

6 strategies of the silver-tongued

If you're looking for a killer reaction to your ideas and requests, start by using some killer rhetorical devices — in both your writing and speech. The examples below are all from Steve Jobs' 2005 Stanford Commencement Address.

Rhetorical Device	Example
Repetition of a word or phrase at the beginning of successive sentences or clauses	"... [D]on't waste [your life] living someone else's. Don't be trapped by dogma ... Don't let the noise of others' opinions drown out your own inner voice."
Repetition of the final words of a sentence or line at the beginning of the next	"... [T]he only way to be truly satisfied is to do what you believe is great work. And the only way to do great work is to love what you do."
Contrasting two opposing ideas	"The heaviness of being successful was replaced with the lightness of being a beginner again."
Word or phrase that suggests a resemblance but is not literally applicable (metaphor)	"The first story is about connecting the dots." (No, Jobs wasn't literally connecting dots on his iPad as he went through life ... at least, not to our knowledge!)
Posing and then answering a question	"How do you get fired from a company you started? Well, as Apple grew ..."
Grouping phrases in threes	"I didn't have a dorm room, so I slept on the floor in friends' rooms, I returned Coke bottles for the five-cent deposits to buy food with, and I would walk the seven miles across town every Sunday night to get one good meal a week at the Hare Krishna temple."