

# Persuasiveness

## A faith perspective

In order to be persuasive, one must be able to show how those he wishes to persuade will benefit from what he wants them to do. Some of the definitions given for persuasiveness by Character First include:

“Convincing others to seek a righteous path through life”

“Holding strong to a valuable belief or conviction while encouraging others to adopt your point of view” and

“Guiding vital truths around another’s mental roadblocks”

However, the dictionary describes persuasiveness as:

“Having the power to influence or win over by argument.”

“To succeed in making someone do or believe something by giving the person good reasons.”

In the Character First material, the definitions presuppose that the one doing the persuading has the best of intentions in mind and that they would be persuading someone to do something valuable or righteous. The dictionary definitions give a more general description of persuasiveness leading the reader to realize that people can be persuaded to do good or bad things depending on the arguments used.

Persuasiveness therefore carries with it a great deal of responsibility. Unlike some of the other character traits embraced by the Hamburg community such as Truthfulness, Honor, Forgiveness or Dependability, Persuasiveness can be used for good or evil depending on who is doing the persuading and for what outcome. When striving to be someone of good character, it is important to seek the truth at all times and to be concerned about what is in the best interest of all involved before attempting to persuade.

In the third chapter of the book of Genesis, the serpent persuaded Eve to eat of the fruit that God had forbidden. He persuaded her by telling her that the only reason God didn’t want her to eat the fruit was because He was afraid she and Adam would become knowledgeable and therefore equal to Him. She then was persuaded to disobey God because she believed the lie of the serpent.

In great contrast, Mary, the mother of God, when asked by the angel Gabriel to give birth to Jesus, the Son of God, didn’t need much persuading at all. Even though the thought of being pregnant and unmarried was surely frightening, when Gabriel explained to her how it would occur and what it would mean to the world, she responded, “Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word.” Luke 1:38

And so Mary is sometimes referred to as the “new Eve” because while Eve, persuaded by the serpent, disobeyed God and brought sin and death into the world, Mary, persuaded by the angel Gabriel, obeyed the Lord’s request and brought salvation from sin and the opportunity for eternal life into the world.

Persuasion is a very powerful tool. We must all be careful as to how we use it.

By,  
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