



## Pre-Suasion: A Revolutionary Way to Influence and Persuade

By Robert Cialdini Ph.D.

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**NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER**

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The author of the legendary bestseller *Influence*, social psychologist Robert Cialdini shines a light on effective persuasion and reveals that the secret doesn't lie in the message itself, but in the key moment before that message is delivered.

What separates effective communicators from truly successful persuaders? Using the same combination of rigorous scientific research and accessibility that made his *Influence* an iconic bestseller, Robert Cialdini explains how to capitalize on the essential window of time before you deliver an important message. This “privileged moment for change” prepares people to be receptive to a message before they experience it. Optimal persuasion is achieved only through optimal *pre-suasion*. In other words, to change “minds” a pre-suader must also change “states of mind.”

His first solo work in over thirty years, Cialdini's *Pre-Suasion* draws on his extensive experience as the most cited social psychologist of our time and explains the techniques a person should implement to become a master persuader. Altering a listener's attitudes, beliefs, or experiences isn't necessary, says Cialdini—all that's required is for a communicator to redirect the audience's focus of attention before a relevant action.

From studies on advertising imagery to treating opiate addiction, from the annual letters of Berkshire Hathaway to the annals of history, Cialdini draws on an array of studies and narratives to outline the specific techniques you can use on online marketing campaigns and even effective wartime propaganda. He illustrates how the artful diversion of attention leads to successful *pre-suasion* and gets your

targeted audience primed and ready to say, “Yes.”

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### Editorial Review

#### Review

"The great social psychologist Robert Cialdini has written another timeless and indispensable book about the psychology of influence. I'll be recommending it for years and years."—**Amy Cuddy**, Associate Professor of Business Administration at Harvard Business School, and author of *Presence*

"Extends the science of persuasion in several important ways....an essential tool for anyone serious about science-based business strategies. *Pre-Suasion* is well worth the long wait, and is destined to be an instant classic. The book belongs on the shelf of anyone in business, from the CEO to the newest salesperson."—**Forbes**

"An utterly fascinating read on how the most important drivers of persuasion aren't the words we choose in the moment, but how we set the stage beforehand. Robert Cialdini is the world's foremost expert on influence, and you will never look at it the same way again."—**Adam Grant**, professor of Management and Psychology at the Wharton School, and author of *Originals* and *Give and Take*

"Digging down into how people make decisions at a primitive level is the specialty of author Robert Cialdini, a guru to salesmen and marketers since the publication of his 1984 book *Influence*. In his new book *Pre-Suasion: A Revolutionary Way to Influence and Persuade*, he returns with more tips about how to slither your way into people's minds and rearrange what you find there."—**New York Post**

"No psychologist's research has been used more often or successfully than that of Robert Cialdini, who literally "wrote the book" on influence. Now, he's done it again, showing us the power of the moment before an attempt to persuade. This is classic Cialdini—authoritative, original, and immediately practical."—**Richard H. Thaler**, Charles R. Walgreen Distinguished Service Professor of Behavioral Science and Economics at The University of Chicago Booth School of Business, co-author of *Nudge*, and author of *Misbehaving*

"Robert Cialdini's *Influence* is, by a wide margin, the book that I recommend most often. *Pre-Suasion* may be even more shockingly insightful."—**Chip Heath**, Professor of Organizational Behavior at Stanford Graduate School of Business, and co-author of *Switch* and *Made to Stick*

"[*Pre-Suasion*] is sure to be an important contribution to the fields of social psychology and behavioral economics...detailed, readable, and fascinating, this book may cause the reader to wonder whether unbiased decisions are possible."—**Publishers Weekly**

"A fascinating and engaging glimpse into the world of persuasion, and it's a lot more pervasive and evanescent than we might think."—**BizEd**

"Books employing social science are very popular these days, but so are books on workplace culture. *Pre-Suasion* reminds us that there is a connection between the two, that using insights from behavioral science and social psychology can yield huge dividends if used accordingly and ethically."—**800CEOREAD**

"Exhaustively reviews the research not on how to influence others but on how to make people ready to be influenced....chapter after chapter piles on the experimental evidence from the field and the lab....Scholars,

teachers and researchers will find the endnotes invaluable, because here, with his usual clarity and charm, Mr. Cialdini addresses academic concerns—such as the debate about the persistence and strength of change that can be produced in a brief lab study or field intervention—and explains many studies in detail, with more anecdotes to illustrate them....the overall message of this book is compelling.”—*The Wall Street Journal*

"Fascinating and useful read. An instant classic."—**Michael Mauboussin**

"Robert Cialdini is perhaps the foremost expert on effective persuasion....Cialdini's latest book, *Pre-Suasion*, builds on that work, arguing that the best persuaders aren't merely eloquent charmers with well-crafted, finely tuned arguments; they're also creative preparers who focus on finding the best ways to launch their offers and ideas....The book provides a vast catalogue of research and techniques, many of them marketing related."—*HARVARD BUSINESS REVIEW*

"Best Sales and Marketing Book of 2016."—**Geoffrey James, Inc.com**

#### About the Author

Robert Cialdini is recognized worldwide for his inspired field research on the psychology of influence. He is a *New York Times* bestselling author. His books, including *Influence*, have sold more than three million copies in thirty-three languages. Dr. Cialdini is Regents' Professor Emeritus of Psychology and Marketing at Arizona State University and the president and CEO of Influence at Work, an international company that provides keynotes and influence training on how to use the lessons in Dr. Cialdini's books ethically and effectively.

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Pre-Suasion



## PRE-SUASION: An Introduction

As a kind of secret agent, I once infiltrated the training programs of a broad range of professions dedicated to getting us to say yes. For almost three years, I recorded the lessons taught to aspiring automobile salespeople, direct marketers, TV advertisers, frontline managers, charity fund-raisers, public relations specialists, and corporate recruiters. My intent was to find out which practices worked time after time. So I answered the organizations' ads for trainees or otherwise arranged to be present in their classrooms, notebook in hand, ready to absorb the wisdom born of long-standing experience in the business of persuasion.

In these programs, advanced trainees were often allowed to accompany and observe an old pro who was conducting business. I always jumped at those opportunities because I wanted to see if I could register not just what practitioners in general did to succeed but also what the best of them did. One such practice quickly surfaced that shook my assumptions. I'd expected that the aces of their professions would spend more time than the inferior performers developing the specifics of their requests for change: the clarity, logic, and desirable features of them. That's not what I found.

## PRE-SUASION

The highest achievers spent more time crafting what they did and said before making a request. They set

about their mission as skilled gardeners who know that even the finest seeds will not take root in stony soil or bear fullest fruit in poorly prepared ground. They spent much of their time toiling in the fields of influence thinking about and engaging in cultivation—in ensuring that the situations they were facing had been pretreated and readied for growth. Of course, the best performers also considered and cared about what, specifically, they would be offering in those situations. But much more than their less effective colleagues, they didn't rely on the legitimate merits of an offer to get it accepted; they recognized that the psychological frame in which an appeal is first placed can carry equal or even greater weight.

Besides, they were frequently in no position to tinker with the merits of what they had to offer; someone else in the organization had created the product, program, or plan they were recommending, often in fixed form. Their responsibility was to present it most productively. To accomplish that, they did something that gave them a singular kind of persuasive traction: before introducing their message, they arranged to make their audience sympathetic to it.

There's a critical insight in all this for those of us who want to learn to be more influential. The best persuaders become the best through pre-suasion—the process of arranging for recipients to be receptive to a message before they encounter it. To persuade optimally, then, it's necessary to pre-suade optimally. But how?

In part, the answer involves an essential but poorly appreciated tenet of all communication: what we present first changes the way people experience what we present to them next. Consider how a small procedural difference has improved the bottom line of the consulting business of a Toronto-based colleague of mine. For years, when bidding on a big project, it wasn't unusual to get price resistance from the client, who might propose a 10 percent or 15 percent reduction. That was frustrating, he says, because he never felt comfortable padding the budget to cover this kind of potential pushback on costs. If he did agree to the cut, his profit margin became so thin it barely paid to take the business. If he didn't acquiesce, he either lost the job or produced partners who were initially disgruntled because he wasn't willing to work with them on price.

Then, during one proposal meeting, he accidentally hit upon a maneuver that rid him of the problem forever. It wasn't a step-by-step attempt to specify or justify each of the expenses involved in his services; he'd long since given up on that approach, which only brought scrutiny to the bill. Instead, after his standard presentation and just before declaring his (\$75,000) fee, he joked, "As you can tell, I'm not going to be able to charge you a million dollars for this." The client looked up from the written proposal he'd been studying and said, "Well, I can agree to that!" The meeting proceeded without a single subsequent reference to compensation and ended with a signed contract. My colleague claims that this tactic of mentioning an admittedly unrealistic price tag for a job doesn't always win the business—too many other factors are involved for that—but it almost always eliminates challenges to the charges.

Although he stumbled onto it, my friend is not alone in experiencing the remarkable effects of merely launching a large number into the air and, consequently, into the minds of others. Researchers have found that the amount of money people said they'd be willing to spend on dinner went up when the restaurant was named Studio 97, as opposed to Studio 17; that the price individuals would pay for a box of Belgian chocolates grew after they'd been asked to write down a pair of high (versus low) digits from their Social Security numbers; that participants in a study of work performance predicted their effort and output would be better when the study happened to be labeled experiment twenty-seven (versus experiment nine); and that observers' estimates of an athlete's performance increased if he wore a high (versus low) number on his jersey.

What's more, the potent impact of what goes first isn't limited to big initial numbers. Other researchers have shown that just after drawing a set of long lines on a sheet of paper, college students estimated the length of the Mississippi River as much greater than those who had just drawn a set of short lines. In fact, the impact of what goes first isn't limited to numerics at all: customers in a wine shop were more likely to purchase a German vintage if, before their choice, they'd heard a German song playing on the shop's sound system; similarly, they were more likely to purchase a French vintage if they'd heard a French song playing.<sup>2</sup>

So it's not one particular experience that guides what's done later. It can be exposure to a number, the length of a line, or a piece of music; and, as we will see in later chapters, it can be a brief burst of attention to any of a variety of selected psychological concepts. But, because this book is mainly about the things that enhance persuasion, those chapters give special treatment to the concepts that most elevate the likelihood of assent. It's important here to take note of my choice of the word likelihood, which reflects an inescapable reality of operating in the realm of human behavior—claims of certainties in that province are laughable. No persuasive practice is going to work for sure whenever it is applied. Yet there are approaches that can consistently heighten the probability of agreement. And that is enough. A meaningful increase in those odds is enough to gain a decisive advantage.

In the home, it's enough to give us the means to get greater compliance with our wishes—even from that most resistant of all audiences: our children. In business, it's enough to give organizations that implement these approaches the means to outpace their rivals—even rivals with equally good cases to make. It's also enough to give those who know how to employ these approaches the means to become better, even best, performers within an organization.

Take, for instance, one such best performer (we can call him Jim because, what the heck, that was his name) who worked for a firm whose training program I had entered to study. The company made expensive, heat-activated fire alarm systems for the home, and Jim was its top salesperson. He didn't win every sale, of course, but the likelihood that he would emerge from a sales call with a signed contract was, month after month, better than his counterparts'. After an initial period of classroom instruction, I was assigned to spend the next several days accompanying various salespeople, to learn how they approached the selling process. This always involved an in-home visit to a family that had scheduled an appointment for a presentation.

On account of his star status, I looked closely at Jim's technique. One practice stood out as central to his success. Before beginning his sales effort, he established an aura of trust with the family. Trust is one of those qualities that leads to compliance with requests, provided that it has been planted before the request is made. Despite the mountains of scientific reports and scores of books that have been written making that point and suggesting ways to achieve trust, Jim accomplished it in a fashion I've not seen in any of them. He did it by pretending to be a bit of a screwup.

The sales sequence taught to all company representatives was fairly standard to the industry. After making small talk to build rapport, the prospects (usually a couple) were given a timed ten-minute written test of fire safety knowledge designed to reveal how little they knew about the actual dangers of a home fire. Then, at the completion of the test, representatives began the active sales pitch by demonstrating the alarm system and walking prospects through a book of materials documenting the system's superiority to all others. Everyone else brought the book into the house from the start and kept it close by, ready for use. Not Jim, though. He would wait until a couple had begun taking the knowledge test, when he'd slap his forehead and say, "Oh, I forgot some really important information in my car, and I need to get it. I don't want to interrupt the test; so, would you mind if I let myself out and back into your home?" The answer was always some form of "Sure, go ahead." Oftentimes it required giving him a door key.



I watched Jim make three presentations. Each time, his “forgetfulness” surfaced in the same way and at the same point. On the drive back to the office later that evening, I asked him about it. Twice, he wouldn’t give me a straight answer, annoyed that I was pressing to discover his selling secret. But when I persisted, he blurted, “Think, Bob: Who do you let walk in and out of your house on their own? Only somebody you trust, right? I want to be associated with trust in those families’ minds.”

It was a brilliant trick—not an entirely ethical one, but brilliant nonetheless—because it embodied one of the central assertions of this book: the truly influential things we say and do first act to pre-suade our audience, which they accomplish by altering audience members’ associations with what we do or say next. In chapter 7, I will forward the argument that all mental activity arises as patterns of associations within a vast and intricate neural network, and that influence attempts will be successful only to the extent that the associations they trigger are favorable to change.

Jim’s tactic provides a good illustration. To become a top salesperson, he didn’t have to modify the features of the alarm system he was selling or the logic, wording, or style of how he portrayed it; in fact, he didn’t stray from the standard presentation at all. Instead, he only had to first become associated with the concept of trust, the (intensely positive) other associations of which would then become linked to him and his advice. Even Jim’s unorthodox method of connecting himself to the concept of trust was purely associative. He didn’t claim to be the sort of individual—a close friend or family member, perhaps—that people let have open access to their homes. He just arranged to be treated in way characteristic of trusted individuals of this sort. It’s noteworthy that this tactic was the only real difference I registered between Jim’s presentations and those of his significantly less successful coworkers. Such is the strength of mere association.

All told, there are any of a number of first steps, besides establishing trust, persuaders can take that will make audiences more receptive to the case they intend to present. The steps can take multiple forms, and, accordingly, they’ve been given multiple labels by behavioral scientists. They can be called frames or anchors or primes or mindsets or first impressions. We will encounter each of those types in the remainder of these pages, where, throughout, I’m going to refer to them as openers—because they open up things for influence in two ways. In the first, they simply initiate the process; they provide the starting points, the beginnings of persuasive appeals. But it is in their second function that they clear the way to persuasion, by removing existing barriers. In that role, they promote the openings of minds and—for would-be persuaders like Jim—of protectively locked doors.<sup>3</sup>

## **THE BIG SAME**

There’s a joke I’ve heard influence practitioners tell about the difficulties of persuading prospects to move in a desired direction. It tracks an exchange between the sales representative of a marketing firm and a potential client who wants to bring out a new brand of frozen spinach.

Client: Do you have experience marketing new food products?

Sales rep: We have quite a lot of experience there.

Client: Does that include experience in selling frozen food?

Sales rep: Yes, it does.

Client: How about frozen vegetables?

Sales rep: We've brought several types to market over the years.

Client: Spinach?

Sales rep: Actually, yes, spinach too.

Client [leaning forward now, voice straining in anticipation]: Whole leaf . . . or chopped?

At business conferences, the joke produces knowing, derisive laughter from the influence professionals who hear it. Of course it was never funny the times the joke was on them—when they'd lost a contract or sale because a prospective customer, caught up in some detail of a difference, missed the big picture of what they had to offer. The contemptuous reaction to the joke's punch line always struck me as odd, because I had found persuasion practitioners guilty of the same kind of narrowness—not in meetings with a customer or client but in the training sessions designed to prepare them for those meetings.

It wasn't long after I began operating undercover in the training classes of influence practitioners that I encountered something curious: participants in the sessions were nearly always informed that persuasion had to be approached differently in their particular profession than in related professions. When it comes to swaying people, advertising works differently than marketing; marketing works differently than fund-raising; fund-raising works differently than public relations; public relations works differently than lobbying; lobbying works differently than recruitment. And so on.

What's more, distinctions were stressed even within professions. Selling whole life insurance is different from selling term insurance; selling trucks is different from selling cars; selling by mail or online is different from selling in stores; selling products is different from selling services; selling to an individual is different from selling to a business; selling wholesale is different from selling retail.

It's not that the trainers were wrong in distinguishing their own bailiwick from those of their professional neighbors. But this steady referencing of their uniqueness led to a pair of lapses in judgment. First, they often detoured into distinctions of little consequence. Worse, in their emphasis on what's different among the successful persuasion professions, they didn't focus enough on an extraordinarily useful other question: What's the same?

This oversight seemed a serious failing because if trainees could indeed be shown what proved convincing across the widest set of influence situations, it would help them win the day in all manner of circumstances, novel and familiar. If they could indeed be educated to understand and employ the universal principles that undergird effective persuasion, the details of the change they were hoping to generate wouldn't matter. They would do swimmingly whether their influence attempt involved wholesale or retail, whole life or term, whole leaf or chopped.<sup>4</sup>

My goal during those times spent scrutinizing commercial training programs, then, was to discover what lies in parallel beneath all the truly superior professional approaches to influence. A driving question for me throughout that nearly three-year period was, "What do these approaches have in common to make them work so well?" The limited footprint of the answer that emerged surprised me. I identified only six psychological principles that appeared to be deployed routinely in long-prospering influence businesses. I've claimed that the six—reciprocation, liking, social proof, authority, scarcity, and consistency—represent certain psychological universals of persuasion; and I've treated each, one per chapter, in my earlier book, *Influence*.

## THE BIG DIFFERENCE

In a portion of *Pre-Suasion*, I have tried to make instructive contact with those principles again while taking an important change in direction. The earlier book was written to inform consumers how to resist influence attempts employed in an undue or unwelcome way. One factor that spurred me to write this book is that, although *Influence* has now appeared in multiple editions and sold more copies than I could have sensibly imagined, few consumer groups ever contacted me for follow-up. But my phone hasn't stopped ringing with requests from two other types of callers: corporate representatives inviting me to speak to their groups and individual readers wanting to know how to become more influential in everyday interactions with coworkers, friends, neighbors, and family members. It became plain that, more than just learning how to deflect or reject it, large numbers of people are ravenously interested in learning how to harness persuasion.

In contrast to *Influence*, one aim of this book is to help satisfy that hunger directly, but with a pair of dietary restrictions. The first concerns the ethics of persuasive success. Just because we can use psychological tactics to gain consent doesn't mean we are entitled to them. The tactics are available for good or ill. They can be structured to fool and thereby exploit others. But they can also be structured to inform and thereby enhance others. Chapter 13 offers a rationale—beyond the traditional one based on the economic consequences of a damaged reputation—for why organizations should steer sharply away from unethical persuasive practices: those practices will lend themselves to the attraction and retention of employees who find cheating acceptable and who will ultimately cheat the organization as a consequence.

This book also abides by a second stipulation. Although the material should be seasoned liberally with personal illustrations and accounts, the meat of the evidence has to be scientifically based. In any effort to manage the influence process successfully, a scientifically grounded approach provides a real advantage. Traditionally, persuasion has been viewed as an elusive art; the province of those few with an intuitive grasp of how to turn a phrase just so. But something radical has happened to the study of persuasion during the past half century that permits the rest of us to benefit as fully as the born masters.

Researchers have been applying a rigorous scientific approach to the question of which messages lead people to concede, comply, and change. They have documented the sometimes staggering impact of making a request in a standard way versus making the identical request in a different, better-informed fashion. Besides the sheer impact of the obtained effects, there is another noteworthy aspect of the results: the process of persuasion is governed by psychological laws, which means that similar procedures can produce similar results over a wide range of situations.

And, if persuasion is lawful, it is—unlike artistic inspiration—learnable. Whether possessed of an inherent talent for influence or not, whether insightful about the methods or not, whether a gifted artisan of the language or not, it is possible to learn scientifically established techniques that allow any of us to be more influential.<sup>5</sup>



Importantly different from *Influence* is the science-based evidence of not just what best to say to persuade but also when best to say it. From that evidence, it is possible to learn how to recognize and monitor the natural emergence of opportune moments of influence. It is also possible (but more perilous, from an ethical standpoint) to learn how to create—to make—those moments. Whether operating as a moment monitor or a moment maker, the individual who knows how to time a request, recommendation, or proposal properly will do exceedingly well.

## IT'S ABOUT TIME(ING)

It's about time that I finished this book that is in one sense about timing; in fact, it's several years late. I intended to write it while away from my home university during a leave of absence at a well-known business school. There, I figured, I'd have access to knowledgeable colleagues who could help me think about relevant issues, as well as an uncluttered calendar that would allow me the blocks of time I needed to write.

A month or so before I was to relocate, I was negotiating with the associate dean about certain aspects of my visit that stood to make it more fruitful—an office near respected colleagues, secretarial assistance, telephone, parking, and library privileges—when I received a fateful call from him. It began wonderfully. “Bob,” he said, “I have good news. I was able to get you the office you wanted; the computer in there is more powerful than the one you asked for; don't worry about access to a secretary, the library, parking, long-distance calls—we'll take care of all that.” I was grateful and told him how much I appreciated all he'd done for me. He waited a beat and replied, “Well, there's something you could do for me. We've just experienced the need for someone to teach a specialized marketing class for our MBA students. I'm in a bind, and it would really help me out if you could do it.”

I knew that agreeing to his request would torpedo my chances of completing the planned book during my stay because (1) I had never taught in a business school before, which meant learning a new set of teaching norms; (2) I had never taught a marketing class before, which meant developing an entire course with coordinated lectures, readings, exercises, and exams; and (3) I had never taught MBAs before, which meant, for the first time in my career, I'd be allocating much of my out-of-class activities to the questions, comments, and needs of the most relentless students known to the teaching profession: first-year MBAs.

I agreed anyway. I couldn't see any other appropriate option, not in the instant after expressing my sincere thanks for everything this moment maker had just provided. If he had asked the day before or the day after, I would have been able to say no, explaining that there was a book I needed to write during my stay. But the circumstances were different inside his privileged moment.

Because of what he had just done for me, there was no socially acceptable alternative to saying yes. (I can only be glad he didn't need a kidney.) So, owing to the demands of the moment, “yes” it necessarily was. And, yes, at the end of my leave of absence, arranged specifically to write this book, there was no book. Family members were disappointed, as were a few editors, and I was disappointed in myself.

I can see a pair of upsides to this sequence of events, though. First, instructive new research has accumulated within the domain of persuasion science, which I have incorporated into the writing. Second, the associate dean's extraordinarily effective maneuver illustrates perfectly another major assertion of this book: pre-suasive practices create windows of opportunity that are far from propped open permanently. I am confident that I would have been able to muster the resources to decline the man's request if he had made it in a separate, subsequent phone call.



When it's high time to ask. Fortunately, there are many other factors besides the effects of cannabis that increase assent if we time our requests to their presence. Doonesbury © 2013. G. B. Trudeau. Reprinted with permission of Universal Uclick. All rights reserved.

It's because of the only-temporary receptiveness that pre-suasive actions often produce in others that I've introduced the concept of privileged moments. The meaning of the word privileged is straightforward,

referring to special, elevated status. The word moment, though, is more complex, as it evokes a pair of meanings. One connotes a time-limited period: in this case, the window of opportunity following a pre-suasive opener, when a proposal's power is greatest. The other connotation comes from physics and refers to a unique leveraging force that can bring about unprecedented movement. These yoked dimensions, temporal on the one hand and physical on the other, have the capacity to instigate extraordinary change in yet a third, psychological, dimension. The remaining chapters, described briefly below, show how.<sup>6</sup>

## **PART 1: PRE-SUASION: THE FRONTLOADING OF ATTENTION**

### **Chapter 2. Privileged Moments**

Chapter 2 explicates the concept of privileged moments, identifiable points in time when an individual is particularly receptive to a communicator's message. The chapter also presents and supports a fundamental thesis: the factor most likely to determine a person's choice in a situation is often not the one that offers the most accurate or useful counsel; instead, it is the one that has been elevated in attention (and thereby in privilege) at the moment of decision.

### **Chapter 3. The Importance of Attention . . . Is Importance**

Chapter 3 explores and documents one central reason that channeled attention leads to pre-suasion: the human tendency to assign undue levels of importance to an idea as soon as one's attention is turned to it. The chapter looks at the effects of channeled attention in three different arenas: effective online marketing efforts, positive consumer product reviews, and successful wartime propaganda campaigns.

### **Chapter 4. What's Focal Is Causal**

Chapter 4 adds a second reason for why channeled attention leads to pre-suasion. In the same way that attentional focus leads to perceptions of importance, it also leads to perceptions of causality. If people see themselves giving special attention to some factor, they become more likely to think of it as a cause. The influence-related upshots of the "what's focal is presumed causal" effect are examined in domains such as lottery number choices and false confessions in police interrogations.

### **Chapter 5. Commanders of Attention 1: The Attractors**

If elevated attention provides pre-suasive leverage, are there any features of information that automatically invite such attention and therefore don't even require a communicator's special efforts? Chapter 5 examines several of these naturally occurring commanders of attention: the sexual, the threatening, and the different.

### **Chapter 6. Commanders of Attention 2: The Magnetizers**

Besides the advantages of drawing attention to a particular stimulus, there is considerable benefit to holding it there. The communicator who can fasten an audience's focus onto the favorable elements of an argument raises the chance that the argument will go unchallenged by opposing points of view, which get locked out of the attentional environment as a consequence. Chapter 6 covers certain kinds of information that combine initial pulling power with staying power: the self-relevant, the unfinished, and the mysterious.

## **PART 2: PROCESSES: THE ROLE OF ASSOCIATION**

### **Chapter 7. The Primacy of Associations: I Link, Therefore I Think**

Once attention has been channeled to a selected concept, what is it about the concept that leads to a shift in responding? All mental activity is composed of patterns of associations; and influence attempts, including pre-suasive ones, will be successful only to the extent that the associations they trigger are favorable to change. Chapter 7 shows how both language and imagery can be used to produce desirable outcomes such as greater job performance, more positive personnel evaluations, and—in one especially noteworthy instance—the release of prisoners kidnapped by the Afghan Taliban.

### **Chapter 8. Persuasive Geographies: All the Right Places, All the Right Traces**

There is a geography of influence. Just as words and images can prompt certain associations favorable to change, so can places. Thus, it becomes possible to send ourselves in desired directions by locating to physical and psychological environments prefit with cues associated with our relevant goals. It's also possible for influencers to achieve their goals by shifting others to environments with supportive cues. For instance, young women do better on science, math, and leadership tasks if assigned to rooms with cues (photos, for example) of women known to have mastered the tasks.

### **Chapter 9. The Mechanics of Pre-suasion: Causes, Constraints, and Correctives**

A communicator pre-suades by focusing recipients initially on concepts that are aligned, associatively, with the information yet to be delivered. But by what mechanism? The answer involves an underappreciated characteristic of mental activity: its elements don't just fire when ready, they fire when readied. Chapter 9 examines this mechanism's operation in such varied phenomena as how advertising imagery works, how infants can be pre-suaded toward helpfulness, and how opiate drug addicts can be pre-suaded into performing an important therapeutic activity that none would consent to otherwise.

## **PART 3: BEST PRACTICES: THE OPTIMIZATION OF PRE-SUASION**

### **Chapter 10. Six Main Roads to Change: Broad Boulevards as Smart Shortcuts**

On which specific concepts should an audience's attention be focused for the greatest pre-suasive effect? Attention should be channeled to one or another of the universal principles of influence treated in my earlier book, *Influence*: reciprocity, liking, authority, social proof, scarcity, and consistency. There is good reason for their prevalence and success, for these are the principles that typically steer people in the right direction when they are deciding what to do.

### **Chapter 11. Unity 1: Being Together**

Chapter 11 reveals an additional (seventh) universal principle of influence: unity. There is a certain type of unity—of identity—that best characterizes a We relationship and that, if pre-suasively raised to consciousness, leads to more acceptance, cooperation, liking, help, trust, and, consequently, assent. The chapter describes the first of two main ways to build We relationships: by presenting cues of genetic commonality associated with family and place.

## **Chapter 12. Unity 2: Acting Together**

Besides the unitizing effect of being together in the same genealogy or geography, We relationships can result from acting together synchronously or collaboratively. When people act in unitary ways, they become unitized; and when such activity is arranged pre-suasively, it produces mutual liking and support. Chapter 12 provides illustrations in the forms of greater helping among strangers, cooperation among teammates, self-sacrifice among four-year-olds, friendship among schoolchildren, love among college students, and loyalty between consumers and brands.

## **Chapter 13. Ethical Use: A Pre-Pre-Suasive Consideration**

Those using a pre-suasive approach must decide what to present immediately before their message. But they also have to make an even earlier decision: whether, on ethical grounds, to employ such an approach. Often, communicators from commercial organizations place profit above ethics in their appeals. Thus, there is reason to worry that the pre-suasive practices described in this book will be used unethically. However, chapter 13 argues against unethical use, offering data from studies indicating that such tactics undermine organizational profits in three potent ways.

## **Chapter 14: Post-Suasion: Aftereffects**

Pre-suaders want to do more than create temporary changes via momentary shifts in attention; they want to make those changes durable. Accordingly, chapter 14 provides the behavioral science evidence for two kinds of procedures that increase the likelihood that changes generated initially will take root and last well beyond pre-suasive moments.

## **Users Review**

### **From reader reviews:**

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