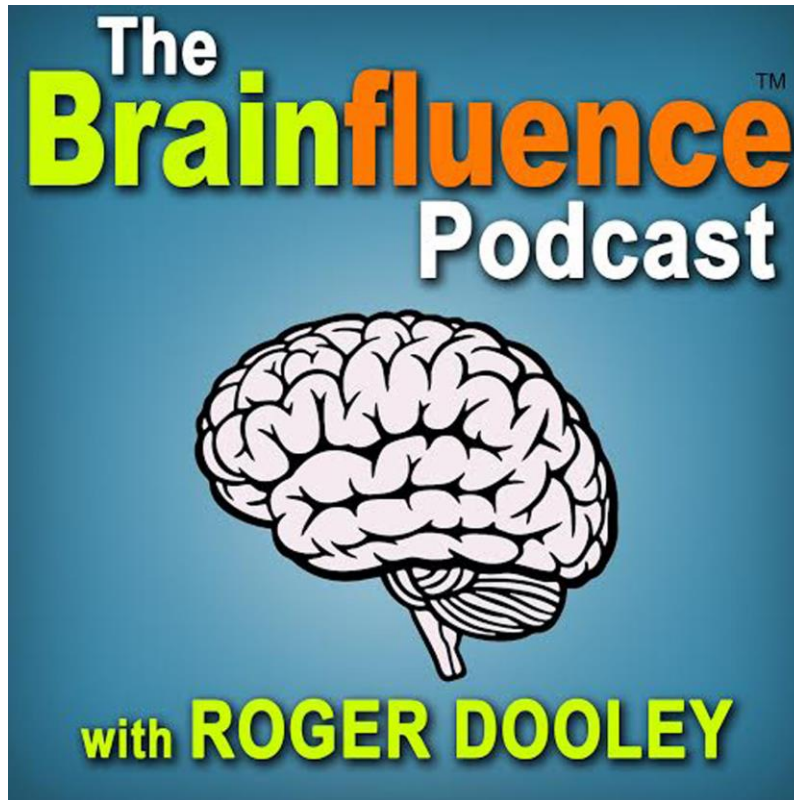


Ep #35: Influence Tips from the FBI's Former Top Behaviorist Robin Dreeke



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**Roger Dooley**

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Welcome to the Brainfluence Podcast with Roger Dooley, author, speaker and educator on neuromarketing and the psychology of persuasion. Every week, we talk with thought leaders that will help you improve your influence with factual evidence and concrete research. Introducing your host, Roger Dooley.

Roger Dooley: Welcome to the Brianfluence Podcast, I'm Roger Dooley and today our guest is Robin Dreeke, an expert in the art of personal communication. Robin has a fascinating background. He's a Naval Academy grad, and former Marine, and he's worked extensively in applying the tools of psychology to study and predict behavior.

For the past 17 years, Robin's been with the FBI, he's the former head of their elite behavioral analysis program in their counter intelligence division, and now Robin has added "author" to his credentials. His newest book is, "It's Not All About Me: The Top 10 Techniques for Building Quick Rapport With Anyone." Welcome to the show, Robin.

Robin Dreeke: Thanks Roger, really appreciate you inviting me on.

Roger Dooley: Glad you could be here.

As a brief intro, I asked Robin before we got going if there was a TV character that was similar, at least in a role to his position and he explained that it's quite a bit different in reality, so we won't put him on the spot to try and identify which character he's most like or his role is most like at the FBI.

Robin Dreeke: I'd have to watch him first to understand it too.

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Roger Dooley: How do you make the leap from your sort of day job to applying these techniques to communication with say family members, with business prospects, and so on when clearly a lot of your focus over time has been on more nefarious elements of society, perhaps?

Robin Dreeke: Great question, Roger. I get asked it a lot and you'd be surprised at how small a leap it is. Matter of fact there's no leap at all. Here's why. It all comes down to leadership, it all started there years ago when I was a Marine Corps officer. I learned very quickly, because I had some fantastic staff NCOs that were guiding and training me how to interact more appropriately and really learn how to lead, which came down to making sure that as a leader I understood my people's needs, wants, goals, dreams and aspirations, put them first and helped them achieve those things.

When I came into the FBI, my especially working in counter intelligence, my entire job for these last 17, almost 18 years now has been to develop relationships with absolutely everyone. I don't deal a lot of times with people that fall into the abnormal psychology realm, I deal with people that still, I'm in my late 40s, I deal with people that are still older than me, definitely twice as smart as me, so why should they want to talk to me, why should they want to have a relationship. It comes down to how you treat them. People don't care about titles and positions, they just care about how you treat them.

I've been really fortunate for my life and career. One, in that I recognize I didn't have these skills to begin with, second, I was surrounded by some fantastic individuals that did have these skills, and then third was placed in the

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situations where I was asked to write, teach, train, mentor, guide, all these skills that I was slowly learning from these great masters. The second I started really making this objective art form into an objective paint-by-number process, I then started realizing this isn't just at work, this isn't just here or there, this is actually everywhere in life, because any time you have at least 2 individuals engaged with each other and you're trying to move forward on any source of project or sales or leadership or anything, you need to develop trust. That's what I really found was the core of everything, of every human interaction, that I've got to strategize, whether it's homework or play, it comes down to trust.

Roger Dooley: That's interesting, Robin, because today there's a lot of segmentation of business to consumer, business to business and so on, and lately I've seen sort of a reaction to that, emphasizing that there is, while you may have business customers or consumer customers and so on, but people are people regardless, and if you focus too much on the category that you're putting them in and not so much on the human category that they belong in, you'll fail.

Robin Dreeke: Yeah. Even just the verbology you just used there, you place them into a category, just that even think about putting someone into a category means that you're objectifying a human being, and people do not want to feel like they're an object, they want to feel like there's a personal connection and that there's trust, and so you can't even think that way.

I always say, I always ask groups and audiences when I'm talking, I say whoever felt like they were talking to the

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creepy salesman, that you just felt like something was off, and I always get, everyone's hands go up, I say why.

I say you get an emotional reaction to something, like why do you think that's caused, and you get puzzled looks. I said here's what it is, really. I said they might be saying the right things, but you can tell that they're not believing what they're saying. In other words, there's incongruence between that which they're saying and that which the rest of the world is seeing. It's because they're not embodying, and they don't truly believe that they're there to help you, they're there for their own goals and aspirations or dreams or just to make a quick sale. In other words, they've just objectified you.

So when you feel objectified, you can tell it, and so this whole process, the most important thing is to never objectify another human being.

Roger Dooley: Right, and labeling can change your focus, too, because if you're thinking this is a business to business sale, you start focusing exclusively on the business benefits and trying to sell delivery and price and quality and so on, which are maybe very important overall, but you forget about the human piece of the equation.

Robin Dreeke: I think that's a great thing to point out, and those are great things to talk about because those are the priorities of the other company, and they're your priorities, and how does that affect the individual?

At the end of the day, we're trying to support our families, our communities, and so if I understand what your priorities are and I can talk in terms of those priorities, on a business to business, there's nothing wrong with that at

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all as long as you are not doing it purely for your own benefit and that you're actually there to help others take care of theirs, that's what leaders do and that's what influencers do, and those are ultimately the ones that come out ahead.

There's a great scene, if anyone remembers, from the old 1930s Miracle on 34th Street, it was Santa Claus in Macy's. Macy's started ramping up the sales because if Macy's didn't have it, Santa Claus sent them to Gimbel's, and so that really engendered greater trust, because he was looking after the welfare of the consumer, trying to get the right toy for their kids and so now they trusted Macy's even more. It's just a great anecdote to talk about exactly what goes on in someone's mind.

Roger Dooley: Robin, the first topic in your book is a technique involving artificial time constraints, persuasion experts use a scarcity ploy that involves time constraints, things like making an offer expire at midnight to induce people to act more quickly, but your time constraints are a little bit different, correct?

Robin Dreeke: Yes. I would start out by saying it's really a difference between someone sits down next to in a movie theater or waiting for a business or train or even at a bar and says hey, can I buy you a drink? Shields go up, your defenses, you're on heightened defense of who is this individual and when's it going to end.

Robert Cialdini, the author of, "Influence," always says that you have to answer 3 questions, especially when dealing with a stranger within the first couple seconds,

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and that is who are you, what do you want, and most importantly, when are you leaving?

I love always talking about when this is going to end, because as soon as you let someone know when it's ending you're really empowering them with choice and with how this is going to go and when's it going to end, even if it doesn't end right away, because it never does, but just a mere stating that hey, do you have 30 seconds, and even if that's too long I can leave now, and you can imply it, you can be standing on a checkout line, you could be in an elevator, all these things are implied time constraints, and the thing you can use the time constraint very proactively, instead of just a few seconds, instead of sitting down with someone and saying hey, how about we develop this business relationship together? That's kind of open ended, and it can set some people back because they don't know what if it doesn't go right, what if I don't like this. Rather than, I really like giving people a time constraint saying how about this, why don't we agree to get together for 3 cups of coffee over the next month, and see if we can align our priorities and learn about them and if it works out great, if not, no harm, no foul.

A big difference between going from that open ended, when's this going to end to here's a chance, we'll get together for a few times and see if we can work this out. I like it.

Roger Dooley: Really, what you're using time constraints for is to reduce the threat from interaction where ... I've been doing a lot of international flying lately, and always a bit wary of interacting with the person next to me on a 9 hour flight, because somehow you don't really know what's going to

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happen, so what you're saying is by establishing right at the outset, some kind of a time constraint, be it artificial or a stated thing or just something that's indicated by your actions, you're providing that person an out. They know that even if for some reason the interaction isn't to their liking that they'll be able to get out of it fairly quickly.

Robin Dreeke: Even when flying I love it, I do the same thing. Basically if you're flying internationally, you're flying for 9 hours, what I'm going to do is give you 8 hours and 40 minutes of complete silence and gift giving in the sense of I'll give you the armrest if I have a breath mint or hand sanitizer, I'll always offer it. That way you have your space and I build up that need to want to reciprocate from the other person, in the last 20 minutes when they say we're starting our initial dissent, that's your time constraint right there and that's when you can have a really productive conversation.

Roger Dooley: Interesting, although that's when you find out that the person you're sitting next to is the most interesting person in the world and you wish you'd interacted right out of the gate.

Robin Dreeke: Always keep them wanting more, that's OK, grab a business card.

Roger Dooley: We think of fast talking sales people as being persuasive, it's probably one of the great stereotypes out there of the used car salesperson that talks fast and closes sales, but does a faster rate of speech help or hurt?

Robin Dreeke: In general, what the science is saying on it is that it's hurting a lot of times because you tend to look like you're overselling and the trust starts plummeting. I will caveat it



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for a few things. If you're passionate, your rate of speech is going to go up a little bit, but as long as you are not talking in terms of your interest but in terms of the other person's interest, that will offset a little bit, but you do, in general, you want to be speaking a little bit slower for the demographic in which you're in. You don't want to be too far askew, someone from the northeast and someone from the Deep South; it's going to be too far apart.

If you actually have credibility, and here's where the science is, and you speak with a slightly slower rate of speech for the demographic in which you're in, the credibility just starts skyrocketing at that point.

Also, as the speaker yourself, it's giving you time to think about what's coming out of your mouth before it actually comes out so you can make sure you're talking in terms of the other person's interest and priorities so you're not all of a sudden going back to yours and then that's when the scales start going up again.

Roger Dooley: The key is to talk perhaps a little bit more slowly but still match to the typical rate of speech for the person you're talking to. I grew up in the northeast and we tended to talk rather quickly up there, but I've spent time in the south too, and I've seen the point where the two could barely communicate if you had a really fast talker and a really slow talker. I'd be a little bit slower than the person you're talking to.

Robin Dreeke: That's just good matching. Basically all you're trying to do in every engagement, is identify yourself as someone that is, I call it tribe mentality, as part of that tribe. The more like things we have and do and say and verbology and

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phraseology, the more it says to the other person that wow, this person's just like me, and so I can accept them for who they are.

Roger Dooley: Does that include adapting your speech to the way the person you're talking to is speaking? For example, I know that after spending some time in the south I began to pick up the occasional y'all and adopt a few other things, I never developed the full on southern accent but I found I was picking up a few of those patterns. Is it wise to emulate those, or could that be off putting for the person thinking that, well somehow you're not real.

Robin Dreeke: That's a great question. I think all those things are really, really powerful at developing that trust, as long as they are organic, that's the best way I can say it. That is, it becomes a natural state of what you're doing because of the trust you're developing, based on conversations about again, in terms of their priorities, dreams, wants and aspirations and putting those ahead of your own. All those other byproducts will start happening naturally.

One time someone asked me, and I think this will answer your question. During interview schools and sales schools and things like that, they used to and probably still do talk about body matching or mirroring. Someone asked me, I never teach that, someone asked me how come you're not talking about mirroring when interviewing or leading or doing sales? I said well, here's the really good reason and I think you were hitting on this.

If you're caught doing that intentional, you'll never have trust again because the person feels they're being mocked or made the fool, so I never talk about it

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consciously because if you are developing good trust, it's just going to be a natural byproduct of it.

You're right, matching is very, very good, it's very strong but if you do it consciously, it looks like it's a manipulation technique and as soon as it looks like that, good luck getting trust back again.

Roger Dooley: We hit on one of the principles when we talked about scarcity, and you've already mentioned this quickly in passing, and that would be reciprocity. You talk about a gift giving technique. Explain that a little bit.

Robin Dreeke: It's one of the core principles of who we are as human beings, genetically and biologically. I always start out by saying, ancient tribal man, 30, 40, 50, that was the size of the tribe, it was the first form of social welfare, healthcare, and everything else. We're genetically coded to want to belong to part of a tribe.

The greatest analogy I use to get people to understand the emotion behind it, I always ask who here has ever traveled overseas? Generally a lot of people have. I said all right, what happens when you find someone from your own country? If you're an American, what happens when you find another American? People just tend to latch on, and you try to identify places you've been together or at least tread the same ground, if you're from the same state. It's a huge comfort feeling to do this because of this tribal mentality that we have because it's good for our survival.

Part of that is this reciprocity or reciprocal altruism, in that again, go back to the tribe, you have a group of hunters go out, one guy will make a killing, he comes back, I say

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what should he do with it? They always answer he should share. I say of course, because what happens if he doesn't share? If he gets sick, lame or injured at another point in time, he'll just be left to die.

The ones that survive are coded to reciprocate gifts giving. We do this all the time. If someone does you a favor, you say thank you. That is a gift. Non-judgmental validation is a gift. Doing the littlest things are all these little gifts, and so I'm a big believer in doing it, keep it commensurate, obviously to the level of the relationship that you're at, but you do favors to other people and our genetics want to reciprocate in kind, then you throw societal norms on top of that, then it's a great cascading effect.

I love gift giving and reciprocal altruism, it's very powerful.

Roger Dooley: How does that contrast with quid pro quo, because that involves an exchange as well, but a little bit different order, I guess?

Robin Dreeke: Yeah, it can be very similar. Quid pro quo, when I refer to quid pro quo there's 3 facets to it for me. One reason for a quid pro quo is some people are a lot more guarded than others and so they might need a little bit more disclosure to feel comfortable to disclose themselves about their needs, wants, dreams and aspirations, so that's one reason for it.

Another reason is to identify again, liking, tribe mentality. Hey, if I get some stories and anecdotes and you tell me about your challenges and priorities, if I have similar ones or know someone with similar ones, I'm going to quid pro quo and give you a short little yes of course, I've had a

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similar experience to yours, tell me more about your thing, so you get a little bit there.

Last reason why I think a quid pro quo is important, throughout a conversation, lightly, and I say "lightly" because if you start talking about yourself too much, the other person's brain's going to shut down to engagement, so that it is an organic conversation that's going on and doesn't turn into a monologue by one person, because if that happens, they're fantastic, they're really great, but if that person starts realizing wow, I'm doing all the talking, I don't even know this person's name, it can really freak people out.

Roger Dooley: I write a lot about expectations and how what people expect shapes their reality. How do you build managing expectations into your techniques?

Robin Dreeke: It's my final line I really like because I think managing expectations is critical in maintaining the altruistic way about going about this. I say I manage expectations because not everyone is ready for the most awesome gift that I'm going to give them. That is non-judgmental validation for who they are as a human being.

Someone could be having a bad day, every human being is completely different, or you just might be messing up, too, who knows. I don't know all the reasons but if I go in with no expectations but I'm just there to help service and take care of their goals, wants and priorities, then whatever the outcome is, I'm good because for me, in every engagement I have, I always just want to leave the other person feeling better for having met me, and if I can

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do that, that's the only expectation I have and everything else I manage, so I don't expect ...

I don't do anything with the expectation reciprocity, of course everyone's hopeful for it, but if I just don't expect it, then good things will happen.

Roger Dooley: Really you're managing your own expectations rather than trying to manage the other person's expectations.

Robin Dreeke: I focus on my own first, again, because I don't want to build resentment, because again, that's not good for trust and people can see that so yeah, managing my own first. I can manage theirs as well, but I tend to try to focus on mine.

Roger Dooley: That makes a lot of sense. Often in expectations, they can actually shape what people experience and so if you tell people you're going to get something out of this, and if you approximate that in reality then that can actually happen. The key there is that you've got to plausibly deliver on the expectation that you created.

You talk about questions, Robin, like how, when, why, other than as simple sort of conversational gambits, how do those help?

Robin Dreeke: Yeah. How, when, why, anything open-ended, I've also added over the last couple years is challenges questions. Here's what I mean. I think the most important thing anyone can do is not have a script of what they're going to say when they go into a meeting or engagement.

I generally put together an opening that will seek a thought or opinion about something, that will give me an

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understanding of this other's individual's priorities if I don't already know them, and their context of how they see me and they see the world through their experiences. That's how I structure my opening.

After that, whatever comes out of their mouth is what they are willing and want to talk about so that's what I'm focusing on, so after that, because if I'm memorizing what I'm supposed to say or do or what I'm supposed to look for or my expectations, I'm not focused on what the most important thing in the engagement is, and that's the other person, so that's why I just make sure I have my open-ended questions like oh, how did you come up with that idea, that's really fantastic, or when did you decide to do that, or as my fall back on everything, hey, what kind of challenges do you have in your line of work? What kind of challenges are you dealing with this week? What kind of challenge do you have raising teenagers? Everyone has challenges.

Those kind of open-ended questions don't require me to memorize anything, and they give me even more content to talk about when the other person responds, that they're willing to talk about, so again, it makes it very easy, makes it very organic and makes it very genuinely sincere, because I'm not talking about what I want to, they're talking about what they want to.

Roger Dooley: That could be pretty good advice for podcasters, even.

Robin Dreeke: Yeah. You're doing a great job.

Roger Dooley: Save you all the trouble of actually preparing and getting into the detail for the questions, just focus on how, when, why and so on.

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One thing that we have to deal with today is that so much of our interaction with people is by channels that are very limited in nature. It's social media, it's email, even phone isn't all that common today compared to electronic communication that's in some kind of written form, and often sort of asynchronous, where you're not interacting live with the other person.

How do you deal with that? I assume these techniques still apply, but do you have any particular ways of improving communication when you've got these limitations imposed by the media?

Robin Dreeke: You're right. All these core elements of trust will apply in all situations, no matter what medium you're using, whether they're vocal, non-verbal and limited text lines. It all applies.

The most important thing in each of these situations is to not judge the other person, what's coming out of their mouth or what they're writing, because ... It just makes so much sense when you think about it.

As soon as you poke at someone, take a side, offer a thought or an opinion that might be controversial, you're going to have at least half the world lined up against you, which is fine, if that's what you want to do. Just realize your actions, words, whether written or non-verbal or spoken are going to have a reaction, and people want to be accepted non-judgmentally for who they are, their thoughts and opinions and everything, so as soon as you start offering something that's incongruent with what their thoughts, opinions and beliefs are, you're going to cause



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some issues. I always try to avoid those things when communicating in the social media realm.

Roger Dooley: You know Robin, I love the title of your book, "It's Not All About Me." Next week my guests are going to be Bryan and Jeffrey Eisenberg who have written a lot about digital marketing and conversion optimization and so on.

One of the things they've been emphasizing for years, and this would be particularly in writing copy for websites and designing websites, is to not focus on "we" and you talked about this sort of we effect where you look at people's texts on their website or their landing page, and all they're talking about is themselves instead of talking about you and how they can meet your needs, so even though you're talking mainly about two-way communication here, but I think there's a good lesson there, even for people who are writing advertising and website copy.

Robin Dreeke: I'm sorry, Roger, you're so right on that. Someone asked me once before, well what about the 30 second elevator pitch that people say you have to have ready at all times where you're selling yourself? I said OK, but why should they listen to you?

I said I think they're great as long as you're going to sell yourself in terms of what the other person's priorities are, that's fantastic. That's exactly what you're saying about the websites.

If someone's just giving their resume on a website, OK, so why should anyone read it? How is that helping me?

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There's a technique when writing, and I use this in my book and I always try and use it and I try to do it when I do social media, is asking questions. It's a great way to start a conversation. If you ask rhetorical questions that anyone can identify ... Or at least your target market can identify with, that's what's going to suck people in.

Have you ever wanted to be a better communicator? Have you ever wanted to talk to your teenagers more effectively? Have you ever wished you could resolve conflicts at work?

Whatever it is you're doing, when you ask a rhetorical question like that, this is ... You're going to start grabbing onto people because they can relate it to their own situation, and so those are the people you're going to draw in, and then when you can talk about the tools and techniques and things that you're offering in terms of those things, now that's what starts a great conversation and dialogue about why you should read this website or why you should look at this product and service, because you just grabbed your target audience by asking those questions.

Roger Dooley: We're just about out of time here Robin, and let me remind the audience that we've been talking with Robin Dreeke, he's former head of the FBI's behavioral analysis program, and the author of, "It's Not All About Me: The Top 10 Techniques for Building Quick Rapport With Anyone."

Robin, how can our listeners find your stuff online and connect with you?

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Robin Dreeke: Oh great, thanks. Very easily. My website is: [www.peopleformula.com](http://www.peopleformula.com), all one word, and I've got lots of links on there to different interviews I've done. I'll be adding Roger's on here soon. Videos, my book obviously, which is on Amazon, and also my email address. You can easily email me through the website, and I love to engage, especially when strategizing interactions, it's a great passion I have and a lot of fun for it, so please reach out any time.

Roger Dooley: Great, and we'll have links to Robin's website, his book, and the other resources we talked about today at [rogerdooley.com/podcast](http://rogerdooley.com/podcast).

Robin, thanks so much for being part of the show today.

Robin Dreeke: Thanks for reaching out, Roger, I appreciate it and had a great chat with you. Thank you.

Thank you for joining me for this episode of the Brainfluence Podcast. To continue the discussion and to find your own path to brainy success, please visit us at [RogerDooley.com](http://RogerDooley.com).