to gain their compliance by letting them know what is right and what is wrong.

42. My Concern for You: Try to get others to comply because of *your concern for them*. That is, try to gain their compliance by referring to your regard for, consideration of, interest in, and feelings for them.

43. Nature of Situation: Try to get others to comply by being attentive to the situation or circumstances you find yourselves in. That is, try to gain their compliance by taking note of the *appropriateness* of their behavior *to the situation* and/or the appropriateness of your request in the situation.

44. Negative Affect: Try to get others to comply by *being really negative*: expressing negative emotions, acting really unfriendly, and creating an unappealing impression. That is, try to gain their compliance by *acting displeased* to get them to do what you want.

EXAMPLES

Rather than directly asking Alicia to open the window, I off-handedly mentioned that it was hot in the room. To get Mark from letting his friend move in I would drop subtle hints about how little space we have.

Instead of asking her directly if she wanted to have sex, I would turn the lights down, put some music on, offer a drink and see how things went.

He said: 'Let's go to the party. I really do want to.'
She said: 'Get some beer. I want to stay here and watch the game.'

Take me out to dinner. I want to go.

I said: 'Come to the bar with us. Everybody's going.'
He said: 'Sign up for the camping trip. Do you want to be the only one who isn't going?'
All of your friends are doing it.

I said: 'I'd really like you to take me to the dance this weekend, but I don't want to force you.'
She said: 'You'll have to decide whether to redo your part or not. The decision is up to you.'
If you want to go camping with us, you're invited but you don't have to go if you don't want to.

I asked Warren to undertake a particular job by explaining why the job needs to get done.
I would explain to my roommate that since our lease limits us to two people the friend cannot stay.
The individual presents facts or evidence to try to get cooperation.

He said: 'Don't eat that company's tuna. Innocent dolphins are murdered by their fishing techniques.'
I said: 'Treat your parents better. Remember, do unto others what you want them to do unto you.'
Eva told me not to cheat on my tax return because it was wrong.

He said: 'I think about you a lot. That's why I am asking you to keep in touch more so I can help you.'
I said: 'Why don't you get to know the people you work with? I really want things to go well for you at your new job.'
Why don't you break up with Josie? I just want you to be happy.

I told David and Colleen that they should make out somewhere else.
Your girlfriend said: 'I don't care if you swear with your friends, but don't do it in front of your grandparents.'
You know, this is the wrong time and place for that.

I act mean to him to get him to do as I wish.
I express my negative feelings in an attempt to get the other person to comply.
I verbally expressed my anger to get Dana to change her ways.

STRATEGY

45. Not Seek Compliance: No attempt is made to get others to do what you want. That is, *no compliance is sought*.

46. Persistence: Try to get others to comply by *being persistent*. That is, try to gain their compliance by persevering (continuing) in your attempts to get them to do what you want.

47. Personal Expertise: Try to get others to comply by referring to your credibility (your personal expertise). That is, try to gain their compliance based on your *experience, know-how, trustworthiness, and judgment*.

48. Positive Affect: Try to get others to comply by *being really positive*: expressing positive emotions, acting really friendly, and creating an appealing impression. That is, try to gain their compliance by *charming them* into doing what you want.

49. Pre-Giving: Try to get others to comply by *doing positive and nice things for them in advance of asking* them to do what you want. That is, try to gain their compliance by giving them things they'd like and then only afterwards making your request.

50. Promise: Try to get others to comply by making a *promise*. That is, try to gain their compliance by offering to give them a reward or something they'd like if they do what is wanted.

51. Promote Task: Try to get others to comply by *promoting the value and worth of what you want them to do*. That is, try to gain their compliance by identifying one or more positive qualities of the thing you are asking them to do (e.g., what you want them to do is important, meaningful, rewarding, enjoyable etc.).

52. Self-Feeling (Negative): Try to get others to comply by stating that not doing so will result in an automatic decrease in their self-worth. That is, try to gain their compliance by pointing out that *they will feel worse about themselves* if they don't do what you want.

53. Self-Feeling (Positive): Try to get others to comply by stating that doing so will result in an automatic increase in their self-worth. That is, try to gain their compliance by pointing out that *they will feel better about themselves* if they do what you want.

EXAMPLES

Instead of getting John's permission, I do what I want anyway. Since I wasn't sure how to ask her out on a date, I just didn't ask at all.

When I want to help around the house, I don't bother asking, I just do it by myself.

I just continued to tell Larry what I thought he should do until he did it.

I keep repeating my point of view until MaryAnne gives in. I got Jake to comply by repeatedly reminding him about what I wanted.

He said: 'After 25 years of experience in this business, this is the way you should do it.'

To get Bill to buy the new car, I told him: 'I've attended a number of professional seminars in the product design of cars. I'd advise you to trust my judgment.'

From doing computer repair as part of my job, I know that IBMs cost a lot and you get very little.

I tried to act friendly and helpful to get Tim in a good mood so that he would do what I wanted.

I would tell my date that I really like her a lot and make references to her attractiveness to get her to go to bed with me.

I act charming to get Pat to do what I want.

I helped my father around the house and then I asked to borrow \$50.

I give him a small gift or card before I ask him to do what I want.

I sent my friends who lived on the beach a Christmas present and then called up awhile later and asked if I could visit them over the holidays.

I said: 'I will give you a reward if you do what I want.'

I told my friends I would buy pizza and beer if they helped me move.

I'll buy you a car if you get all A's this year.

I told Mark: 'Going to the beach will make you happy.'

He said: 'Play this game with me; it's lots of fun.'

I got Sandy to go to college by saying: 'You'll find it rewarding and interesting.'

You tell Dick he will feel ashamed of himself if he gets bad grades.

She said: 'How can you live with yourself if you say no?'

You'll lose all respect for yourself if you continue to cheat on your wife.

She said: 'You will feel good about yourself if you do it.'

I said: 'You will feel like you've done something worthwhile if you help out at the food drive.'

I know you will have a sense of pride and accomplishment if you stick this out and graduate from college.

STRATEGY

54. Suggest: Try to get others to comply by *offering suggestions* about what it is you want them to do. That is, try to gain their compliance by subtly proposing an idea that indirectly points out and describes what it is you want them to do.

55. Surveillance: Try to get others to comply by indicating your awareness and observation of what they do. That is, try to gain their compliance by *referring to your general vigilance, surveillance, scrutiny, and/or monitoring of their behavior*.

56. Third Party: Try to get others to comply by *having someone else ask them for you*. That is, try to gain their compliance by getting someone else to intervene and do it for you.

57. This Is the Way Things Are: Try to get others to comply by telling them they have to because *that is just the way things are*. That is, try to gain their compliance by referring to rules, procedures, policies, or customs that require them to comply.

58. Thought Manipulation: Try to get others to comply by convincing them that the request you are making is *really their own idea*. That is, try to gain their compliance by having them think they were the ones who really wanted to do it in the first place.

59. Threat: Try to get others to comply by *threatening them*. That is, try to gain their compliance by saying you will punish them if they don't do what you want.

60. Value Appeal: Try to get others to comply because of *important values* that compel action in this instance. That is, try to gain their compliance by pointing to *central and joint beliefs* that should guide what they do.

61. Warning: Try to get others to comply by *warning them* about what they are doing. That is, try to gain their compliance by alerting them to possible negative consequences of their behavior.

62. Welfare (Others): Try to get others to comply by telling them how *other people would be hurt if they don't* do what you want. That is, try to gain their compliance by pointing out that the welfare of other people is at stake.

EXAMPLES

She said: 'You know, one alternative is to take the Airbus to L.A.'

She said: 'Why don't you think about joining a softball team?'
If I were you, I'd probably call accounting before I got started on the project.

She said: 'I'll be checking on you while I'm out of town, so make sure you are home every night by 11 p.m.'

She said: 'Keep your eyes on your own test. We will be watching.'

This is stupid. You know I'll find out if you take money out of the bank.

John really gets along well with Mark, so I had John ask Mark to quit parking in my parking spot for me.

I ask my sister to ask for me.

I would talk to other neighbors who have known the Smiths for a longer time and see if they could convince the Smiths not to cut down the tree.

She said: 'You don't have a choice. You have to pay your taxes.'

I told the customer that if they wanted to return the merchandise they would have to bring a receipt because that's store policy.

This is a required course. You must take it.

I get Nancy to think it is her idea to go out to dinner.

I get my friends to think that they want to leave the party rather than me so that we can go home.

I got my spouse to buy me new clothes by making him think he was the one who wanted to do it and not me.

I said: 'John if you don't do what I want, I will punish you.'

Paul threatens to reveal some deep dark embarrassing secret about Tim to someone special if he does not comply.

Unless you stop being late for work, your future with this company will be in serious jeopardy.

I would get the person to comply by stressing our common goals, beliefs, and values.

She said: 'John I know you won't cheat on me because you value honesty.'

Since financial security is really important to us both, I think you should take this job even though it may not be what you want.

Jerry said: 'Be careful, she's out to get you.'

I warned him against it so he didn't do it.

You might be risking your job if you get pregnant.

Mary said: 'You'll ruin it for the rest of the family if you don't show up for the reunion.'

He said: 'They are all depending on you to get this done.'

I told John that the next time he drinks and drives he should think about the people he could hurt.

STRATEGY

63. Why Not?: Try to get others to comply by making them justify why they should not. That is, try to gain their compliance by pointing out there are *no real grounds for not doing so*.

64. Your Concern for Me: Try to get others to comply because of *their concern for you*. That is, try to gain their compliance by referring to their regard for, consideration of, interest in, and feelings for you.

EXAMPLES

I said: 'There is really no reason for you not to do this.'
When John asked me why he should do what I wanted, I said 'Why not?' and he did it.
Why not do it? You really have nothing to use.

I told Ken that if he really respected me he'd be willing to wait.
I said that if he really cared for me he'd stop cheating on me.
I told Gary that, because of the way he feels about me, he should do what I want.