

RULES OF ENGAGEMENT

The four rules of engagement are always in play. In every conversation we have, even with ourselves, the four rules of engagement state that:

1. Everyone is always right.
2. Our greatest desire is to be right.
3. You can't change another person's mind.
4. You *can* help people shift their perspective.

Let's look at these rules at work in our day-to-day lives.

THAT'S MY STORY AND I'M STICKING TO IT

How many people do you know, and it could be you, that would be happier if they could "just change one thing" about themselves. That is because it does not fit their story of themselves. Think of an example of someone who would be happier if they just...quit smoking, lost weight, met the right partner, etc.

Now think about what in that person's context, or personal story, would need to shift in order to make that change. How would this person need to make their reality change in order to fit the first two rules of engagement, that is, to make the story "right"?

Most people do not understand how to make that shift in their context, but until they do, they will continue to behave to that story. It's their story, and they are sticking to it.

SO HOW DO YOU GET THEM TO SHIFT THEIR PERSPECTIVE?

So you can't change people's minds, but you can shift their perspective. That is the power of influence. Before you begin that process, you must first honor their perspective, validate their story – because everyone's greatest desire is to be right. One way to honor someone's perspective without agreeing with them is to approach it like a talk show host approaches an interview. Find out

why they feel the way they do.

To practice, think about someone you are often at odds with – a colleague, a family member, an annoying neighbor, and practice asking questions about their perspective. “That’s interesting, why do you feel that way? When did you first notice this? Who else, do you think, feels this way?” You can learn a lot about “the why behind the what” without agreeing or disagreeing, but by simply asking questions.

The person I disagree with is:

An example of what we disagree about is:

Our interview might go like this:

If you commit to asking questions in a way that honors their perspective, people will begin to feel comfortable talking with you. If you let people be comfortable with who they are when they communicate with you, they begin to like themselves when they are with you. This kind of connection helps them want to connect with you, and this lays the foundation for your influence to have any effect.