Changing Minds
_The art and science of changing our own and other people’s minds_

By Howard Gardner

Howard Gardner has identified seven R’s, which are involved in helping or hindering people changing their minds. They are: reason, research, resonance, re-description, rewards, real world events and resistance.

**Reason** is employed by way of the use of argument in order to persuade.

**Research** is used in order to collect facts, also with the purpose of persuading.

**Resonance** appeals to the feeling part of the human personality. Does a proposal feel right? Some people rely heavily upon resonance, and prefer it to a reasoned and researched position. Orators and advertisers seek a message that will resonate their audience.

**Redescription** can be profoundly effective. Matters are often expressed in the negative, but when changed into a positive form of expression, convey a completely different and more attractive meaning.

**Resources and rewards** are an important part of any negotiation, and are usually accompanied by penalties. This is often known as the “stick and carrot” approach.

**Real world events** can have the effect of changing perceptions completely.

**Resistance** for example, attachments to the old models, hinders mind changes.

(adapted from Parselle, 2006)

Minds are exceedingly hard to change. Ask any advertiser who has tried to convince consumers to switch brands, any CEO who has tried to change a company’s culture, or any individual who has tried to heal a rift with a friend. So many aspects of life are oriented toward changing minds — yet this phenomenon is among the least understood of familiar human experiences. Changing minds is difficult and Gardner acknowledges it takes its own pace — the slow is just as effective as the fast.

Howard Gardner is an education thought-leader who has changed minds at many levels - among his students, with educators and society at large.

**References**

Amazon.com editorial reviews. Available at http://www.adventureassoc.com/resources/newsletter/nlbr-changing-minds.html
