



American Expression E1549 Twist someone's arm

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"To twist someone's arm" is a common idiom in the English language, often used informally to describe a situation where one person persuades or convinces another to do something they may be hesitant or reluctant to do. The phrase carries a figurative meaning, as it does not involve actual physical harm but rather implies a gentle or sometimes persistent form of persuasion.

Imagine a scenario where two friends are planning to go hiking. One friend is not particularly enthusiastic about the idea due to the long trek and unpredictable weather. The other friend, who is eager for the adventure, decides to "twist their arm" to come along.

To twist someone's arm involves employing various tactics to sway their decision. It may include offering persuasive arguments, appealing to their interests, or simply making the idea more appealing. In our hiking scenario, the enthusiastic friend might say, "Come on, it'll be so much fun! We can enjoy the fresh air, take stunning photos, and have a great time together. Plus, it's a chance to escape our daily routine."

This persuasive technique can also involve compromises. For instance, the reluctant friend might be concerned about the difficulty of the hike. In response, the enthusiastic friend could propose a shorter route or suggest taking frequent breaks. This compromises approach is akin to gently turning the other person's arm, making it less uncomfortable or intimidating.

In some cases, twisting someone's arm may require a bit more persistence. The person seeking persuasion may not give in easily, and so the persuader might continue to make their case. They could share stories of past hiking experiences, highlight the benefits of the activity, and reassure their friend about safety precautions. Persistence here is like slowly but steadily applying pressure to the arm, making it more challenging for the other person to resist.

However, it's essential to note that twisting someone's arm should always be done in a respectful and considerate manner. Pushing too hard or using aggressive tactics can lead to resistance, resentment, or strained relationships. The goal is not to force someone against their will but to help them see the value or enjoyment in the proposed activity.

Ultimately, when someone's arm is successfully twisted, it means they have been convinced or persuaded to do something they initially had reservations about. In our hiking example, the reluctant friend might eventually agree, saying, "Alright, you've convinced me. Let's go hiking this weekend." This decision reflects the gentle yet effective persuasion that took place.

In conclusion, the expression "to twist someone's arm" signifies the art of convincing or persuading another person to do something they may be hesitant about. It involves using various strategies, such as persuasive arguments, compromises, and persistence, to make the idea more appealing. When done respectfully and considerately, this idiom illustrates how effective communication and persuasion can lead to positive outcomes and shared experiences.

Questions for Discussion

1. Have you ever had someone try to twist your arm to do something you initially didn't want to do? How did you respond, and what made you eventually agree or disagree?
2. What are some common tactics people use when they're trying to twist someone's arm to join an activity or make a decision? Can you share any personal experiences of successfully or unsuccessfully using these tactics?
3. In your opinion, what's the fine line between gentle persuasion and pressuring someone when you're trying to twist their arm? How can you ensure that your efforts to persuade are respectful and considerate?
4. Have you ever been on the receiving end of persistent arm-twisting that crossed the line into discomfort or annoyance? How did you handle the situation, and what did you learn from it?
5. Can you think of a time when you successfully twisted someone's arm for a positive outcome, like convincing a friend to try something new or persuading a colleague to support your idea at work? What strategies did you employ, and what was the result?