

TALKING POINTS PLUS

The 3-Step Response Formula for Influencing Your Friends, Neighbors and Co-Workers

Whenever you hear someone say something you disagree with and want to influence him/her to see the issue differently, try using this simple 3-step formula to craft a response which will be heard. Speak in a calm voice with sincerity. Your voice is powerful.

STEP 1 A statement which agrees with some part of what you just heard, or – if there is nothing you can agree with – a neutral statement.

(Example: You hear: “Obama said he would make equal pay for women a priority of his administration.”
You say: “ Well as a woman, pay equity is certainly important to me.”

STEP 2 Present a contradicting fact or facts in a clear but non-abrasive way.

(Example: You continue: “But I’m concerned that Obama hasn’t done what he says he would do as President in his own Senate office. CNS News reported recently that in Obama’s office women were paid \$6,000.00 or more below the average for a man in his office. But in McCain’s office, women were paid \$3,000.00 more than the men!

STEP 3 Personalize.

(Example: You continue: “Obama says a lot of things that sound really wonderful, but on this issue and some of the others, I’m just afraid he doesn’t have a record that corresponds to his words. I’d rather work in McCain’s office and I’d rather vote for a candidate who has not just words, but a long record that shows me who he is and what he will do.

These steps may overlap a little. That’s fine. You may personalize in step 2 and find something to agree with in step 3. That’s fine. Just get it all in.

TALKING POINTS PLUS – 3 Step Response Taxes and Spending Worksheet – Example

The Objection to McCain

My family is having a hard time. Obama says he will cut my taxes and help families like mine. I'm voting for Obama.

The Talking Points

McCain's plan keeps the Bush tax cuts.

Obama will raise capital gains tax rates and do away with the exclusion of the first \$500K of gain on home sales.

Obama will remove the cap on earnings subject to Social Security taxes.

New York Times writer, David Brooks reports that for Obama to fund his huge domestic spending programs, he will have to break his promise not to tax the middle class. The numbers just aren't there.

McCain has NEVER asked for an earmark. He has "walked the talk"

Obama has voted for tax increases 94 times in during his short tenure in the Senate

The Conversation

Step 1. I think you've hit on a really important issue. A lot of us are struggling.

Step 2. You know, what will boost this economy is good jobs and I'm concerned that Obama's tax policy will stop job growth. We've seen that happen before when taxes increased. AND, I worry those increases are not just on the rich! You and I have a 401K at work and a house we might want to sell someday. Obama's plan will tax that income. And our social security taxes will increase. He's already voted for tax increases 94 times. He'll have to increase taxes a lot to pay for his additional spending programs. In less than 200 days, he's asked for almost \$1Billion in earmarks. John McCain has NEVER asked for an earmark.

Step 3. McCain just has credibility on this issue with me because of his record. And, from what I'm learning about Palin, she does do. That's why I'm supporting McCain and Palin.

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Information in Step 2 is taken from RNC Co-Chairman Davidson's weekly Pink Elephants Talking Points, July 30, 2008 and from "Questions for Obama" by George Will, Newsweek May 5, 2008.

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Step 1. I think you've hit on a really important issue. A lot of us are struggling.

Step 2. You know, what will boost this economy is good jobs and I'm concerned that Obama's tax policy will stop job growth. We've seen that happen before when taxes increased. AND, I worry those increases are not just on the rich! You and I have a 401K at work and a house we might want to sell someday. Obama's plan will tax that income. And our social security taxes will increase. He's already voted for tax increases 94 times.

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TALKING POINTS PLUS – 3 Step Response Taxes and Spending Worksheet – Example Cont.

The Objection to McCain

Well, jobs are important, but I just think Obama will give families like mine health care and money for education and help with our mortgage. We need that.

The Talking Points

New York Times writer, David Brooks reports that for Obama to fund his huge domestic spending programs, he will have to break his promise not to tax the middle class. The numbers just aren't there.

McCain has NEVER asked for an earmark. He has “walked the talk”

Obama has asked for almost \$1Billion in earmarks in less than one term in the Senate

The Conversation

Step 1. I know. So many things are really expensive these days. I'm just not sure that government help is the right answer. **Step 2.** Obama will have to increase taxes a lot to pay for his new spending programs. What concerns me is that I'd rather have a good job and lower taxes and be able to provide health care and education for myself and make my own choices. I don't want government telling me what doctor to go to or what my kids can major in. And, I think big government spending puts our nation at risk because we have to borrow so much of that money from countries like China. Obama's spending scares me. In less than 200 days, he's asked for almost \$1Billion in earmarks. John McCain has NEVER asked for an earmark. **Step 3.** For me it's just about trust. For over 20 years, McCain has NEVER asked for an earmark – that's “walking the talk.”

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TALKING POINTS PLUS – 3 Step Response Price of Gas Worksheet -- Example

The Objection to McCain

Gas is coming down a little but it's still well over \$3.00 a gallon and it may go back up even higher than \$4.00 because of the hurricanes. We need a change. Republicans just support big oil companies.

The Talking Points

It is our dependence on foreign oil (Iran gets >\$66 billion a year!) and competition from countries like China and India that threatens not just our economy, but also our national security and our environment.

John McCain supports development of the huge energy resources we have in this country. He has an energy plan that includes safe nuclear energy.

McCain has no history of ties to the oil industry.

The Conversation

Step 1. Who would have thought gas would be this high.

Step 2. But you know – even though we hear it sometimes – I'm not sure it's the oil companies. Our dependence on foreign oil scares me. 2/3 of the oil we use is coming from countries like Iran! AND we are competing for it with countries like China. John McCain supports responsible development of the huge oil and coal resources we have in our country. He also has an energy plan that includes safe nuclear energy. I think McCain makes a lot of sense when it comes to energy. And he doesn't have any past ties to the oil industry. In fact, he has a really strong record of being independent of special interests.

Step 3. I like that a lot.

TALKING POINTS PLUS – 3 Step Response Worksheet

The Objection to McCain

The Talking Points

The Conversation

TALKING POINTS PLUS

Sample Agreeing or Neutral Statements

1. You know we hear that so much in the press.
2. You've hit on one of the most important issues in this election.
3. I know. We all want _____ . (Fill in the blank: our troops home, cheaper gas, better healthcare, etc.)
4. I understand.

TALKING POINTS PLUS – Soft Question Formula for Initiating a Conversation

This formula can be used when there is a difference of opinion (Obama vs. McCain) and you want to initiate a conversation about it. It includes the 3 Step Response, but only after several other steps. In the following example, Sue, a Republican with a McCain sign in her yard, wants to talk to her neighbor Mary about the Obama sign in Mary's yard.

1. Small talk:

Example: Sue is picking up her newspaper and sees Mary in the yard. She says: "Hi Mary. Is it hot enough for you?" They talk about the weather for a minute.

2. Observation:

Gesturing toward the signs in both yards, Sue says: "I see we are viewing the election a little differently."

3. Soft question:

"You know Mary, we've been neighbors and friends for a while now and I know you've thought it through. Do you mind my asking what it is about Obama that appeals to you?"

4. Listen:

You say nothing! Really listen. Concentrate on what is being said, not what you are going to say next.

5. 3 Step Response:

If, for example, Mary says she is supporting Obama because she wants the troops home, You use the formula and say something like "I know. We all want the troops home. And that's actually starting to happen. I just heard that the President has ordered shorter tours of duty for our soldiers. He can do that because the surge is working. And Obama was against the surge. It was McCain who stood up for it against a lot of strong opposition. That's what I like about McCain. He's seasoned. He has experience and a solid record."

6. Be prepared for neighbors comment:

Mary's response may be positive ("That's a good point.") neutral (Well, I'm no expert on the surge.) or negative (My mind's made up. I don't want to talk about it.)

7. Appropriate Reaction:

End this conversation in a friendly, positive way:

Mary says: "That's a good point." You can say: "Thanks. There are a lot of things to consider. The great thing is we are both taking an active role in the political process."

Mary says: "Well, I'm no expert on the surge." You can say: Well I'm basing that on what I read and hear on the news and from some soldiers I know. Anyway, the great thing is we are both taking an active role in the political process."

Mary says: "My mind is made up. I don't want to talk about it.." You can say: "Fair enough. The great thing is we are both taking an active role in the political process."