**RedZone Podcast Episode #98: Unleash Your Superpower with Communication + Persuasion: with Jeff Tippett**

Bill Murphy: 00:00 ... Show today.

Jeff Tippett: 00:01 Thanks for the opportunity to be here. I'm excited to chat with you and your audience.

Bill Murphy: 00:05 Well I know one of the big things we talked about prior to this was really the need for learning, as leaders, becoming better communicators, becoming better persuaders. What do you find right now with leadership is a quality within your space that is, where you would you say, "It's a quality that if you could jump in everybody's brain and you could turn the gears, you would have them do what?"

Jeff Tippett: 00:34 Yeah, my big, bold statement is this, that we all live or die based upon our ability to persuade. So, from my perspective, it doesn't matter if you're the CEO of a company, if you're the CIO, if you're an entrepreneur, if you're in sales or if you just don't want to live alone for the rest of your life, that we all live or die based upon our ability to persuade. So from perspective, if I can help people understand how to persuasively communicate better without ever manipulating people around them, that it will help them rise to the top.

Bill Murphy: 01:06 Do you ... How do people ... Sometimes I think that if people were more focused on themselves from how they're presenting themselves in the workplace, meaning are they good stewards of their own energy? Are they good stewards of their own enthusiasm? What does just personal responsibility mean about how you're carrying yourself and amongst people, play into your thesis?

Jeff Tippett: 01:38 It plays out this way. We are all giving clues as to our brand. People sometimes think brand is your logo, or your color or font treatment. It has nothing to do with that. Brand is held in the eyes of your audience, those looking on and some people say, "Well hey you, I'm just in the middle of the company. My brand really doesn't matter" and what you're actually saying is, "My brand doesn't matter." So, your brand is saying something. I encourage people to focus on their brand, what they're putting out there, how they're messaging themselves, as a way to stand out.

Bill Murphy: 02:11 Yeah. It's interesting. Several CIOs, certainly the entrepreneurs I'm working with, but the CIOs in particular, several of them have gone up through the ranks recently to become CEOs and some have become ... Some CISOs, Chief Information Security Officers, have gone on to become CIOs and it's interesting. They're ... The shifts that have happened to them as far as how they're playing the game, they're playing as almost themself incorporated and how they would approach the business if they were, essentially subcontracted, and how they would play it differently.

 It's interesting what ... As you were writing your book like what ... How do you want people to leave your presentations when you speak to them. What is the feeling you want them leaving with?

Jeff Tippett: 03:06 When they walk out of a keynote or a seminar, I want them to feel my energy. I want them to feel the presence that I bring to the table. I also want them to walk away with actionable content, things that they can put into play that can change their life. At the same time, I want them to walk away feeling like, to the degree possible, we have had this emotional connection, this emotional bond, because that is part of persuasion as well, is creating that common ground there.

Bill Murphy: 03:33 It's interesting because a lot of people like to complain about millennials and such. I think what's interesting about millennials is their demanding a personal kind of contextual engagement that I think is aggravating for a lot of older folks. Yet at the same time, it's interesting because if you're persuading people, wouldn't you want to have context around the people that are working for you? It's ... What are your thoughts on that?

Jeff Tippett: 04:02 Absolutely. I think it's a fantastic change that's happening in our workforce and I give millennials a lot of credit for that change and that demand for a connection, that demand for authenticity. Admittedly, earlier in the workplace that didn't exist there but what we find is that through this type of connection that groups performed better, we trust one another better. I know that when I'm on stage talking, the best responses I get are when I share shortcomings or things that I did that just didn't work out or examples in my book where I just messed up. What happens is people trust me more by my willingness to be open and be transparent. They like them better than my success stories.

Bill Murphy: 04:48 So one of the things I forgot to mention up front is about your book. I was gonna bring it up a little bit later, but I think it's great that we're talking about it now because I'd like to find out from you from ... When you're crafting your message, you've clearly broken this into several component parts within chapters. Is there from a leadership point of view, if someone's sitting there driving into work right now, what is the key question that they can be asking themselves? For example, what I'm thinking right now, "What is my simple clarifying message? What is my ethos? What is the simplest message that I can convey of who I am and what I do?" That kind of pops into my head. What do you think people should be asking themselves that drives the clarity of message?

Jeff Tippett: 05:41 Great question. Albert Einstein said it this way. He said, "If you can't explain something simply, you don't know enough about it." So I have a whole chapter where we take all this stuff that's bouncing around in our head ... I think this is one of the areas where we've missed the mark is being able to craft this very simple message. We're to a point now with our time, with our attention spans, that our audiences are demanding very short messages. Now that doesn't mean we can't tell the full story. It means that we need to tell it in bite sized portions.

 For example, when people ask me, "Hey Jeff. What do you do for a living?" My response is very simple. I say, "I speak professionally." Almost every single time what follows that is now them asking, pulling more out of me. They say, "Jeff, what do you speak about?" And I'll tell them, "I speak on persuasive communications." Now I've whet their appetite for the next level of information and they say, "Jeff, I guess that sounds like you just teach people how to manipulate for a living." I'm like, "No. Let me explain the difference." What happens there, and I talk about this in my book, is an inverted funnel. What we're after is bite sized pieces of information, like I mean word to word to word. We want to capture people's attention with one word that makes them wonder what the second word is and this is not an explosion of information. This is very concise, packed information that whets their appetite, makes them ask you for the next level 'cause they're so interested.

Bill Murphy: 07:10 So what's in ... Can you give an example of that? The reason I want to dive into this is that a CIO or a CISO can come from a, they can either come from a business angle of like they've been hired up through the business channel or they can come from a technical angle. Same thing with an entrepreneur. They can be super, bits and bites oriented from a tech point of view or they can come from more of a business aspect or more of a right brain versus left brain. How do you coach someone with persuasion that tends to be more left brain oriented versus right brain from their dynamism versus someone who might be more introverted and more quantitative focused?

Jeff Tippett: 08:04 In that chapter on Positioning Your Message, one of the things that I talk about in there is understanding how people respond. Here's what we know. We know that people primarily respond out of emotion and not logic. People respond with the feeling before they think. Probably one of the best applications of this is finding ways that you can incorporate both, but realizing you probably need to lead with the emotion and find what is emotional in the story, emotional in what you're saying, lead with that, work in the logic and you'll have your best chance of persuading and moving them with you.

Bill Murphy: 08:43 Yeah, it's interesting because as the world of information is expanding and we're having to make sense, really the higher level thinking with a lot of people is making sense, and certainly within my audience, is making sense of a lot of complexity and distilling and spending time distilling the message into something that is simpler, digestible, but doesn't lose the fact that there was analysis involved. I really like what you're saying about how many people are actually taking the time, but what's the emotional response of all this information? What's the emotion of the story you're trying to tell around the information? Is that one of the pieces that you're trying to convey? Is telling a story and what's the emotion behind the information that you're presenting?

Jeff Tippett: 09:34 Absolutely. So what I like to do first is let's focus on the simple message and at this point we're not pulling in emotion. We're not pulling in positioning. We're not pulling in the type of action we're gonna ask out of people up front. All we want to do is we want to distill this down to the very simple message. Typically what I ask people to do is we work through this process is, first of all, kind of like what you just identified, when there's so much information in our head is to debrief yourself. Go through, take a whiteboard, that's what works for me, or a legal pad or whatever works for you, and get everything out.

 For me, it's like ping pong balls bouncing in my head. It's extremely complex. I do a lot of public affairs work through my firm. Policy is anything but simple. It's extremely complicated, so going in and debriefing yourself, pulling the information way down, then looking at it, you get the basic information out of there and ask yourself, "What problem am I solving with this, this message that I'm trying to convey there?" And then look at evidence you have written out on your message. Begin to strike everything that is not crucial. What we're looking for is just the main words that are extremely important. I encourage people, "Don't block them out. Let's just strike through them, because we're probably gonna bring them back at a different level of communication. But finding that very simple way of stating it, striking out every single thing else that's not become part of that and then, to what you were just saying as well, to remove all internal or generally unknown jargon. Sometimes it can create barriers as we're communicating to others. So how do you pull all of that out to make your content a bit more approachable?

Bill Murphy: 11:17 Does metaphor work or verbal imagery? Or physical imagery? What tactics and skills do you encourage leaders to build into their repertoire of communication?

Jeff Tippett: 11:31 Absolutely. One of the words that I love to use and I use this from the stage all the time and use this when I write, is using the word "imagine." What that does it sets your audience up. It frees their mind past any of the barriers of reality of what could really happen. It sets them free from all of that and allows them to picture the world, picture the situation, picture the environment the way that you want to describe it to them. By using the word "imagine" and I do that in sharing the story of my international adoption, for example. I'll say, "I had a situation several times where guns were pointed at my head, when I had machetes held at my neck, when I got run out of towns and out of cities because of the violence that was erupting in Haiti during this time of political unrest."

 So I'll say things like, "Imagine what you would do with a knife, a machete held to your neck. Imagine what you would do with a gun pointed at your head. Imagine what you would do if you had to flee the city and jump on the back of a truck to save your own life." What I'm doing here is I'm using the word "imagine," which enables them to create their own mental picture. I'm using the word "you" and I'm using it extremely early in the conversation because that let's them know this is about you and what's important to you.

Bill Murphy: 12:47 Well, got a couple things there that I want to go ... First of all, you've got to tell the story about the machetes in Haiti. We can't just leave that there. What actually happened in Haiti?

Jeff Tippett: 12:59 I ended up adopting a baby from the country of Haiti and it wasn't something that I chose to do. I never pictured myself doing this. My father went over to do humanitarian relief and came back and told me the story, speaking of stories, told me a story of a ninth grade translator that was in an English speaking, American Christian school and happened to get pregnant. The school gave her two options. They said, "You can get rid of your baby and give up your baby or you can quit school." I can't even imagine what that type of decision was like for her, but she made the gut wrenching decision that she wanted to find a home for her baby.

 So I, within the first thirty days, flew over to meet the baby, brought food, clothes to her, money, some medicines as well. I got a chance to just meet her and bond with her and it was six and a half months of the hardest time of my life navigating this space. There were times I just wanted ... Many times I wanted to just throw my hands up and quit. I wanted to give up. There were times I had to face when I thought that it was the Haitian government against me, even things internally where I was fighting myself.

 For example, at one point my attorney emailed me from Haiti and said, "Look, Jeff. The office that you need has shut down" and of course this was part of Air Seas Government collapsing. He's like, "We don't know if it's gonna open again or when it's gonna open." He said, "At best, you need to consider your adoption on hold, but at worst, you might need to face the fact here that your adoption is over and you're never going to be able to complete this adoption."

 Of course I was devastated, but within the week I flew to Haiti. This is my mode. This is what I did. Every single day I got up with my translator and I walked to the office that I needed the signature to go home at the end of the day disappointed 'cause of course, no one showed up. Finally about two weeks into this situation, someone did show up at the office and you can imagine my messaging was happy. I was full of emotion. I was full of anxiety. I was full of frustration. I was full of anger and I also knew ... My approach always in the past had always been to really manipulate others to get what I wanted. I fell flat on my face because it just didn't work in Haiti.

 When he first started talking, I was conveying words like, "I, me and my." "I want to adopt this baby. I need you to sign. I need to give her a home. I need to do this." It was just about "I." And guess what happened? Nothing. He glassed over. I immediately had to redirect. I had to figure out what have I done wrong and how do I reach this person, because obviously this isn't going to happen the way that I'm approaching this. With the limited knowledge I had of Haitians, what I did know was this. They love their children. Their babies are like jewels to them. I turned my messaging around to him. I made it centric to her and I talked about her and how she didn't have a home. How she did not have financial resources. How she didn't have promise of an education. How she didn't have promise of a family and how I could be that person if he would sign this document for me.

 Within ten minutes, it was all signed. He read through it and it was all signed and I was out the door. What I learned is, was as long as I made it about me and what I wanted, I was gonna fail. But, when I turned it around to what mattered to him, I found success.

Bill Murphy: 16:21 That's ... I love that story. It's funny you flipped that around. As you're telling this story, I can think about a lot of situations where, yeah you're looking for what's in it for me, but really the "me" is the person that is on the other side of the table or the other side of the presentation. They're asking the question, "What's in it for me" or "What's in it for-" Instead of focusing on the actual presenter, is being able to do that mental flip in the other direction. It seems that's what you're able to successfully accomplish.

Jeff Tippett: 16:57 Exactly. That's why I put a chapter in my book about, " Helping Others Find Their Win, So You Win. In this chapter, I encourage us to check our hearts. Check our emotions. Check the reason that we're doing the things that we're doing. Are we really doing it just to promote ourselves and to take care of ourselves, or do we really care about our audience? Do we really care about the people to whom we're talking and to whom we're working.

Bill Murphy: 17:22 Yeah, that's really powerful. I know also, it's funny that you mention the word "you" and how you're communicating with people. I was working with our Marketing Department and I saw that we were just using too much of words like, "They" and "We," and I thought, "Why are you not directing it at you, you like you're-" How do you coach people to, instead of watering down their use of pronouns, to actually focus on "you." What is the core there?

Jeff Tippett: 17:56 It's a very keen observation from you. Yeah, using words like "they" really isolates your audience and keeps your audience out of the picture. What we're looking for and in fact I discuss this in the book, we really want to use the word "you" as soon as it's relevantly possible. It can't be too soon, but as quickly as possible. If we interject the word "you," what we're doing is we're letting the audience this is specific to you. This isn't a generic conversation. It isn't a generic approach. I'm making this very "you" centric. I encourage people ... We try to find a way, how can we put the word "you" in as soon as possible into any conversation that we're having or a writing that we're doing.

Bill Murphy: 18:36 I think it's a more courageous, braver, bolder way to communicate and also it seems to me, it more establishes the presenter as an authority.

Jeff Tippett: 18:48 Absolutely. That's part of the approach in persuasive communication. I have a chapter where we talk about becoming an industry expert, how you become the go to person and sometimes people think, "Oh that's only if you're self employed" or "Only if you own the company is that important." I kind of push back on that a little bit, because I don't think we have to be the owner of the company or the entrepreneur. We can be within a company and we can build out our brand, build out our role as the industry expert, the guru, the go to person in our space, which elevates our credibility within the company and ultimately our ability to persuade people around us.

Bill Murphy: 19:26 Yeah, 'cause we have politics within and friction and latency within every organization, whether we're an entrepreneur or whether we're within our own businesses. There's always ... It seems like, and I think I remember bringing this up to someone, that I think all of us have a responsibility to sell what we believe, sell ourselves, or sell our message. I know it's not a word that people like to hear, but I like the word persuasion. There's probably a softer way to say it, but it's really, really important for leadership.

Jeff Tippett: 20:03 Absolutely. I think when we go back to like what you were just saying here and we think less of the word "sell" and more of the word like "persuasion," for example, and especially when we understand the difference, because sometimes people do equate manipulation and persuasion. They think it's just this awful, horrible, dirty space that no one wants to be in. When we break these apart and we really take a minute to understand what manipulation is and when we understand what persuasion is and then we understand the difference, I think it sets off light bulbs and it sets us free to be willing to go to persuade others as a way to find success.

Bill Murphy: 20:40 Yeah. I think it's important for people to listen. What I love about your approach is it doesn't matter if you're a flamboyant extrovert or you're an introvert. Really spending time to exam your, the with them, the person that you're talking to, what's in it for them, what's in it for ... What's the message that you're trying to elicit and convey to them, not for you. That's a challenge for people to get out of their own head.

Jeff Tippett: 21:10 Yeah. Absolutely. Part of this, from my perspective, is one of the ways that we can show that this really is about them, is by our willingness to make a connection with them. Again, I always say, "Check your heart. Do you really care? Do you care?" This is about being human. This is about being kind to other people and finding ways that we can connect with other people, to whatever degree, and willingness they are willing to connect.

 In the book I talk about several things like humor. Humor is one of the best approaches we can use for people to drop down the barriers and walls, especially if they think we're coming to sell something to them. By using humor, it's so important to me that I'm in the middle of a ten week class on writing and performing stand up comedy. I'm doing that to help my stage presence, to help me to be able to connect with other people. We can use things like humor, compassion, empathy, things like storytelling as well and authenticity are great tools to help us make that connection with our audience. That does give them the confidence that we care about them and that we're centered on them.

Bill Murphy: 22:19 This is great. I just think it's so timely we are having this conversation. I'm just a firm believer in persuasion. How can people learn ... I know you're book's being launched, did you say January first?

Jeff Tippett: 22:34 January 1st, 2019.

Bill Murphy: 22:37 How can people learn more about you, kind of get on your mailing list so that they'll get notified of your book coming out. What's the best way to go about doing that.

Jeff Tippett: 22:46 The simplest way to do it is just to text the word "persuade" to 66866, that's 66866 and here's what's gonna happen. When you text the word "persuade" you'll get a message back. Enter your email address and I'm gonna send a free copy, a soft copy of the chapter of my book on "Crafting a Simple Message." In this chapter, I drill down, I help people understand what you need to do to get that initial message crafted. Some tips in there. Some stories in there as well. It's all available for free.

Bill Murphy: 23:19 This is great. I appreciate this, Jeff. As we wrap up, is there any pieces that you were hoping that I would ask you that you'd really like people to know before we wrap up our call today?

Jeff Tippett: 23:34 Yeah. Let me leave with this and this is one of the things I like to leave with on stage as well. To end the conversation here around the adoption, when I finished, I was in the airport in Miami and the baby was whimpering. She had double ear infections. She went through a lot of pain. She screamed the whole flight back and I stood in the airport there and I felt proud and accomplished for a few minutes, but as quickly as that came it just went out the door.

 Here's what I began to wonder as I looked at her. I began to think through like what her life is gonna be and I began to wonder, "Hey is she gonna be a doctor and heal people? Will she be a humanitarian and relieve suffering? Will she be a teacher and impact hundreds of students that could impact thousands of lives?" While I didn't have answers to that, what I did know was that I was wrong in thinking that the adoption was over. This was just like the first stone that fell, like tossing a stone into a pond or lake. We've probably all done that. We know what that thump is like and then we know the ripples that continue out.

 The adoption was like that stone going in, but this thing is gonna continue beyond me. I will never know some of these lives that she's going to impact and sometimes as entrepreneurs or people working within companies, our heads fall down and we start thinking about the emails and we start thinking about the meetings that we have to do. We think about the coffee, the lunch meetings and I encourage people to lift your head back up and realize the things that we are doing are gonna impact lives beyond us. If we're entrepreneurs creating jobs, that means somebody's gonna put food on the table. That means that a kid might get tutoring or a kid can go to an extra-curricular activity. That's gonna change that kid's life. I encourage us to know that there's a greater good that happens when we make the right choices in life.

Bill Murphy: 25:14 Yeah, it's so true though. We don't really know the metaphor of dropping that rock in the middle of the pond and that when you wake up in the morning when it's flat, you just never know what shores your message is gonna impact, how you're gonna impact things in the future and what little lever that you turn has an impact that you're not aware of right now.

Jeff Tippett: 25:37 I'm a firm believer in that. I firmly believe that if we're out there doing good for others, that we really care about other people and we're seeking out ways to help other people, to create new scenarios for them, better lives for them, that this will extend beyond us. This is a great time in our world to exhibit kindness and compassion and caring for other people and it will continue well beyond anything that we'll ever know. That wakes me up. That motivates me. That gets me excited to be back on stage.

Bill Murphy: 26:03 Yeah, it's certainly a bigger purpose for sure. This is a great message, Jeff. Thank you for sharing this with my audience today.

Jeff Tippett: 26:11 Thank you for the time and trusting me with your audience and to deliver some sound advice to them, so I appreciate this opportunity. Thank you.

Bill Murphy: 26:17 Have a great day.

Jeff Tippett: 26:19 Thank you.