



Adopt an attitude that demonstrates a **sincere willingness to be influenced**

The challenge

The most effective leaders are able to elicit and listen openly to the opinions of others. Not only is this an excellent means to gather additional perspectives and often new information, but it also helps clarify points of agreement or disagreement, which is a major advantage when the execution of a decision depends on other people.

However, people do not always dare to express their views openly, and even less so if they report to you, for fear of making themselves vulnerable, or because they feel you will not really accept being contradicted, etc. Only if you explicitly listen will people tell you what they sincerely think.

Four key attitudes

Explain the value that others can bring to you

- Show that **you are aware that your vision of the situation is incomplete**.
- Remind others that **you aren't an expert on every topic** and that their opinions can provide useful additional input to advance your thinking.
- Underline the **value added** by your counterparts to incite them to let down their guard.
e.g.: Remind them how their ability to put things in perspective was extremely helpful in a previous discussion.
- Clearly **express what you expect** from your counterparts, in terms of their experience, specific expertise, critical perspective, etc. This will increase their sense of legitimacy.

Show you are willing to listen

- **Set aside specific time to listen.**
e.g.: Informal conversations, informal discussion at the start of meetings, etc. You must show that you are willing to take the time to talk with those around you, despite your everyday pressures.
- **Actively solicit** the opinion of your colleagues and/or subordinates in the early stages of your thinking, to bring a critical perspective on a project in progress, to support you on some aspect you do not fully master, etc.
e.g.: "What do you think? You probably have a different opinion."
- Show that **you are willing to take account of opinions other than your own.**
e.g.: Present your ideas as hypotheses; be willing to change your mind, etc.

Remind people that you count on their active involvement

- **Share information**, in order to make others feel included.
e.g.: Keep them in the loop on changes (context, objectives, etc.), organize information updates at each key project phase, etc.
- Show that you **value each person's opinions**, even if they don't come from an expert on the subject.
e.g.: Ask your financial director for his views on the sales strategy.
- **Explain why people should get involved.**
e.g.: Specify that the topic engages the responsibility of the entire organization, show the impact of the decision on the domain of your counterpart, etc.

Show your gratitude

- **Show your gratitude** toward those who have helped you challenge your way of seeing things by sharing their views with you.
- **Avoid reacting abruptly**, e.g., when someone contradicts you or points out flaws in your reasoning.
- Show that you **have taken account of the ideas and opinions** expressed to you.
e.g.: Give credit where it is due when you use ideas suggested by a team or individual; explain why you choose not to adopt a given suggestion, etc.