

It was another typical week with CREW ministries. However, along with my typical responsibilities, I also spent a lot of time at meetings this week. The typical tasks I worked on included, plans for the Chicago retreat, meeting with the week's Program Director to guide her in the plans for Sunday night, and interacting with the students. However, this week I also attended the monthly Steering Committee meeting in which we evaluated the future plans and direction of CREW ministries. I also attended a meeting with the youth director and H-CREW coordinator to finalize the details of the Chicago staff retreat. Most of my time and energy has been put towards planning this staff retreat. We are in a time where there seems to be tension and conflicts among our staff members. So, this retreat is packed with team building exercises that I have high hopes will reunite and refresh our staff. In order for the activities to fill their purpose, the staff members will need to have a positive, open-minded attitude. Furthermore, the only way they will have that attitude is if I am successful at "selling" the idea to them. It is time to learn some persuasion techniques.

I have not yet had a course in persuasion, so I have had to do my own literature research on the subject. From my research, I have learned five persuasive speaking techniques: appeal to audience needs, appeal to a variety of needs, sell yourself as well as your idea, have a realistic purpose, and focus appeals on a critical audience segment (Adler, 1989). So, first of all, appealing to audience needs means finding out what the needs are and then showing my audience how what I have to offer can help those needs (Adler, 1989). On the trip this weekend, my audience is going to be J-CREW volunteer staff members and they have a need to connect with each other, be stretched out of their

comfort zone, have fun with each other, feel respected and valued, discover what their role in CREW ministries is, and to gain motivation. So, I believe that a time of debriefing after each activity will be crucial. I will lead them in a discussion about what we can learn from the activities, and guide them into seeing how it fills their needs.

Next, appealing to a variety of needs is effective persuasion. This means, I need to look at all the needs from all the different perspectives within the group and take them into consideration (Adler, 1989). I just spoke about the needs of the staff members. However, there are also the needs of Acey Martin, the youth director, and my own needs that I think should be considered. Acey Martin needs to see an enthusiastic leadership team, to feel effective in this ministry, to know that his coordinators share and reflect his core values, and needs to feel that I can handle the responsibilities placed on me. I believe that this weekend, will give me opportunities to fill these needs by the way I respond to the staff. As strange as it is to mention, I know I am approaching this weekend with many of my own needs. In a way, I need to sell myself on the activities of this weekend, if I am going to sell it to my staff. My needs include feeling that my staff is having a good time and finds the time purposeful, and feeling that my staff can look to me as a leader and relate to me as a person at the same time.

Third, persuasive speaking involves selling myself as well as my idea. This means showing competence, trustworthiness, similarity, attraction, and sincerity (Adler, 1989). I have a lot of experience in youth ministry. This weekend, I need to push away any doubts I have about my capabilities and let my staff see that I am, indeed competent. Also, I need to show trustworthiness by demonstrating that I will come through with what I say I will do, and that I am not taking sides with either Acey Martin or them. I am

impartial and am looking to bring all “sides” of the ministry together. I would like to show similarity by letting the staff members see me as a struggling college student just like they are and by allowing conflict to surface and not sugar-coating it. Attraction is about my image and the way I make them feel about themselves when they are around me. So, in order to attract my staff, I will need to appear clean-cut, but not in an intimidating way. In other words, I want to look professional, yet down to earth. Also, I need to make the staff feel good about themselves and can do this by complimenting them. During the exercises this weekend, as soon as I recognize a positive attitude or behavior, I will point it out and encourage it to continue. Finally, I must be sincere. I believe in the potential of this weekend to bring together this group of people as a staff, and so I need to clearly show my hopeful enthusiasm. I cannot allow myself to be influenced by their negative attitudes, even though I may feel insecure and doubtful. Instead, I need to model the enthusiasm that I expect them to have in CREW ministries.

Fourth, in order to persuade my staff that this retreat will be fun, I need to have a realistic purpose for the weekend in mind. In other words, I cannot expect a miracle (Adler, 1989). If I approach this weekend, expecting that the activities will magically eliminate any and all conflict and tensions within the staff, I am setting myself up for disappointment. In any group of people who work so closely together, there is always going to be conflict. However, if I approach this weekend with the goal of just getting my staff to have enough respect and appreciation for each other and myself, for them to want to put in effort to work out conflict when it arises, I am being realistic. I cannot push them to be close friends with each other or myself. However, I can persuade them to see the value in at least trying to work together for the sake of the youth we work with.

Finally, persuasive speaking involves focusing appeals on the critical audience segment. In other words, I should know who the key decision makers are in the group and focus my appeal towards them (Adler, 1989). Among the J-CREW staff there are two guys who everyone seems to look to and follow. They are emergent leaders within the group. If I focus on making my appeal to those couple of guys and get their support, then the rest of the group will follow. If I can just sell the weekend to them, I will be able to sell it to everyone. So, I need to be particularly persuasive when it comes to those key people.

## Works Cited

Adler, R. B. (1989). *Communicating at work: Principles and practices for business and the professions*. (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). United States of America: McGraw-Hill, Inc.