



## YOUR TEAM SUCCESS PODCAST

# How To Tell If Your Idea Is A “Compelling Offer” Or A “Convincing Argument” With Will Duke

**Shannon Waller:** When you're doing what you most love to do, it's very easy to present it as a compelling offer versus a convincing argument. Stay tuned for my great conversation with Will Duke as we talk about the influence on you and your team of focusing on what you are truly meant to do.

Hi. Shannon Waller here and welcome to Team Success. Today, I'm talking with an incredibly good friend, confidante, peer, colleague, client, all the things, friend, Will Duke. And Will, you and I were talking and you said something incredibly insightful, which I thought, "Ooh, I really want to have you on the podcast to talk about this." And it really has to do with an insight about Unique Ability. So we'll get into that in just a moment. But before we jump in, why don't you let people know who you are, what you're up to, where you are, all that kind of good stuff to set the context?

**Will Duke:** So, Will Duke. Live in San Antonio, Texas. I owned and operated a security integration company until about a year ago. Still inside the company now, but we do designs, installations, and support of very large physical security infrastructures for commercial clients.

**Shannon Waller:** Nice. That's a big job.

**Will Duke:** Yeah. It's fun. It's been very interesting to take Strategic Coach concepts into this world because none of our competitors do it. So it's been a lot of fun.

**Shannon Waller:** Do you find that it's given you an advantage?

**Will Duke:** Oh. So, I was having coffee with one of our top clients about three weeks ago, and he said to me, "Will, you and your team have helped me and my team think differently about security." And I thought, "Oh my God," and it was because we created a workshop environment that's similar to what we do in Strategic Coach. And the goal was, we're not there to talk about products. We're not going to have people in there ripping through marketing sheets. It was only to talk about their problems. And I think that's helped. It's very similar to when we go up to Toronto or Chicago and sit down and do The Moving Future. So we do have very similar things to that to remind people of how much they've already achieved in life.

**Shannon Waller:** Very cool. And to me, that's really taking it out of the normal transactional way of doing business into relationship and, this is what we're going to talk about today, helping people think about their thinking.

**Will Duke:** Yes.

**Shannon Waller:** And by the way, thinking about your thinking is like an insight. The insight is thinking about your thinking, but it means you have that higher level perspective. And one of our most recent books, our small quarterly Ambition Series books, Dan talks about the fact that people think about four things. This is in the Thinking About Your Thinking book. And he goes,



YOUR TEAM SUCCESS PODCAST

## How To Tell If Your Idea Is A “Compelling Offer” Or A “Convincing Argument” With Will Duke

"People talk about things, they talk about people, and they talk about other people's thoughts. What people don't normally think about is their own thinking." And that's what the Coach Program is, and that's what you've been helping your clients—what a great comment to hear from your client. That's amazing, that you've helped us think differently about security because then they had a whole different perspective and new opportunities open up as a result of that, and dangers that they might not have previously identified get seen. Same with opportunities. Same with your strengths. So that's really powerful. Thanks for sharing that.

**Will Duke:** Absolutely. Yeah.

**Shannon Waller:** Cool. All right. So you and I were working together in one of our favorite ways to do that, out on a Coach workshop, and you had this insight, and I'm going to describe a term, which is compelling offers versus convincing arguments, which is something that, actually, Dean Jackson said first and Dan Sullivan quotes often. And the quote is, "A compelling offer is 10 times more effective, powerful"—put in your word—"than a convincing argument." And you had an insight and you shared this with me. Now, this is what I got excited about. You said, "Inside my Unique Ability," those things you love to do, are best at, endlessly fascinated and motivated about, "I'm thinking and talking about compelling offers 100% of the time. Outside of my Unique Ability, everything is a convincing argument and it doesn't stick."

And I had this picture, Will, of crossing a threshold, crossing a line, that on one side it's all trying to make convincing arguments, which feels, at least to me, hard. Joe Polish's saying, "Hard, annoying, lame, and frustrating—HALF." But when you get into the compelling offer and your Unique Ability, it's a completely different world. So let's expand on that because you've worked hard to figure out your Unique Ability. You're taking that into your future. So let's just delve into this a little bit. What difference has it made to you to learn your Unique Ability? And then we'll get into the compelling offer part.

**Will Duke:** Well, so when I think about compelling offers, it's things that come easy to me. And the convincing argument is maybe something I'm not very good at, but I'm smart enough to figure it out, and I can just ... Grit is one of my Unique Abilities. I can push my way through it.

**Shannon Waller:** Right.

**Will Duke:** So, if you take the workshop concept, it was a compelling offer to our clients, but it was a convincing argument to my team because I did not take enough time to make it simple in our backstage. And so all I was doing was piling more work onto my team members, and so at a certain point, I started to calculate the amount of time that one workshop would take to produce, and it was 100 hours.

**Shannon Waller:** Wow.



YOUR TEAM SUCCESS PODCAST

## How To Tell If Your Idea Is A “Compelling Offer” Or A “Convincing Argument” With Will Duke

**Will Duke:** Because we go all out, and the clients love it, and it's amazing. And I look at my team, and they're just dragging. And so I'm like, "Wait a minute." So when Dan said this, back in, gosh, I think it was ... Was it October of last year? My brain just lit on fire. And I'm like, "Oh my God, I have what I think are compelling offers, but they're really convincing arguments, and I'm tricking myself." And so the end result of all that was I paused the workshops.

**Shannon Waller:** Oh.

**Will Duke:** I paused them because our team was just ... The air was just sucked out of them, and we're in the middle of revamping it. And now I pulled it away from our clients, and our clients are like, "Well, where's the workshops?" The other part of a compelling offer, too, was we were doing the workshops for free.

**Shannon Waller:** Interesting.

**Will Duke:** And so I don't think it can be truly a compelling offer to a client if the check writer doesn't get out his checkbook and write you a check. So going forward, when we decide to turn them back on, we're going to charge, and we're going to charge a lot for them. One of the things that a client said to us at the end of our checkout of one of our workshops last year is, "I can't believe we have a partner like you that does this for free." And he was giving me a compliment, but it was not a compliment. It was not.

I mean, those are the thoughts when I think about ... Just to have those four words in your brain: compelling offer, convincing argument. And you put it up against and you're like, "Okay, is this truly a compelling offer?" And it has to hit all the groups. It has to hit your team. It has to hit the client. If you've got partners, strategic partners, it's got to be a compelling offer to them. And if any one of those groups, it's not a compelling offer, then it's like, a positive and a negative is a negative. It washes out and it defaults back to a convincing argument. And so it really is about perspective and empathy of, if it's great for your client and bad for your team, it's bad. It's just bad.

**Shannon Waller:** You've just really hit on, I think, a major source of conflict between entrepreneurs and their teams, which is, of course, something I've been delving into for 25-plus years, which is interesting. But it's true. They get really excited. Sometimes that thing is Coach, by the way. Coach is a super compelling offer for the entrepreneur, and the team is like, "Oh God, you're gonna come back every quarter with a whole slew of new ideas, and I have to change what I'm doing every quarter." And the entrepreneur finds himself in the place of having to convince, which is never fun and is a negative until you can make it a compelling offer, like, "What if we all got freed up to do what we're best at? What if you could become more successful and make more money and that gets shared?" And then they're like, "Oh, that's more interesting."



YOUR TEAM SUCCESS PODCAST

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So I think that's a really great point. And then your point about pricing. I just finished recording a book with Dan this morning, and part of it has to do with capitalism. And one of the key elements of that is obviously productivity, but the other one is pricing. Your client gave you a huge clue that your pricing was not in line with the value creation. You're in a collaborative event with them, but not charging them anything. So there's something unequal. There's something unbalanced about that.

**Will Duke:** Totally. I remember one of our Zoom workshops, Derek, I forget his last name. We were in a breakout, and he says, "Get over it. Quit doing those workshops for free. Just charge." And I'm like, "Wow, that's kind of direct." And you know what? He was right.

**Shannon Waller:** Yeah.

**Will Duke:** He was 100% right. And we're so close to our own companies. And these are clients that spend millions of dollars with us, like eight, nine, 10 million dollars a year. So charging five, 10, \$15,000 for a workshop, it's not really about the money. It's about, I want them to have skin in the game so that they have a little bit more ownership. They're in it with us. It's not really about the money, but it helps me build out the team on the backstage as well.

**Shannon Waller:** Yeah, 100%. And I think we pay for what we value.

**Will Duke:** Yes.

**Shannon Waller:** If something's a commodity to us, we're going to look to find, "Can I shop Amazon? Can I shop Best Buy? Where can I find the cheapest deal?" Right? And so when we don't charge for things, we commoditize ourselves, which is a little wackadoo when you think about it, but we can be nervous about charging, about having a price. And then when you do, people are like, "Oh, yeah. That's a value." And sometimes, and this has boggled my brain as I've grown in my entrepreneurial capabilities, sometimes people don't value it until you charge enough. There's charging. There's also charging too little. They're like, "Oh, that can't be very good if you're only charging that much."

**Will Duke:** Absolutely.

**Shannon Waller:** Right? Price sensitivity is not quite what we think sometimes, which I find fascinating. People want to know, if it's really valuable, charge well for it. I mean, you don't have to be exorbitant, but you can be solid in terms of the value that it's creating.

**Will Duke:** You think you like Gucci, Louis Vuitton, these really high-end luxury brands. They understand brand and value and what people will pay for it. I mean, you spend \$3,500 for a



YOUR TEAM SUCCESS PODCAST

## How To Tell If Your Idea Is A “Compelling Offer” Or A “Convincing Argument” With Will Duke

purse, I'm like, "Oh my God." And my wife thinks it's the coolest thing since sliced bread. So to her, the purse is a compelling offer. To me, it's like, "Convincing argument? It's a purse."

**Shannon Waller:** You can get something from wherever, but fills the same function. Yeah, but at that point, you're in a total different stratosphere with regard to the value that it's creating.

**Will Duke:** Absolutely.

**Shannon Waller:** Which is usually, in other people's eyes, which is always interesting. I think the whole thing, your distinction that you made, which I'm still in love with, is that when you are doing what you love to do and are best at and find fascinating and motivating, it's so easy to present that in the form of it being a compelling offer. It's like, "Look at the value creation I can provide for you. Look at the protection that I can give you. Look at how we can help solve your problems, maximize your opportunity, and reinforce your strengths." And yet, when we step back from those Unique Abilities into what we call excellent, competent, or incompetent at Coach, then it becomes more effort. And you have grit as one of your capabilities. So it's really easy for you to go there, but it's not fun and it probably feels hard.

**Will Duke:** It feels hard. And then there's guilt because I think as the leaders of our organizations, CEOs, presidents, we forget the impact we have on others. And people oftentimes will shake their head up and down and they're like, "Oh, that's a great idea, Will," when they really think, "This guy is crazy." I want a transparent organization at all times. I don't want people filling me with crap. If you think this sucks, I want to know. And what can we do to make it better? Don't just come and report the news. Anybody can do that.

**Shannon Waller:** Right.

**Will Duke:** But we have to remember, we have an impact on others, and I think we forget that sometimes. Like, "Oh, I'm the leader of an organization that does millions of dollars of business," and people look to me and people aren't always going to tell me what's really on their heart. Sometimes, they're just going to shake their head up and down, when inside they're going, "Oh my God, you just added 20 hours of work on my plate this week." So that's where you have to have that perspective and empathy of, "What do you have on your plate? Do we have the right team to support this? Do we have the right structure? If we're going to do 50 workshops next year, what would that team have to look like?" And those are the questions I was not asking. I was like, "Well, let's just all jump in here." What I've always appreciated a lot about Coach is you guys are so systematic.

**Shannon Waller:** Yeah.

**Will Duke:** Your sheets, your thinking goals, and your Unique Process.



YOUR TEAM SUCCESS PODCAST

## How To Tell If Your Idea Is A “Compelling Offer” Or A “Convincing Argument” With Will Duke

**Shannon Waller:** Unique Methods.

**Will Duke:** You're great at labeling things. So I've got gathered a lot from that as well.

**Shannon Waller:** Yeah, it's really interesting. If you look at some of the people who were there at the beginning, so Babs Smith, Dan Sullivan, the co-founders of Coach, they're not systems people by nature. I joined in 1991. I was number six. I'm not systematic by any way, shape, or form, but eventually what we were doing in the world was very compelling for our clients. It also became compelling for some team members to join us who contributed incredibly different strengths, who were interested in consistency and work plans and workshop flows and rescheduling lists and all this stuff. We're like, "Oh, that might be useful." But it was our openness to that Unique Ability Teamwork, and people who saw through very different lenses, who put meaning on different types of things. Where we would've had a convincing argument, they have the Unique Ability in pulling it off. They just saw the opportunity and just jumped in and did it, which was huge. Otherwise, we would not be so systematic and impressive to you. I can guarantee you that.

But you make another really good point that we can get trapped in that top role, that top position and think that we're supposed to have all the answers when we flipping don't. We can be very confident in those two to three things that we are unique at, and very, very humble and open and questioning about everything else. So the questions you're asking, like, "What kind of team does it take to support this? And how many can we do? And what price can we charge that would make it worthwhile?" Then the team starts to lean in because then it becomes a compelling offer.

**Will Duke:** The whole concept of Who Not How as you grow your company in the beginning, you are the one solving all the problems. And then you have to realize, "If I don't get out of the way, there's a cap as to how far my company can actually go." And so you have to be okay with the fact that those people are not going to do it exactly how you would do it. You're looking for an output or an outcome, and they may not have the same font as you. All those little things where we get in there and like, "No, don't make it blue. Make it red." Just leave it alone and let them do the work. And that's ... Geez, man, that's been hard for me.

**Shannon Waller:** Oh, I know.

**Will Duke:** I'm a work in progress. We're all a work in progress, but you cannot do great work with somebody breathing all over your shoulders. You can't.

**Shannon Waller:** Yeah.

**Will Duke:** Your team cannot either.



YOUR TEAM SUCCESS PODCAST

## How To Tell If Your Idea Is A “Compelling Offer” Or A “Convincing Argument” With Will Duke

**Shannon Waller:** I watched a Facebook reel this morning. It was an interview between Terry Crews and Lewis Howes on his podcast. Terry Crews is ... I guess he's an actor. I think at one time he was a sports figure, football? Anyway, I'll have to figure that out. Lewis was asking him, because he's gone through a phenomenal transformation and very open about his challenges, and Lewis asked, "What advice would you give?" He said, "Well, what do people need to know?" He goes, "Assembly required. We're like a box of Lego, and people will tell you that you're broken and your pieces aren't put together." He goes, "No, they have it wrong. We are all 'assembly is required.' It's our job to figure that out." And I was like, "Whew." I shared that with Dan and he was like, "Whoa, that's a great statement."

And that's another way of saying 'work in progress,' but we've got all these component bits and we keep learning and we keep growing and we keep expanding, and until we test ourselves on the world, at least for me anyway, I need the feedback. I need that interaction with other people. And they're like, "Oh, Shannon, that was super helpful." Or if they say nothing, if there's crickets, I'm like, "Hmm, that probably didn't land the way I wanted it to." Or someone might be critical. More often, it's just nothing, which is gracious of them. But then you actually learn. It's like, "Oh, more of that, please. Less of that." And you get the edges rubbed off a little bit and you start to form the sense of who you are and what your contribution is, which is an incredibly compelling offer.

So just to wrap up, what advice would you give? We've talked about what this is and why it's so important, because it's a lot more fun living in the compelling offer world and how much more successful too. But how can people take action on this, either in terms of compelling offers or Unique Ability or working with their team? What would your suggestions be for that?

**Will Duke:** So first and foremost, grab your leadership team. Make sure they know the difference between what a compelling offer and a convincing argument is. And before you tell them your thoughts, which one's which, ask them, "Are the things we're doing for our clients, for our team, compelling offers or convincing arguments?" And let them fill that stuff out individually and then go around and share it in a group setting. And the leader has to go last, always.

**Shannon Waller:** Yes.

**Will Duke:** It's a halo effect, right? Because if I say, "Well, I think the X, Y, Z is a compelling offer," they're like, "Well, yeah. I agree with that too." But if you go last, then you'll get the truth. If you go first, you're 50/50.

**Shannon Waller:** Yeah.



## YOUR TEAM SUCCESS PODCAST

# How To Tell If Your Idea Is A “Compelling Offer” Or A “Convincing Argument” With Will Duke

**Will Duke:** Unless you've got team members that have been with you for a while that are okay pushing back on you. But that's one way. And I would also figure out, if you've got 10 things and the seven of them are convincing arguments and three of them are compelling offers, you need to delete at least half the convincing arguments and move things over. Sometimes, you can just make a slight tweak to change it to a compelling offer. So our workshops, we're going to go the workshop light, which is less of a lift, and we're going to charge. So it's still going to be a compelling offer to the client, but the backstage is going to be 10% of the work than we used to do. So I'm going to tweak it, getting feedback from our team. Not what I think. What do they think? That would be my recommendation.

**Shannon Waller:** Yeah, and the thing that you're intimating is that they know the nuts and bolts. We don't. They're the ones doing the heavy lifting, for Lord's sake. So to really take their thinking into account is good. And I think, to your other point, charging is a compelling offer for your team. That's never a conversation I've had on this podcast before. So that's a really cool takeaway, that doing something for free for your team is not a compelling offer. So I think that's a really interesting take on things. So I think that's super cool.

And then a convincing argument, I just want to add one more point in here about that, a convincing argument you feel like you have to justify, you feel like you have to back up, you feel like you have to somehow add evidence or research or something like that, whereas a compelling offer hooks someone's imagination. It connects to their future possibility of growth for them, to their bigger future. And they're like, "Oh yeah." So Unique Ability, that's a compelling offer. Right? I'm trying to think of a bunch more at the moment. But if we can present things in terms of what is possible versus what is justified, it's a very different conversation and much more compelling, and it makes me immediately think of marketing. How are we presenting things front stage, but also backstage to our team to make sure that we're always doing compelling offers?

**Will Duke:** There's also, like, if you're in a room, you're the leader, whether you're a leadership team, and you're speaking 80% of the time, guaranteed it's a convincing argument, almost guaranteed.

**Shannon Waller:** Amen.

**Will Duke:** But if it's a 50/50 or a 20/80, you're leading by asking questions. "What do you guys think about that?" Open-ended questions too.

**Shannon Waller:** Well, what you say about speaking last is just so wise. So there's one exercise that I coach with Coach clients, which is around 10x. What will it take to grow 10 times? And then I ask, we have this whole process and exercise, which is amazing, and then I ask the team, "When do you think this is possible?" And we've already looked at their history and how long it took them to go 10x before and blah, blah, blah. I never ever, ever start with





YOUR TEAM SUCCESS PODCAST

## How To Tell If Your Idea Is A “Compelling Offer” Or A “Convincing Argument” With Will Duke

the entrepreneur. I always end with them. And what has been really, really fun is the team, almost to a person, thinks they can happen more quickly than the entrepreneur. They're gobsmacked. They're shocked. They're like, "You can do it in five years." They had seven or 10, or whatever. But that wisdom of speaking last is huge. So thank you for bringing that point.

**Will Duke:** Absolutely.

**Shannon Waller:** Will, it is always so much fun to talk to you. We always cover so much ground, everything from our favorite books to our favorite expressions to how to work with the team. So thank you, thank you for sharing your wisdom. I'm excited for your bigger future, for what's next in your Unique Ability. As you keep learning in the work-in-progress, I know that you'll be more and more focused on compelling offers and less and less trapped into convincing arguments. So thanks for sharing that great insight with us.

**Will Duke:** It's been great.

**Shannon Waller:** Okay. Talk soon.