

**Making Advocacy Second Nature**

**Encouragement for Introverts**

“First they ignore you,

Then they laugh at you,

Then they fight you,

Then you win.”

[Ghandi’s model for change]

“The greatest mistake you can make in life is to be continually fearing you will make one.”

[Elbert Hubbard]

“I know what I bring to the table, so trust me when I say I’m not afraid to east alone.”

[Unknown]

“I have no idea what I’m supposed to do: I only know what I *can* do.”

[Captain James T. Kirk – *Star Trek: Into Darkness*]

“Flying is learning how to throw yourself at the ground and miss.”

[Douglas Adams]

“Sometimes I win; sometimes I learn.”

[Colleague]

“Proximity confers legitimacy.”

[Gavin Newsom]

“Our greatest glory is not in never falling but in rising every time we fall.”

[Castiel – *Supernatural*]

**Inspiration from R. David Lankes**

“…Having agreed that advocacy is essential, how do we do it? Research and experience both affirm some basics.

* First things first: people do things for their reasons, not our reasons. Like librarianship, advocacy is all about what’s important to *them*. We need to understand their reasons.
* It may seem blindingly obvious, but we need to know who has the power to make the decisions we seek, and who and what influences them. Usually, the most important decision makers are few in number. So we waste time if we try to convince “everyone.”
* To understand and respond to what is important to those who make policy, financial, or partnership decisions, we must get into conversation with them, and listen to what they have to say. Then we reflect back to them the ways in which we match their priorities.
* The people who use a service and those who will go to bat for it are different people. This may be surprising, but it’s true. We have research on this. When seeking support, therefore, engage as advocates those most likely to step up. Generally, these are activists who have a long history of involvement and who are connected with many others (Malcolm Gladwell calls them ‘Connectors’ and ‘Mavens’).
* We have to position our cause in terms of what’s important to our audience, not to us. If they care about improving early childhood reading readiness, for example, we need to position our work in that area as an asset worthy of engagement and support, and use their language when we talk about it.
* We must frame the case in the community’s interests, using the community’s situation and aspirations as our starting point. How do we know about the community members’ aspirations? We’ve talked with them, we’ve heard them, and we’re able to use their language.
* It’s all about relationships. Advocates build relationships of credibility and trust with decision makers and those who influence them. After all, we’re more inclined to believe those with whom we already have trusting relationships. Credibility is earned incrementally, and it’s never automatic.
* Passion matters. Librarians who are passionate and engaged in their communities are, according to research, most likely to engage the support of others.
* Advocates must have both data and stories, and know how to insert them opportunely. Stories of transformative impact are memorable; they give life to data. But data are fundamental to accountability, and they are more effective with some decision makers than stories. As data librarian extraordinaire Kimberly Silk says, ‘You need data and stories. The data make the stories real and the stories make the data matter.’
* In an environment of ‘noise,’ people cope by simplifying. Therefore, advocates must convey their messages in short, personal, memorable, and powerful sound bites. …”

[R. David Lankes – [The New Librarianship Field Guide](http://www.worldcat.org/oclc/933446633) – pp, 86-7 – MIT Press © 2016]