cialdini institute

YOUR PERSONAL REPORT

Influence *Gap Analysis*

How you get people to say yes, the yeses you're missing, and what to do about them.

- Your strongest approach, and when it backfires
- Your biggest gap, and how to close it
- Words to try in real conversations
- Your 30-day plan



Prepared for Sample Reader, October 28, 2026
Based on the research of Dr. Robert Cialdini, author of *Influence*

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START HERE

This report is about the yes

Influence is not a trick you play on people. It is what happens when someone decides to say yes to you: to your idea, your offer or your request for help. People make those decisions quickly, using a handful of reliable shortcuts, and Dr. Cialdini's research mapped them.

This report measures how you work with those shortcuts. Your graded situations show what you know works. The choices you made show what you actually reach for. The distance between the two is your influence gap, and closing it is the fastest way to more yeses.

Read it as a mirror and a map. The mirror shows the moves you lean on and how they land. The map shows where each move works, where it backfires and what to try this month. None of it is a verdict on who you are: these are skills, and skills grow with practice.

Every yes you get is a decision someone made about you.

YOUR EIGHT MOVES, IN YOUR ORDER

1 Giving first Reciprocity
2 Framing the comparison Contrast
3 Making it "us" Unity
4 Showing who else said yes Social Proof
5 Showing what they'd miss Scarcity
6 Building on their own words Commitment & Consistency
7 Proving you know your stuff Authority
8 Being someone they like Liking

Your eight moves, defined

1 Building the relationship

People say yes more readily to those they feel connected to.

Giving first Reciprocity · 1 of 8

Giving first means offering something useful before you ask for anything. People feel a pull to repay whoever gave first, and the pull is strongest when the gift is personal and unexpected.

Being someone they like Liking · 8 of 8

Being someone they like means finding real common ground, giving praise you mean and working toward goals you share. People prefer to say yes to those they like, and they like people who are similar to them, appreciate them and cooperate with them.

Making it “us” Unity · 3 of 8

Making it “us” means building on a real “we”: a family, place, team or cause you share, or work you do together. People treat one of their own as closer to themselves, so they trust sooner and help more freely.

2 Reducing uncertainty

When people are unsure, they look to experts and to people like them.

Showing who else said yes Social Proof · 4 of 8

Showing who else said yes means letting someone see that people like them have already made the choice. Unsure people look at what others did before they decide, and the more those others resemble them, the stronger the pull.

Proving you know your stuff Authority · 7 of 8

Proving you know your stuff means letting people see your real expertise before you ask them to act on it. When people are unsure what’s right, they tend to follow experts they can believe, and admitting a weakness early can make you easier to believe.

3 Moving to action

People act to stay true to their word and to avoid missing out.

Building on their own words

Commitment & Consistency · 6 of 8

Building on their own words means starting from what people have already said or done, then asking for the step that follows. People want to keep their word, and the pull is strongest when they gave it out loud, in front of others and by choice.

Showing what they'd miss

Scarcity · 5 of 8

Showing what they'd miss means making clear what is rare, what is going away and what waiting costs. People want more of what is scarce, and a loss, scarcity's close cousin, tends to weigh more than an equal gain.

4 Shaping the comparison

Every offer is judged against something, and you can choose what.

Framing the comparison

Contrast · 2 of 8

Framing the comparison means choosing what people see first and what your offer sits beside. People judge by comparison, so the same price looks smaller after a bigger one and more reasonable beside what it replaces.

YOUR PATTERN

What makes your influence distinct

1 **Your graded answers on giving first matched the research.**

The research favors gifts that are useful, personal and unexpected, offered before any ask. Your answers on its situations pointed that way. Its chapter shows how to use it on purpose.

`2 of 2 situations`

2 **Your two best-answered moves can work as a pair.**

Giving first and framing the comparison are where your graded answers came out strongest. Used together, they cover more of the moments where a yes is decided. Their own page shows how they combine. `2 of 2 and 2 of 2 situations`

3 **On framing the comparison, your graded answers matched the research.**

The research favors a fair comparison point, set out before people judge your offer. Your answers on its situations pointed that way. Its chapter shows how to choose what your offer is measured against. `2 of 2 situations`

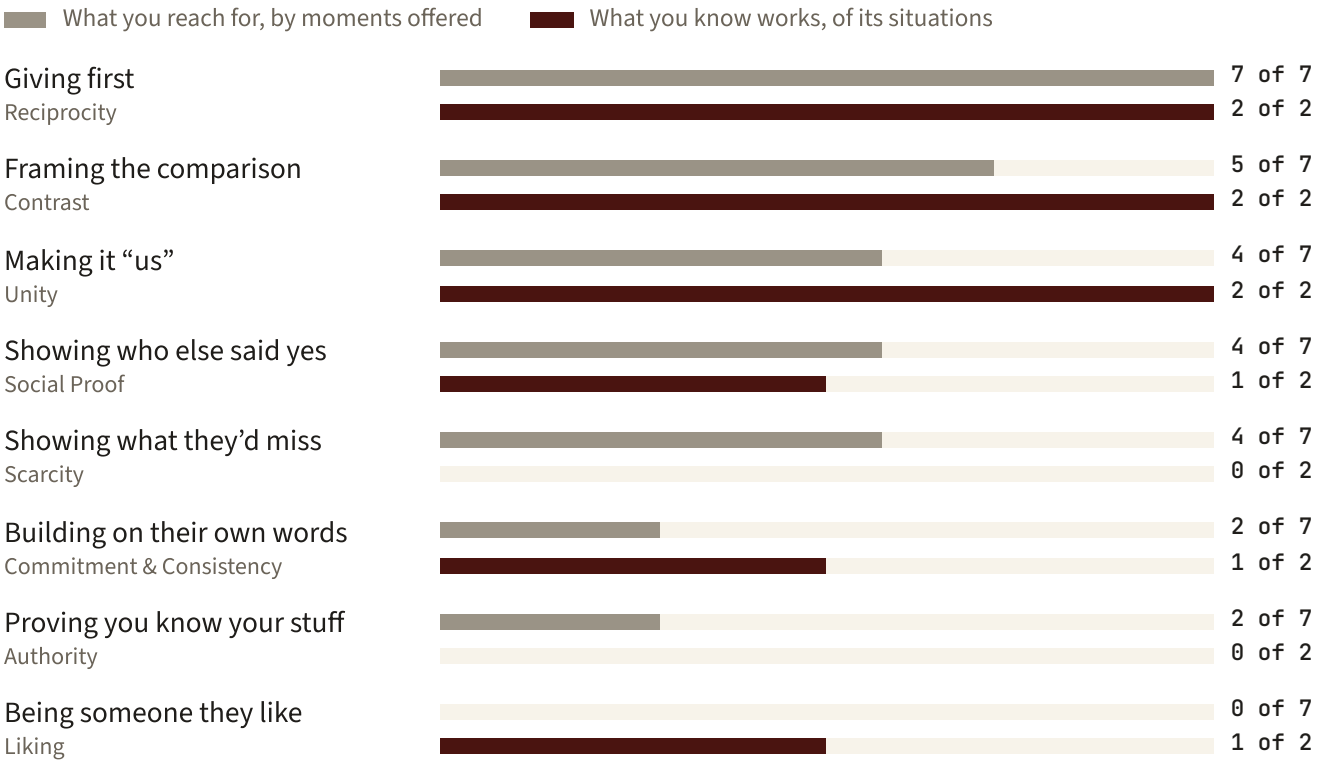
4 **Your graded answers on making it “us” followed the research.**

The research favors shared identity and shared work, so people feel they belong to the same group. Your answers on its situations pointed that way. Its chapter shows how to let others help build the plan. `2 of 2 situations`

THE GAP

What you reach for vs what you know

Here is what you reach for, from your choices, beside what you know works, from your graded situations. Where the two agree, you are either strong or have work to do. Where they disagree is where the most yeses are won or lost.



YOUR POWER MOVES

Giving first
Framing the comparison

You reach for these and you know when they work. Save them for your biggest asks, and make sure they still fit when stakes are high.

THE YES YOU’RE LOSING

Proving you know your stuff

You rarely use these, and they aren’t second nature yet. Pick one and practice it this month.

Giving first

The favor people remember most

GOT RIGHT	2 of 2 situations
REACHED FOR IT	7 of 7 moments

Your answers leaned toward giving first. Used well, the useful idea, the introduction or the concession nobody expected is remembered, and people look for a way to repay it. Most people give after they ask, and your choices put the giving before.

WHAT MAKES IT POWERFUL FOR YOU

Giving first builds credit long before you need it. When you use this move, the introduction or the unasked-for fix stays on the books. When you finally ask, you start in credit, not in debt. Asks made from credit tend to meet a warmer reply.

Personal gifts carry weight, and your choices leaned toward them. The favors people repay most are significant, personal and unexpected. A gift chosen for what this person would value lands harder than one that was easiest to send. People can tell the difference.

An early concession invites the other side to follow. When you give up a point you can afford, and do it early, the other side feels a pull to match it. They often don't notice why. Used well, that pull can move a talk that has stalled.

A useful first message tends to get answered when others don't. When your first note to a stranger offers something useful instead of asking for time, it reads differently. Busy people tend to sort their inbox by who gives and who takes. Giving first puts you in the first pile.

How you answer thanks can keep the favor alive. When someone thanks you, shrugging it off as nothing quietly tells them the favor was worth little. Saying something like "I know you'd do the same for me" keeps its value. It also keeps the relationship two-way.

Generosity, given often, can walk into rooms before you do. People who give first often become known as the one who helps, and that story travels. New contacts can arrive already inclined to trust you. Few moves build that kind of reach so cheaply.

Framing the comparison lets people see exactly what you gave up. A concession nobody notices earns nothing back. When people can see where you started and where you moved to, the step is plain. The clearer the step, the more people tend to feel they owe one back.

WHAT TO WATCH OUT FOR

A gift followed too fast by an ask looks like payment. When the favor and the request arrive together, people reread the favor as a down payment. The pull to repay turns into the feeling of being handled. Leave room between giving and asking.

Giving freely can leave people unsure what you need. People who lean on giving first often forget to ask at all. Others would gladly repay you, but they can't guess the request. Goodwill that is never called on helps no one.

A gift can't answer a doubt. When someone questions your price or your plan, another favor only delays the question. It can even read as a bribe. Doubt needs a reason or proof, not generosity.

People can feel a ledger, even a quiet one. If you track who owes you, it can leak into your tone and your timing. Giving that keeps score stops feeling like giving. Let the tally go, and the pull to repay gets stronger.

HOW TO USE IT FOR MORE YESES

Give before every important ask, and make it about them. A week before the meeting, send one thing that helps with a problem they have right now. An article, an introduction or a quick fix will do. Then ask, plainly.

Plan your concessions before the negotiation starts. Decide in advance which point you can give up, and offer it early. If you open with a larger request you would genuinely accept and they refuse, step down right away. The step down feels like a concession, and people tend to return it.

Call the gift personal, never a trade. Say you chose it because you thought of them, not because you give it to everyone. Avoid "if you do this, I'll give you that," which turns a gift into a reward. Rewards get a task done, but gifts build the relationship.

Let people give back. When someone offers to return the favor, accept it. A relationship where only you give starts to feel unequal to the other person. Receiving well keeps the exchange alive.

Framing the comparison

What your offer is measured against

GOT RIGHT	2 of 2 situations
REACHED FOR IT	5 of 7 moments

Your answers leaned toward framing the comparison, and you handled its graded situations well. The big purchase before the small extra, today's cost before the fix: each fair request arrives beside something that shows its true size. Most people present things in the order they thought of them, and this move chooses the order.

WHAT MAKES IT POWERFUL FOR YOU

Extras raised last barely draw a blink. Settle the big decision before the small one, like the suit before the belt. After the big number, the small one looks small. Raised first, the same extra becomes a decision of its own, with all the scrutiny that brings.

Budget requests tend to hold up when the full plan goes first. When people first see the complete version you could genuinely deliver, the plan you need looks like the careful choice, because it is. Shown alone, it would be the biggest number in the room, and the easiest to cut.

A price set beside the real alternative gets a fairer test. Put it beside what the client would pay otherwise: a bigger firm, a full-time hire or the problem left to grow. They weigh the trade instead of the total. That is a fairer test, and a fair offer passes it.

Today's numbers give a proposed fix something to beat. When you look up how things stand now, like last month's complaint count, the proposal lands beside a starting point everyone can see. Wait for the numbers to come up, and the comparison arrives late or never.

Showing where doing nothing leads makes effort look worth it. When you ask for effort, put both outcomes side by side, in terms the person actually cares about. Next to extra weeks of recovery, a few minutes of exercise a day looks small. Effort with nothing beside it just looks like work.

A first ask that's real makes the next one look reasonable. Used well, this means opening with a figure you could defend line by line. People take it seriously, so the request that follows looks reasonable beside it. Ask for twelve times what you need, and people trust neither number.

Giving first can make a step down feel like a favor, not a markdown. On its own, a smaller second option only looks cheaper. Offered as a real step toward them, it can also feel like a concession. People tend to answer a concession with one of their own, often a yes.

WHAT TO WATCH OUT FOR

An option you'd hate to deliver will eventually get picked. Add a weak option just to make another look good, and sooner or later someone chooses it. Then you either deliver it badly or back out, and both cost trust. Show only options you'd be glad to deliver.

Once people spot one staged comparison, they doubt the honest ones. A buyer who realizes the first house was shown only to lose starts rechecking everything. The fair comparisons inherit the suspicion. Arrange options in an order you could defend if they asked why.

A comparison can show value, but it can't prove something works. When a client doubts the results, a price beside an agency's misses the point. They need proof, like a case, a trial or someone who has done it. Answer the doubt they have, not the one you prepared for.

At home, a comparison can land as a verdict on the person. Setting the weekend away beside the bigger trip helps your partner weigh the cost. Setting their effort beside a friend's makes them feel measured. Compare options, never people.

HOW TO USE IT FOR MORE YESES

Build the comparison from numbers they already own. Last year's spend, this month's complaints, the quote already on their desk: figures like these are hard to wave away. An outside figure can start a debate about the figure itself. Their own numbers leave only the conclusion to discuss.

Offer the extra while the big number is still in view. Right after the main yes, the add-on is measured against the total. Raise it a week later, and it gets judged on its own. Timing is part of the comparison.

Ask whether your comparison matches theirs before you lean on it. Say what you're measuring against, like what they spend on contractors now, and ask if that's fair. If they have a different one in mind, you learn it now, not after the no. A comparison they've agreed to holds for the rest of the conversation.

Make the top option one this person could actually choose. Show an enterprise package to a two-person shop, and they decide you weren't listening. Pick the most ambitious option that still fits their world. Beside it, your recommendation looks made for them.

Making it “us”

One of us, not just like us

GOT RIGHT	2 of 2 situations
REACHED FOR IT	4 of 7 moments

Your answers reached for making it “us” in 4 of 7 moments where it was on offer, and you answered 2 of its 2 graded situations the way the research favors. Here is what it can do when it fits the moment, and when to hold it back.

WHAT MAKES IT POWERFUL FOR YOU

Asking for advice can turn critics into co-authors. Ask for an opinion and people step back to judge. Ask for advice and they step closer, because now they are helping you build it. A careful boss who shaped the timeline rarely turns it down.

A “we” built by doing things together outlasts one that’s announced. A warm-up run at one pace does more than a memo about teamwork. So does a morning huddle where everyone claps in time. Acting in step makes people feel like one group, and they tend to help each other more afterward.

A goal neither team can reach alone softens a rivalry. Rivalry feeds on separate scoreboards. Hand two teams one target that takes both of them, and the old lines start to blur. What was two sides becomes one effort with two halves.

Mixing new people in early keeps a “new people” group from forming. Spread new hires among the veterans: in the car to the offsite, on the project, at the first deadline. Then nobody starts a “new people” table. The line between old and new fades before it can harden.

Requests that start from the block you share land better than rules. A note about late-night noise lands better when it opens with the neighborhood everyone lives in. It turns one house’s complaint into how neighbors treat each other. Quoting the fines would make you the enforcer, outside the group you’re asking.

At home, asking as family works better than offering a deal. If a sibling needs a place to stay, telling your partner plainly that this is what family does asks for something a deal can’t buy. Pitching the rent he could chip in turns it into a trade. Family is the oldest “we,” and a deal only shrinks it.

Giving first can prove the “we” is real before anyone is asked to join. Anyone can say “we’re in this together.” Taking on part of their load first shows it. When you later ask them to put their name on the plan, the “we” already has a history.

WHAT TO WATCH OUT FOR

Strangers hear an early "we" as a pitch. Open a first meeting with "we're here to fix the same problem," and you claim a bond that doesn't exist yet. A real detail you share, like a race you both ran, is the better start. The "we" can follow from what you do together next.

Belonging can't answer a question about price. When your partner is weighing the cost of a weekend away, "we both deserve this" sidesteps the question. They need a fair comparison, like the pricier trip you both wanted. Once the price makes sense, the "we" has room to work.

Using "we" to end a disagreement turns it into a loyalty test. Someone raises a concern and hears that you're all on the same team. Now pushing back feels like leaving the group, so they go quiet. You lose the early warnings a close group needs most.

A strong "we" can excuse insiders for what you'd flag in outsiders. A strong "we" makes its own members look better than they are. The teammate who missed the deadline gets an excuse, and the vendor gets a warning. People outside the circle often see the double standard first.

HOW TO USE IT FOR MORE YESES

Ask for advice a week before you need the yes. Send the rough version early with one question: what would you change if it were yours? Then show them exactly where their idea landed. By decision day, they are approving their own work.

Confirm the shared goal before you negotiate a single term. Ask whether you both want the same thing, like a partnership that lasts, before trading anything. A "we" they confirm out loud is sturdier than one you assume. Then the terms become one problem to solve, not two sides to defend.

Give clients the advice you'd give your own family. Then tell them so, but only when it is true. A client who hears what you would tell your own family stops bracing for a pitch. Sometimes it means advising them to buy less, and that is why they believe you.

Retell each win as "ours," naming who did what. Each shared win makes the "we" more real, but only if someone tells the story. Name the people who shaped it, including those outside your team. The next time you ask, they remember being part of the last one.

Showing who else said yes

The step someone like them already took

GOT RIGHT	1 of 2 situations
REACHED FOR IT	4 of 7 moments

Your answers reached for showing who else said yes in 4 of 7 moments where it was on offer, and you answered 1 of its 2 graded situations the way the research favors. Here is what it can do when it fits the moment, and when to hold it back.

WHAT IT CAN DO FOR YOU, USED WELL

The closest match tends to beat the most impressive name. When a small firm asks for proof, a client their size usually lands harder than your biggest account. Buyers see their own future in a peer, not in a giant. Used well, that choice makes a story feel like theirs.

Used well, this move answers a quiet client's doubt. When the options come up and the room goes still, pushing harder on features rarely helps. Mentioning which option most clients like them pick often does. The silence is usually doubt, and this gives it an answer.

One early yes from a peer can carry the room. If you ask one colleague the team sees as their own to try a change first, their experience arrives with your announcement. In a room where everyone waits for someone else, you've already found the someone.

Each yes can become the next person's reason. When a client signs, ask what nearly stopped them and whether you can retell how they got past it. The next prospect with that worry hears how it ended. That way your proof grows with each deal instead of starting over.

This move works best when it shows the right behavior, not the wrong one. A note saying nobody cleans the shared kitchen tells everyone that mess is normal. Thanking the ones who do clean points to a better norm. More people tend to join them.

Proof people could check rarely needs checking. A named client, a named team or an exact figure sounds like a fact, and "lots of people" sounds like a pitch. When your proof holds up, people tend to take your word on the rest.

Giving first tends to leave you with stories people are glad to share. A client helped with no strings attached is often the one most willing to agree to a case study. Telling their story is a way to return the favor. Used this way, your proof grows as your generosity does.

WHAT TO WATCH OUT FOR

Share the average, and your best people may drift down to it. Tell a team the typical result, and the people beating it can hear permission to ease off. Pair the number with credit for those above it. A word of approval helps keep them there.

Proof helps the undecided and does little for the decided. A best-seller label moves the shopper who can't choose. The one who already knows what they want hears it as noise, or as a push. Once someone has decided, stop selling and make the yes easy.

"Everyone's on board" can silence the one person who sees a problem. Open a meeting with how many people already agree, and the doubter with a real point may stay quiet. You can win the vote and miss the warning. Ask for concerns before you show the consensus.

Popular and proven are different promises. A list of teams using your plan shows it's accepted. It doesn't show the plan holds up when deadlines get tight. When the doubt is about results, an expert who has been through it answers better than a crowd.

HOW TO USE IT FOR MORE YESES

Match the story to their situation, not just their title. Before a pitch, learn what worries them most, whether it's the switch, the cost or the boss. Then tell them about someone who faced that worry and what happened next. The closer the match, the harder it lands.

Show how many people joined, not just how much came in. On a fundraising page, the count of people who gave tells the next visitor that giving is normal. A dollar total has no faces. Say who they are, like parents from this school, and put the count beside the button.

Give each newcomer someone like them to copy. New people are unsure how things are done here, so they watch whoever seems most like them. Pair them with a recent hire who is doing well, not only your longest-serving expert. What they see that person do becomes their idea of the job.

Put the proof where the doubt happens. Doubt shows up at the pricing table, the sign-up form and the pause before a reply. That's where the line about who else chose it belongs. Proof saved for the brochure arrives after the decision.

Showing what they'd miss

The honest reason to decide now

GOT RIGHT	0 of 2 situations
REACHED FOR IT	4 of 7 moments

Your answers reached for showing what they'd miss in 4 of 7 moments where it was on offer, and you answered both of its graded situations differently from the research. Here is what it can do when it fits the moment, and when to hold it back.

WHAT IT CAN DO FOR YOU, USED WELL

Pointing to the leak tends to move people faster than the savings. This is loss framing, a close cousin of scarcity: name what the problem costs each month, not what the fix might save. It's the same number, but a loss tends to weigh more than an equal gain. People move faster to stop a leak than to collect a saving.

A heads-up lands best while it can still change something. If your prices are about to rise, telling the clients it affects before the announcement gives them a real head start. Let them know it isn't public yet. News that is both scarce and exclusive is especially persuasive, and it loses that weight the day it goes out.

Deadlines that hold make people believe the next one. When the early rate ends, let it end, even for a client you like. People who watched the last deadline close take the next one seriously. Used this way, dates tend to get decisions instead of requests for more time.

Putting a price on "next quarter" gives delay a real cost. When a client agrees with everything but the timing, work out what three more months of standing still will cost them. Use their figures, so the number is theirs to trust. Once delay has a price, "later" has to compete with "now."

Naming what only you provide keeps price from being the whole story. Before a client compares you with a cheaper rival, spell out what they'd lose by switching. It might be the team that already knows their history. People weigh what they'd give up, not just what they'd pay.

Something newly scarce pulls harder than something always rare. A fresh loss of access grabs attention in a way a long-standing limit doesn't. So the shrinking stock or the last few seats are worth mentioning the week it happens. Once the change is old news, it's just how things are.

Giving first helps a warning arrive as help, not pressure. People who have had real help from you are more likely to trust that a warning is meant for them. When you say waiting will cost them, they can hear advice from someone on their side. From a stranger, the same words can sound like a closing tactic.

WHAT TO WATCH OUT FOR

Urgency aimed at a doubt makes the doubt grow. When a client pushes back on your price, a deadline asks them to decide faster just when they want to think harder. Pressure at that moment reads as a reason to be careful. Settle the doubt first, then bring up timing.

When every offer has a clock, people stop hearing any of them. People notice how often proposals come with an end date. Once they all do, the dates sound like a habit instead of news. Save the clock for decisions that truly have one.

One quiet extension softens every deadline after it. If someone misses the date and the old rate is honored anyway, they feel looked after. They also learn the dates bend. Let the date stand, and the next one keeps its weight.

Push too hard on the loss, and people dig in. Some people resist anything that feels like their choice is being taken away. Others say yes, then regret it and remember who rushed them. Make the loss clear once, then leave them room to decide.

HOW TO USE IT FOR MORE YESES

Turn your best benefit into the loss it stops. Take the line you lead with, like “this will save you time.” Flip it: “this is costing you an afternoon a week.” Make sure it’s true, then use it most when people are unsure.

Keep a short list of who hears your news first. Decide now who would most want early word of a change. When your prices, dates or terms move and the news is yours to share, call them before the announcement. Tell them they’re hearing it first.

Give every deadline its reason. “The price changes on the first because our supplier raised its rates” sounds like information. “Decide by the first” on its own sounds like pressure. The reason is what makes a real limit believable.

When others want the same thing, say so. People want something more when they see others reaching for it too. If a waiting list or a second bidder is real, tell them. If it isn’t, never hint that it is.

Building on their own words

The yes people keep

GOT RIGHT	1 of 2 situations
REACHED FOR IT	2 of 7 moments

Your answers leaned away from building on people's own words, toward asking for the whole yes at once. When nothing someone has already said or done points toward a request, it has to win on its own. The fix starts small: get one easy yes, out loud, before the big one.

WHAT IT'S COSTING YOU

Meetings that end in nods often produce no promises. When the room hears what needs doing and everyone nods, nobody has said "I'll have it by Thursday." So nobody has promised anything. Then the work gets chased because everyone thought someone else owned it.

Goals kept in private notes are easy to move. When only one person knows the date, nobody else is waiting on it. It slides once, then again, and nobody notices the pattern. The miss looks sudden, but it built up for weeks.

A big ask with no first yes behind it stands alone. Asking for the full pilot before anyone has taken a smaller step leaves people weighing the risk alone. With nothing to build on, the answer people tend to give is "not now."

Without their own reasons, every renewal can start from zero. A fresh case each time gets weighed against a fresh doubt. If what the client said about why they chose you never comes up, a cheaper rival only has to win one argument.

HOW TO START

Turn your next request into a question. Instead of "Please send it by Friday," ask "Can you send it by Friday?" Then stop talking and wait for the yes. That small yes is what people remember on Thursday.

Ask for one small step before the big request. If you need a client to run a pilot, first ask for twenty minutes to map the problem together. A small yes, freely given, changes how people see their part in it. The pilot then reads as the obvious next move.

Have people say their goals in front of each other. At your next team meeting, name one thing you'll finish this week, then invite everyone else to do the same. Write the list where everyone can see it, and check it together on Friday. Goals hold better when people share progress, not only intentions.

Ask people why they said yes the first time. Before a renewal, ask the client what made them choose you. Let them answer in full, and don't fill in the blanks. People hold on to reasons they've put into words themselves.

WORDS TO TRY

WHEN YOU HAND SOMEONE A DEADLINE

"Can you have the draft to me by Thursday at noon? If that's tight, tell me now, and we'll find a day that works."

WHEN SOMEONE ISN'T READY TO COMMIT

"Understood. Would a 20-minute call to map the problem be useful first? You can decide on the rest after that."

BEFORE A RENEWAL OR A BIG DECISION

"When we started, you told me reliability mattered more to you than price. Is that still true this year?"

WHERE TO PRACTICE IT

At work. Building on their own words means letting people choose their deadlines and share them with the team. A date someone chose out loud is one they work to keep.

In sales. Building on their own words means asking what matters before you pitch, then building the proposal from the answer. When they read it, they tend to recognize their own words.

With friends and family. Building on their own words means asking instead of telling: "Will you call if you're running late?" A yes said out loud holds better than a rule handed down.

In your community. Building on their own words means asking for one small, real step first, like a five-minute survey or one evening of help. People who took the first step are the most likely to sign up for the next.

In negotiations. Building on their own words means agreeing on a shared goal before any number comes up, like a deal that lasts. Every later offer gets tested against what both sides already said they wanted.

Proving you know your stuff

Expertise they notice and trust

GOT RIGHT	0 of 2 situations
REACHED FOR IT	2 of 7 moments

Your answers leaned away from proving you know your stuff. People who skip this move often keep two things quiet: what they know, and where their case is weak. Both silences can cost trust, so name a real weakness first, then show what you know.

WHAT IT'S COSTING YOU

A drawback they find on their own costs more than the drawback itself. When a client hears from a competitor that a quote is higher, the price stops being the problem. The problem becomes what else went unmentioned. One early sentence could have turned the same fact into a reason to trust.

A crowd rarely settles a doubt about results. When a team worries a new process will break under deadlines, a list of teams that switched doesn't settle it. They want to hear from someone who has run it through a crunch. Without that voice, people may agree in the meeting and hedge in the work.

A deadline can't fix a doubt about whether you're worth it. When a client doubts you're worth the extra, "this rate ends Friday" only rushes a decision they don't trust yet. The deadline adds pressure without giving a reason to pay more. Answer that question first, and a real deadline has something to push.

Sound advice loses to louder voices when your experience is invisible. In a meeting, people weigh advice by what they know of the person giving it. If they know nothing of your experience, the most confident speaker can carry the room. One line about your track record can change the scale.

HOW TO START

Write one sentence that says why you're worth hearing. Pick one specific fact, like how many launches you've led or how long you've worked on this exact problem. Put it in your next invite or on your first slide. People size you up before you speak, so give them something true to go on.

Hand your introduction to someone else. Ask the colleague who set up the meeting to share that sentence for you. From them it sounds like information, and from you it sounds like bragging. It works even when the room knows they're on your side.

Raise the weak spot they'll find anyway, before they do. Pick the weakness they're most likely to discover, like the higher price or the longer timeline. Say it in your first few minutes, then turn to the strength that outweighs it. A real drawback named early can make what follows more believable.

When the doubt is whether it works, bring in an expert. If a buyer doubts your product will hold up, find someone who knows it inside out, like the engineer who built it. Let them explain why it lasts and take the hard questions. Their knowledge answers what your reassurance can't.

WORDS TO TRY

WHEN YOUR PRICE IS HIGHER THAN A RIVAL'S

"Let me start with the downside: we're not the cheapest. I'd rather you hear that from me. Here's exactly what the difference buys you."

BEFORE A MEETING SOMEONE ELSE SET UP

"Could you open with a line about the rollout I led last year? It will carry more weight from you than from me."

WHEN YOUR TEAM DOUBTS IT WILL HOLD UP

"That's a fair worry. Let me bring in someone who has used this under real deadlines, and you can ask them anything."

WHERE TO PRACTICE IT

At work. Proving you know your stuff means letting your experience show before the meeting starts, through an introduction or a line in the invite. Then ask for the hard questions, so people agree because they're convinced, not because of a title.

In sales. Proving you know your stuff means raising the drawback yourself, like the higher price, then showing what the extra buys. Buyers who hear a real weakness from you tend to believe the strengths more.

With friends and family. Proving you know your stuff means giving advice where you have real experience and saying so when you don't. Advice offered selectively tends to carry more weight.

In your community. Proving you know your stuff means bringing in the person who has actually done it, like the neighbor who ran last year's fundraiser. Real experience settles debates that opinions keep alive.

In negotiations. Proving you know your stuff means showing the evidence behind your number and admitting where their case is strong. That candor can make your other positions harder to dismiss.

Being someone they like

The person they're glad to say yes to

GOT RIGHT	1 of 2 situations
REACHED FOR IT	0 of 7 moments

Your answers leaned away from being someone they like. Yet people most prefer to say yes to someone they know and like. The fix is small: let people see what you genuinely like about them, and give them a true reason to like you back.

WHAT IT'S COSTING YOU

Common ground can sit in plain sight and go unused. Picture a photo on a VP's wall of a place you've also been. If you say nothing, or wait for it to come up, the meeting stays strictly business. A real connection sat there the whole time.

Preparing only to win the argument can make the other side brace for one. When prep goes only into your best points and your defenses, nothing goes into how both sides could come out ahead. You can arrive looking like an opponent. People tend to treat you like one.

Praise held back can read as indifference. When a direct report delivers great results and the talk moves straight to the next project, silence can sound like you didn't notice. People are slow to like a boss who never seems to see them. A specific word of thanks costs little.

Compliments you don't mean can dilute the ones you do. Praising a teammate's thin point, or a manager's poor decision, can feel like harmless diplomacy. It also puts your name behind a call you doubt, and teaches people your praise isn't tied to the work. Then the praise you do mean carries less weight.

HOW TO START

Don't wait for common ground to come up on its own. Often it never does, because the agenda takes over. If you notice something real you share, say so before the business starts. Waiting for a natural moment usually means missing it.

Small things in common are worth saying out loud. You don't need the same school or the same career. The same hometown, the same first job or a shared birthday makes people more willing to help, as long as it's true. A small true overlap beats a big one you'd have to stretch.

Prepare the shared win before your next negotiation. Before you rehearse your arguments, write down one outcome that would help both sides. Open with it. It tells the other side you came to work with them, not against them.

Praise real work, and skip any praise you'd have to fake. When a direct report does excellent work, tell her the exact decision that made it land. When a point or a decision doesn't impress you, find something true to say or say nothing. Praise you mean is the only kind that's safe for your credibility.

WORDS TO TRY

WHEN YOU SPOT SOMETHING YOU SHARE

"I have to ask about that race photo. I ran that one too. How was the last mile for you?"

WHEN SOMEONE ON YOUR TEAM DELIVERS

"Your one-page summary got the board to a decision in ten minutes. That took real skill, and I wanted you to know I noticed."

WHEN YOU OPEN A TOUGH NEGOTIATION

"Before we get to terms, can we list what each of us needs to walk away happy? I suspect there's more overlap than either of us expects."

WHERE TO PRACTICE IT

At work. Being someone they like means noticing a colleague's good work and naming the part that impressed you. People tend to go out of their way for the colleague who sees them.

In sales. Being someone they like means learning about the buyer before the call and opening with something you truly share. The pitch that follows gets a warmer hearing.

With friends and family. Being someone they like means noticing what they do for you and naming it in detail. Praise on an ordinary Tuesday, with nothing to gain, is the kind people believe.

In your community. Being someone they like means showing up often and working side by side toward a shared goal. People come to like the neighbors they see and work alongside.

In negotiations. Being someone they like means preparing as hard for the shared win as for your own position. When the other side sees you looking for a deal that works for both of you, they tend to bargain more openly.

YOUR TOP TWO MOVES

How your top two moves work together

Giving first + Framing the comparison

The bigger ask, then the real one

Used together, these moves support a classic sequence: a larger request you'd genuinely accept, then a step down to the one you need. Right after a refusal, the step down can feel like a concession people want to return. Beside the first request, the second also looks smaller than it would alone. It collapses if the first request is inflated, because people sense the setup and stop trusting the rest.

WHERE IT PLAYS OUT

Where you win the yes, and where you lose it

Your situations covered the rooms where people ask for a yes. Here is how you did in each, and how your strongest move and your biggest gap show up there.

At work

3 of 6 situations

Your strongest move here. At work, giving first means taking a task off someone's plate before their deadline. When you need help later, they remember who stepped in first.

Your next move here. Being someone they like means noticing a colleague's good work and naming the part that impressed you. People tend to go out of their way for the colleague who sees them.

In sales

3 of 6 situations

Your strongest move here. In sales, giving first means sending something useful before the call, not after it. Prospects who got something first tend to make time for the person who sent it.

Your next move here. Being someone they like means learning about the buyer before the call and opening with something you truly share. The pitch that follows gets a warmer hearing.

With friends and family

1 of 1 situations

Your strongest move here. With friends and family, giving first means the specific favor nobody asked for, like the ride or the meal in a hard week. It keeps generosity flowing in both directions.

Your next move here. Being someone they like means noticing what they do for you and naming it in detail. Praise on an ordinary Tuesday, with nothing to gain, is the kind people believe.

Only 1 of your situations were in friends and family, so read this one as a hint, not a verdict.

In your community

1 of 2 situations

Your strongest move here. In a community, giving first means volunteering first and sharing credit freely. The people who were helped tend to be the first to sign up when you ask.

Your next move here. Being someone they like means showing up often and working side by side toward a shared goal. People come to like the neighbors they see and work alongside.

Only 2 of your situations were in community, so read this one as a hint, not a verdict.

In negotiations

1 of 1 situations

Your strongest move here. In a negotiation, giving first means the early, real concession. Give up a point you can afford, and the other side tends to give one back.

Your next move here. Being someone they like means preparing as hard for the shared win as for your own position. When the other side sees you looking for a deal that works for both of you, they tend to bargain more openly.

Only 1 of your situations were in negotiation, so read this one as a hint, not a verdict.

THE OVERALL SHAPE OF YOUR INFLUENCE

Your influence runs on giving first and framing the comparison. The yes you're most likely to lose comes from being someone they like, and your answers slipped most at work. Lean on your strongest moves where they fit, and build the weakest one deliberately.

THROUGH THEIR EYES

How your moves can come across

Here is how giving first, the move you chose most, tends to land with five kinds of people, and what each may miss. These are illustrations from the research, not observations of you.

Your boss

What they see: Help that arrives before it is asked for tends to read as someone who makes their job easier.

What they may miss: The extra effort that giving first can take, unless it gets mentioned.

Your peers

What they see: A colleague who helps first tends to seem worth helping back.

What they may miss: That a steady flow of favors can leave some peers feeling a quiet pressure to keep things even.

The people you lead

What they see: A manager who invests in people before asking for more tends to earn their effort.

What they may miss: That it can be hard to push back on someone who gave first.

Your partner

What they see: Specific, thoughtful favors tend to land as care.

What they may miss: That a lot of giving can start to feel like a debt they can’t repay.

Someone new

What they see: A useful first gift tends to make a stranger remember the giver warmly.

What they may miss: The good intent behind a gift, if it arrives with an ask attached.

THE OTHER SIDE

How others move you

From eight single situations: how readily you said yes when each move was used on you. A snapshot of those moments, so you can decide on the merits.

You said yes most readily: Giving first

You answered: Definitely. A favor done first. When someone gives before they ask, you want to even the score.

You said yes most readily: Showing who else said yes

You answered: Definitely. What people like you are doing. When a choice is hard to judge, their lead feels safe.

You said yes most readily: Showing what they'd miss

You answered: Definitely. What might slip away. When time or supply is short, you move faster.

You said yes most readily: Making it "us"

You answered: Definitely. People who feel like one of your own. A shared home, team or history makes you want to help.

You said yes least readily: Proving you know your stuff

You answered: Definitely not. Where credentials alone don't move you. Here, a strong title wasn't reason enough to change how your team works.

HOW TO SPOT IT WORKING ON YOU

Who Exactly Chose It? Look at who the others are and why they chose. Proof from people unlike you, or numbers with no source, is weaker than it looks.

HOW TO RESPOND

Find One Who Passed. Ask about someone who looked at the same option and walked away. Their reasons balance the crowd's.

Popular Is Not Proven. Use the crowd as a starting point, then test the choice against your own needs.

WHEN THE STAKES RISE

You under pressure

People who lean on giving first often give more when pressure rises. When a deal wobbles or a project slips, the pull is toward another favor, another discount or another late night. It can work, but it can also hide the problem that needs naming.

SIGNS IT'S HAPPENING

Under pressure, you may discount before anyone asks. A tense call can push a giver to offer price or scope unprompted. The other side learns that waiting earns concessions. Your margin ends up paying for their patience.

You may take on extra work to keep the peace. Saying yes to one more task feels kind in the moment. Under strain it can turn into overload, and the quality of the help drops. People tend to notice the drop more than the help.

You may give when you should be asking for support. When you most need help, the reflex can be to offer more instead of requesting it. Others assume you're fine. The help never arrives, because nobody knew it was needed.

HOW TO RESET

Name the real problem before you offer anything. Ask what is really in the way. If it's doubt, bring proof. If it's timing, talk about timing.

Trade concessions under pressure, never gift them. In a tense negotiation, tie every concession to something you get back. "I can do that if we can agree on this" keeps the exchange fair. It also keeps your price intact.

Ask for help plainly. Pressure is when goodwill is meant to pay off. Tell one person exactly what you need this week. Most people are glad to return a favor when they finally know how.

THE COUNTERFEITS

Your ethical edge

5 of 7

traps spotted in your situations

Every principle has a counterfeit: the fake deadline, the borrowed credential, the gift with a hook. In your situations, 7 hid one of these, and you spotted 5. Spotting them protects you, and it keeps your own influence honest.

MOVE	TRAPS SPOTTED
Giving first · Reciprocity	1 of 1
Showing who else said yes · Social Proof	0 of 1
Being someone they like · Liking	1 of 1
Showing what they'd miss · Scarcity	0 of 1
Making it "us" · Unity	1 of 1
Framing the comparison · Contrast	2 of 2

THREE WAYS TO USE INFLUENCE

The smuggler

Fakes the reasons to say yes: a deadline that isn't real, a crowd that doesn't exist, a credential that doesn't apply. It works once, then trust runs out.

The bungler

Has real reasons and wastes them: the right move at the wrong moment, or the strongest point buried at the end.

The sleuth

Finds the real reasons someone should say yes, and brings them forward: the true expertise, the honest comparison, the deadline that exists.

FIVE QUESTIONS BEFORE ANY ASK

1 Is it true?

No invented deadlines, borrowed authority or made-up crowds. Every principle rests on this one.

2 Does it help them too?

If only you benefit, it is pressure, not persuasion.

3 Is the choice still theirs?

Informed people who feel free to say no make decisions that last.

4 Would it survive a second look?

A yes that falls apart on reflection was never really a yes.

5 Could they see your playbook?

If your approach only works while it stays hidden, change the approach.

YOUR ACTION PLAN

Your 30 days

Four weeks, one move at a time. Each day takes about ten minutes. On Friday, look back at what changed and who said yes.

Week 1: Lead with your strongest move

Use giving first on purpose, in the conversations that matter most.

Day 1	**Map Your Credit.** List five people you have helped this year. Note one thing you could ask each of them for.
Day 2	**Give Without Strings.** Send one personal, useful gift to someone on your list. Attach no request.
Day 3	**Connect Two People.** Introduce two people who should know each other, with nothing in it for you.
Day 4	**Ask Clearly.** Ask one person on your list for the specific thing you need. Be direct about it.
Day 5	**Review Your Asks.** Note who said yes, who offered more, and how long you waited between giving and asking.
Friday	Who said yes this week, and what did you do just before they did?

Week 2: Win back the yes you're losing

Practice being someone they like until it starts to feel natural.

Day 1	**Notice the Room.** At your next meeting with someone new, look for something real you share, like a photo or a book. Mention it before business.
Day 2	**Find Small Similarities.** Learn three small things about a colleague you barely know. Bring up any you genuinely share.
Day 3	**Name What You Admire.** When someone's work goes well this week, tell them which choice of theirs made the difference. Skip it if you don't mean it.
Day 4	**Plan for Both Sides.** Before your next negotiation or hard request, write down how the other side benefits. Open with it.
Day 5	**Ask on Warmer Ground.** Make one request of someone you connected with this week. Notice how it lands compared with your usual asks.
Friday	Where did being someone they like feel forced, and where did it feel easy?

Week 3: Check your habit

Notice when proving you know your stuff isn't the right move, and try the one that is.

Day 1	**Hear the Real Question.** Before you answer the next doubt, name the question behind it. Is it whether this works, whether it fits people like them or why they should decide now?
Day 2	**Three Questions First.** In one conversation, ask three questions about the problem before you offer any advice.
Day 3	**Leave the Title Out.** In your next disagreement, make your case without mentioning your role, tenure or track record. See if it holds.
Day 4	**Show a Peer Instead.** When someone doubts it suits people like them, skip the expert rating and show them a peer who said yes.
Day 5	**Change Your Mind Publicly.** Tell your team about one view you've updated this year, and what changed it.
Friday	When did you catch yourself reaching for your usual move, and what did you do instead?

Week 4: Put them together

Combine giving first with being someone they like in one important ask.

Day 1	**Pick One Big Ask.** Choose the most important yes you need this month. Write down who has to say it.
Day 2	**Plan Both Moves.** Decide where giving first opens the conversation and where being someone they like carries it to a decision.
Day 3	**Say It Out Loud.** Rehearse your first two minutes once. Cut anything that sounds like a tactic.
Day 4	**Make the Ask.** Ask plainly, then stop talking and let them answer.
Day 5	**Keep the Notes.** Write down what landed and what you would change. Read it before your next big ask.
Friday	Which move opened the door, and which one closed the deal?



KEEP GOING

You know where the gap is. *Practice is what closes it.*

Reading changes what you know. Practice changes how often people say yes. Pick the next step that fits where you are.

READ

Influence: The Psychology of Persuasion

Robert B. Cialdini. The foundation. One chapter per principle, each full of examples you will start to notice everywhere.

READ

Pre-Suasion

Robert B. Cialdini. What you do before the ask. Read it once the principles feel familiar, and your timing will change.

READ

Yes! 50 Scientifically Proven Ways to Be Persuasive

Noah J. Goldstein, Steve J. Martin and Robert B. Cialdini. Fifty short chapters, each a single move with the research behind it. Easy to try one this week.

cialdini.com/books

AND THREE NEXT STEPS

1. Retake the Influence Gap Analysis in six months, and compare the two reports to see where practice changed your reach.
2. Share your chapters with a coach or a colleague you trust, and ask what they see.
3. If you want to apply these principles in real client or team situations, the Cialdini Certified Practitioner program is the next step.

© 2026 Cialdini Institute. This report describes how you answered your situations and the moments you chose between. It reflects your choices on those items, not a judgment of your character, and it is not a psychological assessment. Built on the research of Dr. Robert B. Cialdini.

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WANT YOUR OWN?

Get your own *Influence Gap Analysis.*

See how you influence people, what you may be missing, and what to try next.

assessment.cialdini.com

Based on the research of Dr. Robert Cialdini, author of *Influence*