

Influence “The Psychology of Persuasion”

Robert B. Cialdini, Ph.D.

Chapter 1: Weapons of Influence

- Science of ethology—the study of animals in their natural settings.
- A well-known principle of human behavior says that **when we ask someone to do us a favor we will be more successful if we provide a reason**. People simply like to have reasons for what they do.
- Price alone had become a trigger feature for quality; and a dramatic increase in price alone had led to a dramatic increase in sales among the quality-hungry buyers.
- It is odd that despite their current widespread use and looming future importance, most of us know very little about our automatic behavior patterns.
 - They make us terribly vulnerable to anyone who does know how they work.
- This last feature of the process allows the exploiters an enormous additional benefit—the ability to manipulate without the appearance of manipulation.
 - Room-temperature water—can be made to seem very different, depending on the nature of the event that precedes it.
 - Presenting an inexpensive product first and following it with an expensive one will cause the expensive item to seem even more costly as a result—hardly a desirable consequence for most sales organizations.

Chapter 2: Reciprocation (The Old Give and Take...and Take)

- The rule possesses awesome strength, often producing a “yes” response to a request that, except for an existing feeling of indebtedness, would have surely been refused.
- The rule for reciprocity was so strong that it simply overwhelmed the influence of a factor—liking for the requester—that normally affects the decision to comply.
- The beauty of the free sample, however, is that it is also a gift and, as such, can engage the reciprocity rule.
 - “There is an obligation to give, an obligation to receive, and an obligation to repay.”
- It is the obligation to receive that makes the rule so easy to exploit.

- **Obligation to receive reduces our ability to choose whom we wish to be indebted to and puts that power in the hands of others.**
- The ability of uninvited gifts to produce feelings of obligation is recognized by a variety of organizations besides the Krishna's.
- Another consequence of the rule, however, is an obligation to make a concession to someone who has made a concession to us.
 - The technique is a simple one that we can call the rejection-then-retreat technique. Suppose you want me to agree to a certain request. One way to increase your chances would be first to make a larger request of me, one that I will most likely turn down.
 - That the larger the initial request, the more effective the procedure, since there would be more room available for illusory concessions. This is true only up to a point, however.
 - That if the first set of demands is so extreme as to be seen as unreasonable, the tactic backfires.
 - The truly gifted negotiator, then, is one whose initial position is exaggerated enough to allow for a series of reciprocal concessions that will yield a desirable final offer from the opponent, yet is not so outlandish as to be seen as illegitimate from the start.
- Responsibility. Those subjects facing the opponent who used the retreating strategy felt most responsible for the final deal.
- The opponent who used the concessions strategy, the subjects who were the targets of this strategy were the most satisfied with the final arrangement.
- Ability to prompt its victims to agree to further requests.
- Advises us to accept the desirable first offers of others but to accept those offers only for what they fundamentally are, not for what they are represented to be.

Chapter 3: Commitment and Consistency (Hobgoblins of the Mind)

- If I can get you to make a commitment (that is, to take a stand, to go on record), I will have set the stage for your automatic and ill-considered consistency with that earlier commitment. Once a stand is taken, there is a natural tendency to behave in ways that are stubbornly consistent with the stand.
- He simply called a sample of Bloomington, Indiana, residents as part of a survey he was taking and asked them to predict what they would say if asked to spend three hours collecting money for the American Cancer Society. Of course, not wanting to seem uncharitable to the survey taker or to themselves, many of these people said that they would volunteer. The consequence of this sly commitment procedure was

a 700 percent increase in volunteers when, a few days later, a representative of the American Cancer Society did call and ask for neighborhood canvassers.

- Almost any small sale will do, because the purpose of that small transaction is not profit. It is commitment.
- **Be very careful about agreeing to trivial requests.** Such an agreement can not only increase our compliance with very similar, much larger requests, it can also make us more willing to perform a variety of larger favors that are only remotely connected to the little one we did earlier.
- Apparently the mere knowledge that someone viewed them as charitable caused these women to make their actions consistent with another's perception of them.
- **Yet another reason that written commitments are so effective is that they require more work than verbal ones.**
- "Persons who go through a great deal of trouble or pain to attain something tend to value it more highly than persons who attain the same thing with a minimum of effort.
- Study of fifty-four tribal cultures found that those with the most dramatic and stringent initiation ceremonies were those with the greatest group solidarity.
- It appears that commitments are most effective in changing a person's self-image and future behavior when they are active, public, and effortful.
- **Rearing children. It suggests that we should never heavily bribe or threaten our children to do the things we want them truly to believe in.**
- If we want more than just that, if we want the children to believe in the correctness of what they have done, if we want them to continue to perform the desired behavior when we are not present to apply those outside pressures, then we must somehow arrange for them to accept inner responsibility for the actions we want them to take.

Chapter 4: Social Proof (Truths Are Us)

- **The principle of social proof.** It states that one means we use to determine what is correct is to find out what other people think is correct.

- The television executives are exploiting our preference for shortcuts, our tendency to react automatically on the basis of partial evidence. They know that their tapes will cue our tapes. Click, whirr.
- Bartenders often “salt” their tip jars with a few dollar bills at the beginning of the evening to simulate tips left by prior customers and thereby to give the impression that tipping with folding money is proper barroom behavior.
- Advertisers love to inform us when a product is the “fastest-growing” or “largest-selling” because they don’t have to convince us directly that the product is good, they need only say that many others think so, which seems proof enough.
- “Since 95 percent of the people are imitators and only 5 percent initiators, people are persuaded more by the actions of others than by any proof we can offer.”
- To reduce their fears, it was not necessary to provide live demonstrations of another child playing with a dog; film clips had the same effect. And the most effective type of clips were those depicting not one but a variety of other children interacting with their dogs; apparently the principle of social proof works best when the proof is provided by the actions of a lot of other people.
- The principle of social proof says so: **The greater the number of people who find any idea correct, the more the idea will be correct.** The group’s assignment was clear; since the physical evidence could not be changed, the social evidence had to be. Convince and ye shall be convinced!
- In general, when we are unsure of ourselves, when the situation is unclear or ambiguous, when uncertainty reigns, we are most likely to look to and accept the actions of others as correct.
- The tendency for everyone to be looking to see what everyone else is doing can lead to a fascinating phenomenon called “**pluralistic ignorance.**”
- Latané and Darley suggested that no one had helped precisely because there were so many observers.
- “In which each person decides that since nobody is concerned, nothing is wrong. Meanwhile, the danger may be mounting to the point where a single individual, uninfluenced by the seeming calm of others, would react.”
- **It might be that someone in need of emergency aid would have a better chance of survival if a single bystander, rather than a crowd, was present.**

- It seems that the pluralistic ignorance effect is strongest among strangers: Because we like to look poised and sophisticated in public and because we are unfamiliar with the reactions of those we do not know, we are unlikely to give off or correctly read expressions of concern when in a grouping of strangers.
- Based on the research findings we have seen, my advice would be to isolate one individual from the crowd: Stare, speak, and point directly at that person and no one else: "You, sir, in the blue jacket, I need help. Call an ambulance."
 - He should understand that he, not someone else, is responsible for providing the help.
- **Without question, when people are uncertain, they are more likely to use others' actions to decide how they themselves should act.** But, in addition, there is another important working condition: similarity.
- **We will use the actions of others to decide on proper behavior for ourselves, especially when we view those others as similar to ourselves.**
- Imitation is the key.
- If the increase in wrecks following suicide stories truly represents a set of copycat deaths, then the imitators should be most likely to copy the suicides of people who are similar to them.
- Behavior of similar others. When people are uncertain, they look to the actions of others to guide their own actions.
- Thus the most influential leaders are those who know how to arrange group conditions to allow the principle of social proof to work maximally in their favor.
- The invasion of Consumers from Mars. They look like humans, but they don't act like humans, and they are taking over.
- **We seem to assume that if a lot of people are doing the same thing, they must know something we don't.**
- Once again we can see that social proof is most powerful for those who feel unfamiliar or unsure in a specific situation and who, consequently, must look outside of themselves for evidence of how best to behave there.

Chapter 5: Liking (The Friendly Thief)

- We like people who are similar to us.
 - This fact seems to hold true whether the similarity is in the area of opinions, personality traits, background, or life-style.
- Many sales training programs now urge trainees to “mirror and match” the customer’s body posture, mood, and verbal style, as similarities along each of these dimensions have been shown to lead to positive results.
- **Joe understands an important fact about human nature: We are phenomenal suckers for flattery.**
- **Pure praise did not have to be accurate to work. Positive comments produced just as much liking for the flatterer when they were untrue as when they were true.**
- Apparently we have such an automatically positive reaction to compliments that we can fall victim to someone who uses them in an obvious attempt to win our favor.
- Research shows that becoming familiar with something through repeated contact doesn’t necessarily cause greater liking.
- They constructed a series of situations in which competition between the groups would have harmed everyone’s interests, in which cooperation was necessary for mutual benefit.
- Conjoint efforts toward common goals steadily bridged the rancorous rift between the groups.
- Therefore, when children of different racial groups are thrown into the incessant, harsh competition of the standard American classroom, we ought to see—and we do see worsening of hostilities. Second, the evidence that team-oriented learning is an antidote to this disorder may tell us about the heavy impact of cooperation on the liking process.
- There is a natural human tendency to dislike a person who brings us unpleasant information, even when that person did not cause the bad news. The simple association with it is enough to stimulate our dislike.
- This finding tells me that it is not when we have a strong feeling of recognized personal accomplishment that we will seek to bask in reflected glory. Instead, it will be when prestige (both public and private) is low that we will be intent upon using the successes of associated others to help restore image.

Chapter 6: Authority (Directed Deference)

- To ask, when we are confronted with what appears to be an authority figure's influence attempt, "Is this authority truly an expert?" The question is helpful because it focuses our attention on a pair of crucial pieces of information: the authority's credentials and the relevance of those credentials to the topic at hand.
- By wondering how an expert stands to benefit from our compliance, we give ourselves another safety net against undue and automatic influence.

Chapter 7: Scarcity (The Rule of the Few)

- The way to love anything is to realize that it might be lost. —G. K. CHESTERTON
- **Something that, on its own merits, held little appeal for me had become decidedly more attractive merely because it would soon become unavailable.**
- Scarcity principle—that opportunities seem more valuable to us when their availability is limited—I have begun to notice its influence over a whole range of my actions.
- The customers are asked to commit to buying the appliance when it looks least available—and therefore most desirable.
- Like the other weapons of influence, the scarcity principle trades on our weakness for shortcuts.
- **As opportunities become less available, we lose freedoms; and we hate to lose the freedoms we already have.**
- The boys in this study demonstrated the classic terrible twos' response to a limitation of their freedom: outright defiance.
- Adolescents tend to focus less on the duties than on the rights they feel they have as young adults.
- Couples suffering parental interference react by committing themselves more firmly to the partnership and falling more deeply in love.
- When our freedom to have something is limited, the item becomes less available, and we experience an increased desire for it.

- **The irony is that for such people—members of fringe political groups, for example—the most effective strategy may not be to publicize their unpopular views, but to get those views officially censored and then to publicize the censorship.**
- We react to information restriction there, as usual, by valuing the banned information more than ever.
- “Commodity theory” analysis of persuasion.
- Do we value more those things that have recently become less available to us, or those things that have always been scarce?
 - In the cookie experiment, the answer was plain. The drop from abundance to scarcity produced a decidedly more positive reaction to the cookies than did constant scarcity.
- Revolutionaries are more likely to be those who have been given at least some taste of a better life. When the economic and social improvements they have experienced and come to expect suddenly become less available, they desire them more than ever and often rise up violently to secure them.
- When it comes to freedoms, it is more dangerous to have given for a while than never to have given at all.
- We should not be surprised, then, when research shows that parents who enforce discipline inconsistently produce generally rebellious children.
- Not only do we want the same item more when it is scarce, we want it most when we are in competition for it.
- Even though the scarce cookies were rated as significantly more desirable, they were not rated as any better-tasting than the abundant cookies.
- **The joy is not in experiencing a scarce commodity but in possessing it. It is important that we not confuse the two.**