

# 58 (More) Phrases that Payses

By Scott Ginsberg

If you control language, you control thought.  
If you control thought, you control conversation.  
If you control conversation, you control outcomes.

Whether you're a manager, customer service rep, sales professional or entrepreneur, these 58 Phrases that Payses will equip you with the approachable answers and persuasive probers that achieve communication success.

1. **What did I not cover effectively enough?** Say this in response to an "I'll have to think it over" objection.
2. **I probably shouldn't be telling you this, but.** It's like a secret. Appeals to someone's natural curious tendencies.
3. **Who else has an opinion on this?** At a meeting, this question engages the whole group. It allows multiple inputs and shows that you're not playing favorites.
4. **Why is that so important to you?** A great probing question to uncover the true motivations behind someone's actions.
5. **I am at your service.** Not just for customer service professionals any more. All business professionals are at the service of their customers. Say this to reassure your client that you've got their back. Remind them that they can ask anything of you. Also a great phrase to use with new members of an organization, guests at a meeting or new congregants at a church.
6. **You probably already know this, but....** Assumptive language appeals to someone's intelligence and compliments him.
7. **Nobody's ever asked me that before!** Shows you don't have all the answers, nor have you heard everything before. Pause before answering. Your sincerity and honesty will be reinforced with your response.
8. **I don't know, but I can find out.** Admits that you're not a know it all. Also commits to follow up.
9. **What do you see as the pluses and minuses of moving ahead?** Open-ended, makes them think about both sides of their decision.
10. **I'm sorry. You lost me.** Great phrase to use against a know-it-all who won't shut up. Use it to gain clarification and keep them accountable.

11. **Where do you call home?** If attending an out of town conference, this is a perfect follow up after an introduction.
12. **I disagree.** Works well if stated confidently and followed with a two second pause. It cues the individual or group of people to immediately halt the conversation and hear you out. What's more, it's less argumentative, abrasive and defensive than "You're wrong!" or "You don't know what you're talking about!" Lastly, it's an effective way to show you're listening AND thinking about what others are saying, rather than just smiling and nodding.
13. **I'm not sure I understand your point, but keep going.** Also known as an "acceptance phrase," this subtle interruption doesn't steal ownership of the conversation, yet makes the point that you're confused.
14. **What's most important in your decision to buy (x)?** Shows people how their highest values will be met by working with you.
15. **Wow, you're really upset about this.** The number one way to respond to crude, rude remarks from someone who's trying to play the "bait game." Remember, he's just trying to get a rise out of you. Don't get defensive or upset. If you do, he wins. Instead, try this "you" statement to reverse the direction of the conversation. It shows that you refuse to take ownership of his problem.
16. **You must be having a bad day.** Another great way to respond to someone's unnecessary criticism. Again, it evades ownership of a problem that's NOT yours.
17. **Have you ever thought about...?** If you're giving someone advice, offering a solution or suggesting a new idea, this phrase works well in place of the dreaded "should." People don't like to be told what they "should" do; however they do appreciate feedback. Here's an example. Let's say your coworker has a problem making cold calls. Instead of preaching to her, you could say: "In my experience, our customers hate to be called before lunch." Then you would suggest, "Have you ever thought about making your calls in the afternoon?"
18. **I'm working on a new idea.** Appeals to someone's curiosity. Encourages someone to get involved on the ground floor. They take ownership and get on board with you, from a simple project within your department to a large corporate initiative.
19. **My job is to make you look like a hero.** My friend Carol taught me this one. I once used it on a new client and she said, "Oh thank God! I'm new here." Great line to offer to a low level, recent hire that wants to impress her boss. Reassures her insecurities about her new job.
20. **Here's the challenge.** Keeps someone on point in your conversation. Makes them interested in what you have to say next.

21. **What's the story behind that?** Open-ended question that usually elicits a great answer. Easy way to learn a lot about someone. Plus, everyone loves a good story.
22. **Wow, I really didn't anticipate that.** World-renowned author and sales trainer Stephan Schiffman explains that this phrase levels the playing field. The next line is, "Why not?" at which point you explain why you thought otherwise. Then you ask where you went wrong. Then the prospect clarifies his objection. AWESOME!
23. **What's really bothering you?** A probing inquiry that digs deeper; yet shows concern for a more pressing issue. Most often, there's always something that's REALLY bothering them.
24. **Hang on; I want to write this down.** Great in person, greater on the phone (since they can't see you.) It's the difference between showing and telling. This phrase lets them know you're listening, taking notes, and encourages them to offer more detailed answers.
25. **Excuse my annoying typing; I just want to get all this stuff down!** Similar to the above example. Polite, humorous way to subtly demonstrate active listening while on the phone.
26. **Well actually, that's why I'm calling.** Perfect for any objection. "We're already happy with our present supplier." "Well actually, that's why I'm calling." "We don't use copy machines in our office." "Well actually, that's why I'm calling." "My boss says you're a huge jerk and a horrible businessperson and don't deserve to live." "Well actually, that's why I'm calling."
27. **Does this all make sense?** Keeps someone on point, offers an opportunity for him to ask questions, interject, or tell you to continue. Don't overuse it, however, or he will think you're insulting his intelligence.
28. **What questions have I not answered for you?** Been using this one for years. Always at the end of the conversation. Usually gets the other person to suggest something I never thought of. Also shows humility that you may or may not have explained everything. Gives them a chance to chime in.
29. **What's on your mind?** More emotional, open ended and specific than "What's up?" "How's it going?" or "How are ya?" Besides, nobody can answer this question with the word "F.I.N.E." which is actually an acronym for "Feelings I'm Not Expressing."
30. **Talk to me.** Short, direct, and to the point. Shows you're prepared to listen. Shows that you're personally and physically available to them. Great when used with a double handed "come here" gesture. (Try this right now, just for fun.)

31. **I can tell something is bothering you.** Of course, only use this when you're SURE something is bothering her. But by explaining that you already know she's ticked, she's more likely to open up to you.
32. **Wow, I'm surprised at you saying something like that.** According to Changing Minds, a non-profit website dedicated to persuasion techniques, being surprised or shocked not just at what the other person says, but also at the person themselves, puts them into a morally lower position (and, by implication, you in a higher position).
33. **What larger problems do these symptoms suggest?** People with multiple concerns usually skate around the big issue. Give them a chance to show you the trees AND the forest.
34. **Listen carefully to what I'm about to say.** Appeals to curiosity, gets them to perk up, highlights a key point. Shows you mean business.
35. **The next thing I'm going to say will surprise you.** People can't help but listen closer.
36. **Did I miss anything?** Another clarifying remark. Gives someone a chance to fill in the cracks. Shows you're open to additional comments and not so close-minded to assume you covered everything.
37. **I'm sorry; I've been talking too much!** Admits that you're aware of the way others perceive you. Puts the ball in their corner. Another great demonstrator of listening skills.
38. **Enough from me, what about you?** Another version of the previous example.
39. **I'm done talking – your turn!** Another version of the previous two examples.
40. **You're making me feel uncomfortable.** When you tell someone exactly and honestly how you feel, he or she can't possibly tell you that you're wrong! According to an article from *Syque*, an online psychological knowledge bank, we often avoid the truth, either because it is uncomfortable for us or (and often even more so) because it might be uncomfortable for the other person. Face-saving social rules means that we will avoid telling the truth if we think it might hurt the other person. People may take advantage of this, asserting a truth in the hope that you will say nothing.
41. **Give me a minute to think that over.** Use this phrase instead of an awkward pause or vocal fillers like "Uh," or "Hmm." This also gives you sufficient time to collect your thoughts and answer more intelligently. Because if you fall prey to answering right away just for the sake of answering right away, you answer will probably SUCK...right away.

42. **I give you my word.** Amazingly, I can only recall one person ever saying this phrase to me. It was the former VP of Monster.com. A few months back we met briefly (on an escalator, in fact!) to discuss possibly working together. When our conversation ended he said, "Scott, I'd love to have you contribute articles to our career database. You have my word." Wow, did that make me feel good! Plus, I got the job. Woo hoo!
43. **I'm your partner in this.** Known as a "Together Phrase," this sentence reassures your colleague or staff member. It also keeps you personally accountable by verbally declaring ownership.
44. **What needs to be done immediately?** Creates a "first things first" attitude. You can even spice it up with an idea quota, i.e., "What three things need to be done immediately?" This phrase puts an idea, project or plans to work right away. It also models and encourages initiative.
45. **You must be very proud of that.** Psychologically speaking, most men have at least some insecurity of status. Use this phrase to acknowledge and recognizes his achievements.
46. **That's my favorite problem!** Jeffrey Gitomer suggests using this whenever an upset customer calls with a complaint. It diffuses their anger and forces a positive attitude to be taken by both parties.
47. **Is that a fair question to ask?** This follow up question helps you (a) maintain control of the conversation and (b) confirm the validity of your question. (Not that your first question sucked. It's just nice to reinforce the fairness of it.) Also, this follow up question increases the probability of getting a honest answer. Most of the time, someone will say, "Yeah, it is," then give you their response. However, if they say, "Actually, that isn't a fair question because..." then, great! You now know where you suck. Never ask that question again.
48. **Did I catch you at a good time?** Although it sounds super salesy - especially over the phone - it does show someone that you respect her time. Use "good" time instead of "bad" time in order to force the positive.
49. **This has been a good meeting.** You can always end with this. Even if the meeting included arguments, problems and the like, closing on a positive note reassures someone that good things are to come.
50. **See what I mean?** Use this with a visual learner to elicit the best response.
51. **Do you hear what I'm saying?** Use this with an auditory learner to elicit the best response.

52. **Do you feel me on this one?** Use this with a kinesthetic learner to elicit the best response.
53. **Let's continue this conversation.** The key word here is "conversation." This indicates your desire to create and maintain a mutually valuable relationship in which ideas can be freely exchanged. It's almost like putting a verbal bookmark on your interaction. Great for networking events when you meet someone you'd like to talk to in more detail without monopolizing her time. Also great for singles looking to extend an initial encounter into something more.
54. **You were right.** Psychologist and best selling author David Lieberman believes this sentence will guarantee you a call back. First of all, it appeals to the person's ego. Everybody loves to be right! Secondly, it shows that you're human. You're willing to admit when someone else is right. Lastly, if someone isn't sure what it is you're referring to, they'll call back just to clarify!
55. **What's the next step?** Not only a great closer, but also a way to motivate someone. Even if you actually know what the next step is, this phrase will encourage someone to verbally commit to taking action.
56. **I appreciate you.** My friend John Milton Fogg, best selling author and MLM guru uses this line in every email, every conversation and every letter. I LOVE it. It's amazing how different (and more powerful) that phrase is when compared to "I appreciate that." Think about it: I appreciate THAT, or I appreciate YOU. Nice one, John.
57. **I'd be happy to.** When I worked for Ritz Carlton, I was trained to say this as a response to every request. Not "more than happy to," and not "no problem," but "I'd be happy to." It's such a simple addition to mundane phrase, but WOW, does it sound ten times better!
58. **You've got my attention.** Immediate indicator that you're listening. Also compliments the other person's ability to captivate you.

LET ME ASK YA THIS...

What are your best phrases that payes?

LET ME SUGGEST THIS...

Email me with your three best examples, and I'll quote you in an upcoming article!

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