

# Influencing Without Authority

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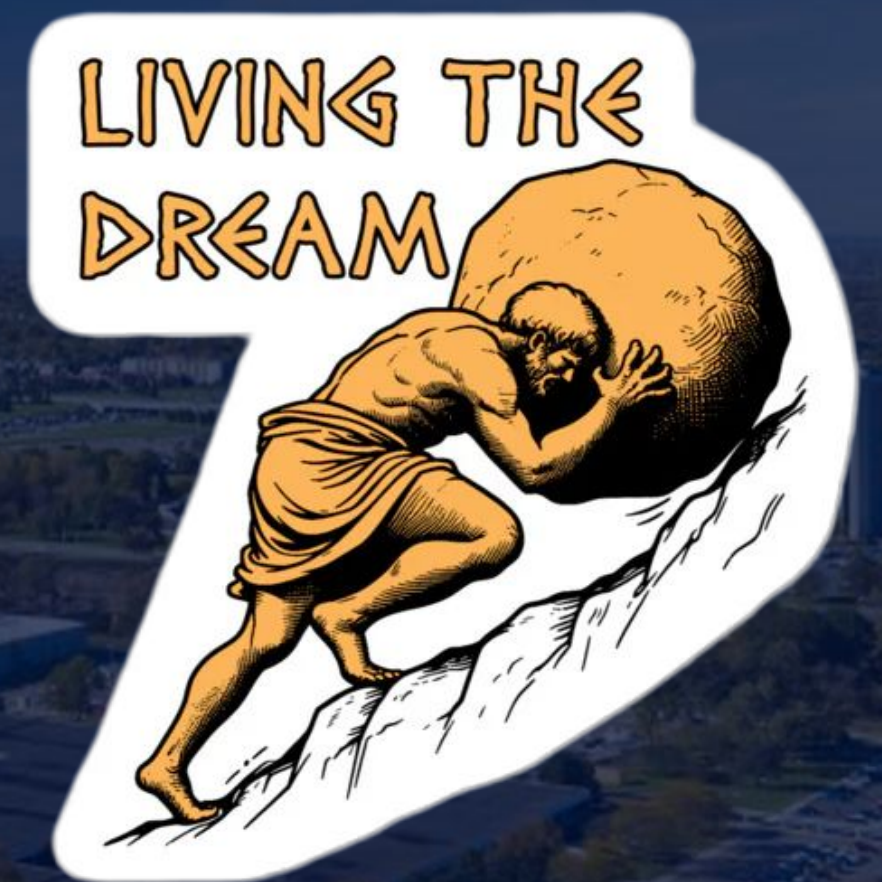
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# What is the point of influencing?

Our work inherently depends on others.



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What about good, old-fashioned  
accuracy and expertise?



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What about good, old-fashioned  
accuracy and expertise?



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Being right, and even being  
“in charge” **don't matter**  
if no one listens.



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# My ingredients for influencing without authority

- **Strategy:** assess my needs and opportunities to bolster my case.
- **Approach:** prepare, align, engage intentionally, manage attitude
- **Reputation:** be the teammate I would want; deliver results; hold myself accountable.



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# Strategy



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# Understand the world you seek to influence

- What is your goal? Why?
- What do you bring to the table?
- Who/what does this affect?
- Historical context?



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# With no authority, what can you leverage?

- Reliability; ability to deliver solutions and outcomes
- Empathy & Respect
- Relationships & Trust
- Alignment with authority
- Resources
- Process inertia



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## Alignment with authority

- explicit priority
- direct assignment
- budgeted project

## Resources

- your work capacity
- skills/contributions unique to your team
- stakeholders in your orbit

## Process inertia

- number & nature of steps
- time to plan, or do
- who already agreed



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# Example: You want to invest in a facade program

## Alignment with authority

“The Mayor is fully behind the facade program and wants the first projects done this year.”

## Resources

- your team has a contract with a solid architect
- your team knows all the businesses in the target area.

## Process inertia

- funding is available in the CDBG action plan
  - the corridor improvement authority has wanted this for years.



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# There's one more thing you can leverage...



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# There's one more thing you can leverage... YOU!

- You bring a unique perspective, talent set, and personality to the work, use it!
- Lean into your greatest strengths (*hint - what are you asked for help with, or for your opinion on*) as a source of credibility.



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# Approach



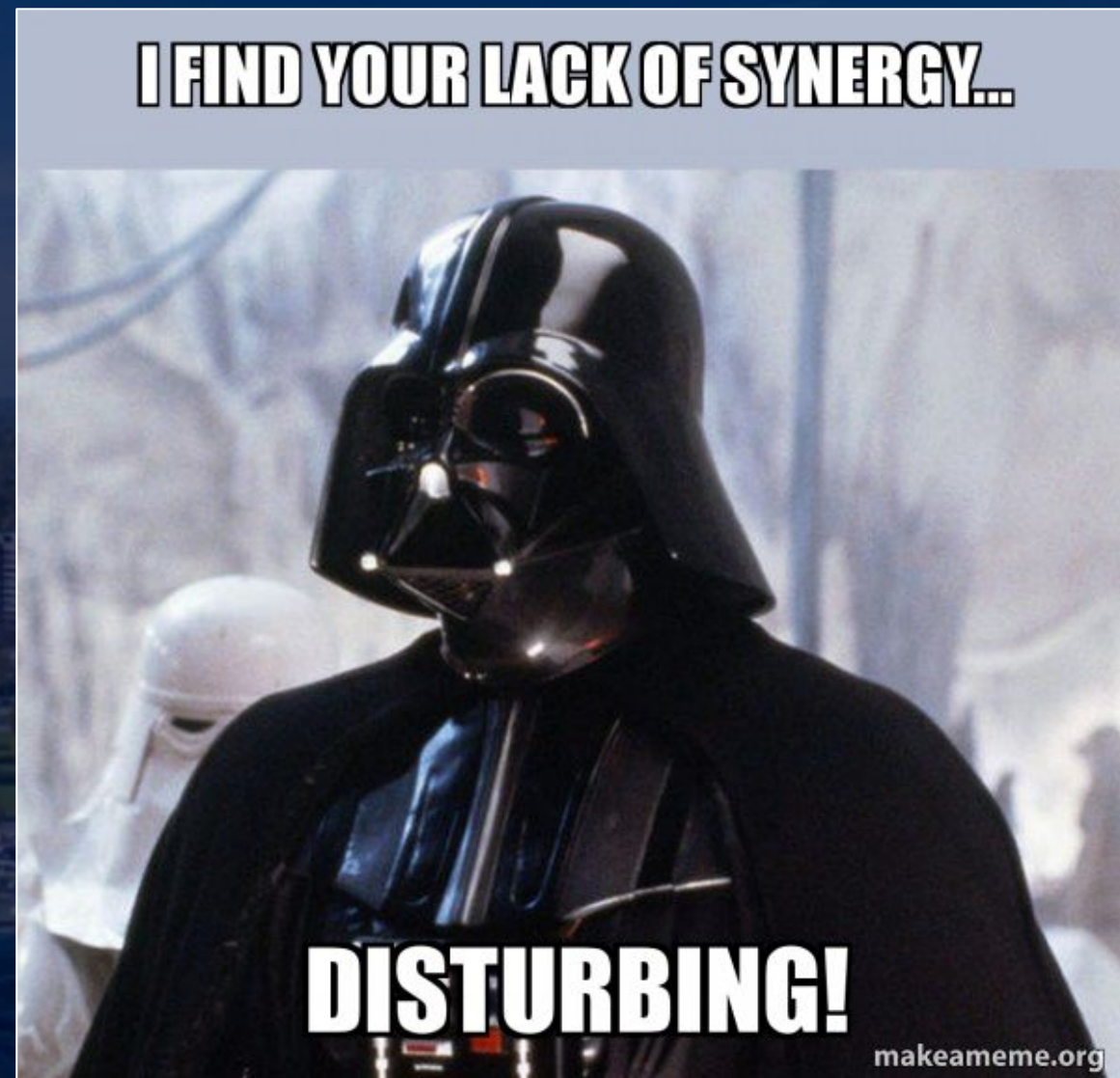
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# Alignment



How does *your* position advance *their* goals or meet *their* needs?



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**Messaging:** How would you respond to...

You've done a terrible job so  
now we have to clean things  
up by implementing my idea.



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# People do this all the time! Don't poison the well.



You've done a terrible job so now we have to clean things up by implementing my idea.



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# Try this:

Our past approach served its purpose; based on direction from leadership now, we need to pivot.



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**Try this:** You can be “direct” without being a



Our past approach served its purpose; based on direction from leadership now, we need to pivot.



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# Handling meetings: “lawyer style”

## The meetings before the meeting



*informal, candid; lay groundwork;  
assume everyone does it*

## The meeting itself



*formalize pre-work; advance, table, or  
die; have boundaries, respect theirs*



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# Reputation



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# Self-evaluation:

- How quickly do people respond to your requests for help?
- How often do people, especially leaders, come to *you* for help?
- Are you a problem announcer, or problem solver?
- How much do you try/explore before seeking help?
- Do you use Chat GPT as an aide, or as a substitute, for thinking?



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# Influence is fueled by reliability, respect, & results.



Caring only when you need something; “not my job, not my problem”



Manages self before managing others; offers solutions; shows respect for needs of others



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# Why reputation matters

- If you are a PITA, you will have no lasting influence!
- Complaints don't solve issues; people do.
- If you want to be trusted, you need to be trustworthy.
- We all make mistakes; having your intent understood and believed makes a big difference in what happens.



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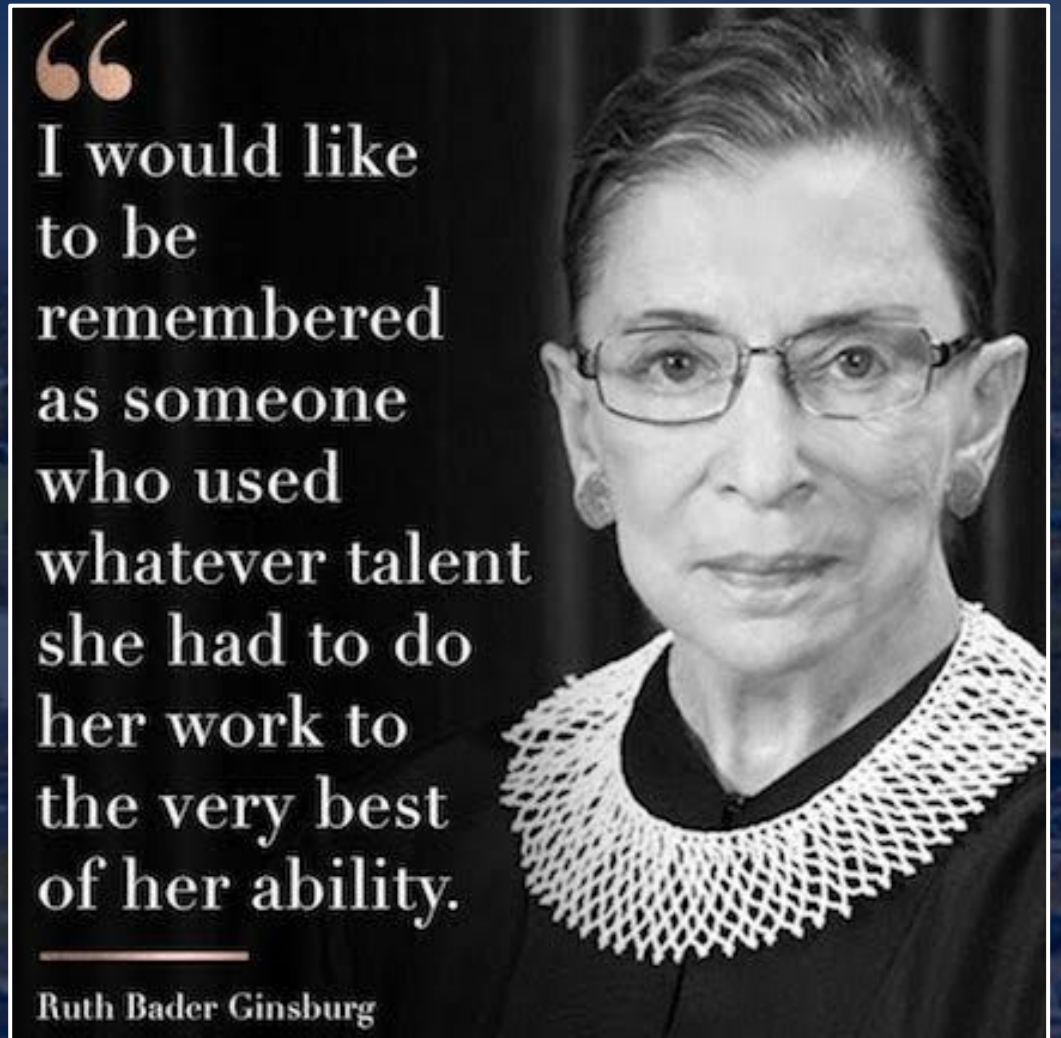


# What contributes to reputation?

- Your ability to deliver outcomes
- How you treat others
- Effort you put in before asking others
- Your attitude
- How and when you ask for help

These earn you influence via:

- Relationships, Trust, Credibility



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# The world is small, but consistency trumps gossip.



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# Final Thoughts for aspiring (Econ Dev) influencers

- Purpose powers through no.
- There's enough people to talk smack and complain; not enough to problem solve.
- Focus on delivering results: your influence will grow naturally with time.



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# Q&A



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