



GET WHAT YOU WANT IN LIFE WITH THE SEVEN POWERFUL PRINCIPLES OF PERSUASION

"Persuasion is grounded in basic scientific practical and learnable principles." -- Harvard Business Review

Have you ever find it difficult to say no to your friends, colleagues and family members? Ever felt trapped into buying something you didn't really want or hoodwinked into saying yes? Time and again, people in every culture have developed certain predictable reactions to common situations in the persuasion process. It is because of these reactions to certain stimuli that make it possible to predict behavior and for that reason to persuade. Unfortunately it is also these same reactions that make it possible to manipulate or be manipulated by unscrupulous individuals.

Politicians, sales professionals, network marketers, insurance agents, colleagues, friends and family members all have an interest in you agreeing to their requests. So how do you know whether you have been manipulated unfairly or ethically persuaded?

Although this article looks at the Seven Principles of Persuasion that govern getting to "yes". And you would have already know your success largely depends upon your ability to persuade and influence others to accept and adopt your point of view. I assert to you that in addition to this, there is a direct correlation between your ability to persuade others and the level of income you receive.

Therefore, knowledge of these Seven Principles of Persuasion would certainly empower you.

Principle #1: PRINCIPLE OF RECIPROCATION

This principle states that when we give something of apparent value, people will respond with a desire to offer something in return.

According to Bob Stone, professor of Direct Marketing at the Northwestern University and founder of his own direct marketing advertising agency, Stone and Adler, Inc.: "It's not at all unusual for the right gift to increase the response by 25 percent or more."

It is no wonder that super salesmen like Zig Ziglar have made this the foundation of how they operate. Zig has always said this: "You can have whatever you want as long as you help enough people to first get what they want." We can see this powerful principle in practice all around us. Supermarkets offer free samples, car dealers offer test drives, health clubs free workouts, builders offer free surveys and so forth so that potential customers try out the product or service and at the same time become indebted at some psychological level.

It is also common practice, at Tupperware home parties, for the presenter to give away an inexpensive Tupperware item or product sample. And reciprocation is further reinforced by the generous offer of free refreshments and tidbits – This technique further obligates the partygoers to the host and the company.

You can build a sense of indebtedness in someone by delivering a number of uninvited "first favors" over time. They don't have to be tangible gifts. In today's world, useful information is one of the most valuable favors you can deliver.

Another form of reciprocity at work is "risk-reversal". In marketing, this is offering a guarantee on the products so that you can overcome a prospect's innate aversion to "taking a risk" and buying the product. With a guarantee, the risk is no longer on the buyer. By reversing the risk, much more sales are made and the customer and vendor are both satisfied. How can you apply "risk-reversal" in your life to get whatever you want? Let me demonstrate by the example of Napoleon Hill, best selling author of "Think and Grow Rich".

Napoleon Hill chose his future employer right out of college even though his future employer didn't know about it. Here's how he got the job. He went to the employer and essentially said, "Let me work for you for two weeks and I'll pay you for the opportunity. Let what I pay you be drawn against my future earnings. At the end of two weeks, if you don't like me, I'll leave. If you like me, you hire me at the rate I'm paying you for the opportunity to show myself."

Of course the employer immediately jumped at this idea. A fortnight later, Napoleon Hill had the job he had set out to get. Why did this work? It worked because he helped overcome the employer's reluctance to hire an unproven fresh graduate. View it from the employer's perspective, he either got an excellent employee after two weeks or he got someone to pay him two weeks of wages and two weeks of free labor. For Hill's employer, it was totally "Risk-Free".

Can you think of three ways you can apply "risk-reversal" in your life to get more of what you want right now?

Principle #2: PRINCIPLE OF CONTRAST

This principle states that when two different items or circumstances are placed close together, their differences will be made more apparent.

"We can do this the hard way... or we can do this the easy way." -- Gangster Movie Script

I'm not advocating any acts of criminal intimidation here, but there is something to learn from the above quote. The way the Principle of Contrast goes like this – You offer your prospect two choices. One choice will be so 'bad' that no one in his or her right mind would take it. The second choice, the one you want them to take, will seem in contrast to be the most attractive.

For example when two homes are in similar neighborhoods, real estate agents will usually say, "Before we look at the \$500,000 home we should really take a look at the \$350,000 home." The more expensive home will always have more features and it is the last home the prospective home buyer will see. Psychologically as the last home is a much more decorated than the first, the less expensive home will appear a lot less attractive to the prospective home buyer.

Here's another example: Retail store salespersons will always sell you the suit first, then offer you "add on" items like ties, belts, cardigans, etc. The additional \$45 to \$150 for the extras is considerably less compared to the \$800 suit. These retail store salespersons would never sell you the \$45 item first, then try to persuade you to "add on" the suit! By the way, do you remember the last time when you availed yourself to a product and what items you were asked to buy in addition to your original purchase?

Remember when using the Principle of Contrast, we must always start with the choice that no one in his or her right mind would take first. It's only then that the choice we want our prospects, loved ones or friends to take will be readily accepted.

Principle #3: PRINCIPLE OF CONSISTENCY

"It is easier to resist in the beginning than at the end." -- Leonardo da Vinci

Research shows that we humans have a nearly obsessive desire to be and appear consistent. Once we've made a decision or taken a stand, we feel pressure to act in ways consistent with that commitment. Usually once a decision is made, we usually don't have to think about it any more.

If you are in insurance or network marketing sales, have you ever had prospects cancel appointments with you at the last minute? In a similar situation back in 1998, a certain Chicago restaurant owner was all ruffled up with last minute cancelled reservations. He solved his problem by asking his receptionists to modify just two words of what they said to patrons requesting a reservation. These two words reduced the no-show rate from 30% to 10%. The magic within these words was that they tapped the human desire to be consistent. The receptionist modified her usual request from "Please call if you have to change your plans" to "Will you please call if you have to change your plans?" At this point, she would deliberately pause and just wait for a response. The pause was critical because it encouraged the customer to make a public commitment. This principle also worked well for my clients in the insurance industry.

Have you ever wondered why is it difficult for a person to leave a cult? That's because cult members are unconsciously trying to justify their earlier assurance to their families and friends that no one is ordering them around and that they had chosen to do what they did." With such public commitment or

declaration, getting out can make these cult members feel really guilty.

In a coaching scenario, if a coach can create a situation in which his client or group makes an active verbal or written commitment, particularly if this is done in public, the chances of compliance shoot up dramatically. In reality, the magic of written goals derives its power from the client's desire to be consistent. A second way to use the Principle of Consistency to persuade is for the coach to frame his request as related to a commitment his client has made earlier on. For instance, "I know how committed you are to your family. The diligent application of the time management tools we are talking about will free you up for more quality family time, don't you agree?"

Principle #4: PRINCIPLE OF LIKING

This principle states that people prefer to say yes to individuals they know and like.

The Master Persuader will always emphasize certain factors and/or attributes to increase their overall attractiveness and subsequent effectiveness. He will always use the following factors:

A) Physical Attractiveness

Majority of the population form conclusions about people within the first four minutes they meet. Research has shown that 93% of the time we are judged based on first impression and the remaining 7% is based on our real abilities.

This means that sales professionals such as insurance, real estate agents with good dress sense are perceived as physically attractive and therefore more likely to influence more prospects to use their services.

Physical attractiveness also gives the impression of intelligence and kindness. As a result, attractive sales professionals and motivational speakers are more persuasive both in terms of changing others' attitudes towards the business and getting what they request.

B) Similarity

We like people who are like ourselves and are therefore more willing to say yes to their requests, often without much critical consideration.

C) Praise

Sincere and lavish compliments almost certainly enhances liking. Remember Dale Carnegie? He advised all who wants to win friends and influence people to be hearty in their approbation and lavish in their praise.

Research conducted at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill found that inaccurate praise also induces the same intensity of liking for the flatterer. In fact, men will sacrifice their lives for praise, honor and recognition. Intrinsically, we crave and yearn for a boost to our esteem. We all wear an imaginary badge that says, "Please make me feel important." And ironically most people would never think of physically harming someone or depriving them of food and water, yet often without reservation we will harm someone emotionally or deprive them of love and appreciation! To be a Master Persuader, we should make it a habit to give genuine sincere praise to someone every day. Don't wait for a reason or for something big to happen. Be generous with your praise. Praise simply makes others more open to persuasion.

D) Increased Familiarity & Frequency

Repeat contact between a prospect and direct sales professionals (like insurance agents and network marketers) always facilitates liking and influence the prospect's decision to join the business. This principle explains the necessity to follow-up with your prospects. According to the 'McGraw Hill Sales Statistical Studies', 96% of all sales happen after 5.6 exposures to information (and, most importantly, the persuasive presenter).

Principle #5: PRINCIPLE OF AUTHORITY & POWER

This principle states that most people have a very strong tendency to obey authority figures and they also prefer products, services and opportunities that are endorsed by people whom they believe to be credible.

From a very young age, we are trained to obey. First our parents (and by default all adults), then teachers, policemen, managers and so on. Eventually it defaults to anyone who seems to be our superior. We thus divide the world into those who are superior to us (and who are thus to be obeyed) and those who are inferior (and who should obey us). We also must be cautious not to equate superiority with authority.

Stanley Milgram was a famous Yale psychologist who is most remembered for his work with obedience to authority. Deeply disturbed by what had happened in Germany during World War II, Milgram carried out an experiment to find out whether it was indeed true, as many Nazi collaborators claimed, that ordinary people could be made to commit unspeakably cruel acts under the influence of authority figures.

Posing as an education researcher, Milgram hired an actor to pose as a "student" in the experiment and told his subjects he was studying "learning." The actor was hooked up to wires that, Milgram explained to his subjects, would deliver a shock whenever they pulled a lever. In his role as experimenter and authority figure clad in a white lab coat, Milgram instructed his subjects to deliver greater and greater shocks to the actor whenever he got answers wrong on a series of learning tests. The actor would howl theatrically in pain and often feign a heart attack before passing out.

How many subjects do you think continued to administer shocks to the actor to the point that they reached the dangerously fatal level? Sixty-eight percent of them obeyed orders to punish the actor! By donning on a white lab coat, Milgram had undoubtedly created an atmosphere of authority.

"The disappearance of a sense of responsibility is the most far-reaching consequence of submission to authority." -- Stanley Milgram, Yale University Psychologist

During one of my training trips to China, I actually came across an advertisement billboard that promotes a certain hospital in a large city. The billboard actually features their team of top medical specialists all donned in surgeon's cap and white lab coats.

Robert Kiyosaki, the best selling author of 'Rich Dad, Poor Dad' and popular guru of wealth creation, has helped many decide to join Network Marketing when he strongly endorses this industry in his landmark book 'The Business School for People Who Like Helping People.' This principle also explains why so many network marketers are approaching medical professions in this business. Whenever doctors join network marketing opportunities and endorse any products, it is usually perceived as credible.

Anyone offering his or her experience, expertise or credentials are harnessing the power of authority. Of course there is nothing wrong with these claims providing they are real because we all want the opinions and ideas of true experts.

You can put this principle to use by citing authoritative sources to support your ideas. Look and act like an authority yourself. Be sure others know that your research, education and experience support your ideas. Complement the Principle of Authority & Power with the Principle of Liking, dress like the people who are already in the positions of authority that you seek.

Principle #6: PRINCIPLE OF CONFORMITY

This principle states that people prefer beliefs, products, services and opportunities that are popular or part of a trend.

This principle is also known as the "Bandwagon Effect" and is closely associated with the Principle of Authority and Power. One way we decide what is correct is to find out what others think is right. Or when everyone else is behaving in a certain manner, most would assume that is the right thing to do. For example, one of the important, and largely unconscious, ways we decide what is acceptable behavior on our current job is by watching the people around us, especially the higher-ups or old timers.

When attempting to persuade, you may wish to include accounts of others' positive reactions to the suggested action. This is especially effective if the people cited are those that the person perceives as similar to self in some ways. In team building, you can use the power of positive people on your team to help you influence others to choose helpful and constructive behavior.

At the corporate level, more and more companies are donating a percentage of their profits to charitable organizations. They are doing this because it has been proven in a study that 70 percent of consumers believe that cause-related marketing helps to solve social problems. And when the product's price and quality are the same, these consumers are more likely to switch to a brand that's associated with a good cause. Even more surprisingly, more than half of these consumers are willing to pay more for a product when it is associated with a cause they care about.

The Principle of Conformity kicks in even more strongly when the situation is uncertain or people aren't sure what to do. When you can show them what others like themselves believe or are doing, people are more likely to take the same action. The 1997 mass suicide among the Heaven's Gate cult followers in Southern California is an example of the negative power of this principle.

“The way to love anything is to realize that it might be lost.” -- G.K. Chesterton

This principle essentially says that people desire more of those things that seem to be scarce. Also when a person believes that something he might want is scarce, that something becomes even more valuable.

Nearly everyone is vulnerable to some form of the Principle of Scarcity. Opportunities seem more valuable when they are less available. Hard-to-get things are perceived as better than easy-to-get things. Why do you think the “limited time offer” is so common in advertising? Because it works! The retailer indicates that a decision must be made now or within a short period of time, or the price will go up or the opportunity will no longer be available. The desire to acquire the scarce item is increased further when we believe that someone else might get it and hence gain a higher social position that we might have possessed.

The Principle of Scarcity also works in calculating the value of an item. If it is rare or becoming rare, it is more valuable. According to the Principle of Scarcity, the more time a lawyer has available in his schedule, the less prospects and clients will value his services. But as the lawyer grows busier and has less time available, prospects and clients see his services as increasingly more valuable.

Likewise many novice insurance agents seemed to be begging for an appointment, “Pete, I hope you don’t mind me asking, are you free on Tuesday at 7pm? I’ve got this interesting investment to show you.” And the answer most often given is “no.” The experienced insurance agent (EIA) however will leverage on the Principle of Scarcity by implying he has a tight schedule, with only certain days and time slots available.

EIA: I can’t meet you on Wednesday, Thursday is also packed. How about Friday at 4pm? I have a 20 minute slot free then.

Prospect: Wow! Business must be good for you! Okay, let’s meet on Friday at 4pm.

By the way, the Principle of Scarcity also has applications in our personal lives. Do you recall the proverb, “Absence makes the heart grow fonder”? Well, on one occasion, I actually sat down with a sobbing course participant who declares his undying devotion and willingness to do “anything” for his wife who has just walked out on him because of years of neglect and being taken for granted.

IS THIS MANIPULATION?

Some of you may be wondering out loud, “Aren’t the above tactics manipulative?” Perhaps, if that’s the way you choose to use them. That’s a matter of personal integrity and ethics. My assumption is that you will exercise integrity when applying these Principles of Persuasion. It is my sincere belief that using these principles to persuade people to think or act in ways that are in their own best interests as well as yours will certainly help everyone become even more successful. The Seven Principles of Persuasion are incredibly powerful and can be combined in numerous ways to your advantage.

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