

Six Universal Principles of Persuasion



Six Universal Principles of Persuasion

- Reciprocity
- Commitment and consistency
- Social Proof
- Liking
- Authority
- Scarcity

RECIPROCITY



Reciprocity

- Free samples

Amway



Dennis Regan (1971)



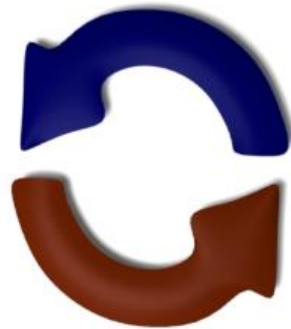
Dennis Regan conducted a research to see how the reciprocation principle works. Subject and another subject (assistant) rated the quality of paintings in “art appreciation” study. Under first conditions, they both rated the paintings. After the session, experimenter’s confederate asked the subject to buy raffle tickets (25c each – way more than Coke)

Under experimental conditions, the confederate left the room and when got back said: “I asked the experimenter if I could get myself a Coke, and he said it was OK, so I bought one for you, too.” When confederate was asking for the favor under the experimental conditions, subjects bought

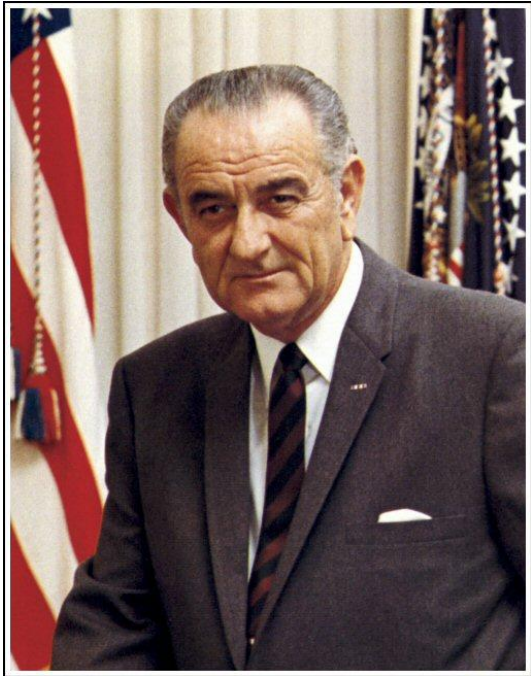
TWICE as many tickets.

Reciprocity - summary

- **Don't ask what they can do for you, ask what you can do for them**



- Lyndon Johnson



- Did many favors...received many favors

Unequal exchanges

(George, Gournic,& McAfee, 1988)

- The research showed that when a woman allows a man to buy her drinks, she is immediately judged (by both men and women) as more sexually available to him.





What gifts are the best?

- Significant
- Unexpected
- Personalized

? What about “gifts” by charity workers in the streets?



Reciprocity - Reciprocal concessions

- **Door-in-the-face-technique**
 - Rejection-then-retreat
 - (def: **Compliance gaining strategy. After someone turns down a large request, the more reasonable request follows**)
- Perceptual contrast principle

Sumimasen

Reciprocity - “Web of indebtedness”

- Reciprocity is a unique adaptive mechanism of human beings
- Pervasive in human culture
- Obrigado (Portuguese)
- Sumimasen (Japanese) = “this will not end”
- *Internal discomfort + possibility of external shame*
- This principle is **not** necessary and desirable in **long-term relationship** (family, close friendships)

Obrigado



What happens with favors over time?

- Desire to repay *small* favors fades away
- Immediately after the favor:
 - The Recipient places more value than the Performer
- Later:
 - The value of the favor decreases in the Recipient's eyes and increases in the Performer's eyes



Watergate (1972-1974)



- Combination of reciprocity and perceptual contrast
- Gordon Liddy – In charge of intelligence gathering operations for the *Committee to Re-elect the President*
 - 1st proposal: \$1.000.000 (chase plane, “yacht of sins”, etc)
 - 2nd proposal: \$ 500.000
 - 3rd proposal: \$ 250.000
 - “...no one was particularly overwhelmed with the project...but after starting at the sum of \$1 million, we thought that probably \$250.000 would be an acceptable figure... How could we have been so stupid?” (Jeb Magruder)

Reciprocity - Defense



- The rule says that favors are to be met with favors, it does not require that tricks be met with favors
- Exploit the exploiter

COMMITMENT & CONSITENCY







Commitment and Consistency

- Once we make a choice or take a stand, we will encounter personal and interpersonal pressures to behave consistently with that commitment.
- Inconsistency is undesirable personality trait

Cognitive dissonance

- Korean War
- Justifying effort



Practical use

No-show rate = **30** %

- *“Please call if you have to cancel”*

vs.

No-show rate = **10** %

“Will you please call if you have to cancel?”

- The magic of **written** declarations
- The public eye – commitment made **publicly**
- **Elderly** have higher tendency to appear consistent

- Toy manufacturers and the undersupply during Christmas

Task: How to keep sales high during the peak season and, at the same time, retain a healthy demand for toys in the immediately following months?



Solution: Create demand → Undersupply → make parents buy sth else → provide the “promised” toy later



Foot-in-the-door technique

- the tendency for people who have first agreed to a small request to comply later with a larger request.



Foot-in-the-door technique

- (Freedman, Fraser, 1966)

❖ California homeowners were asked to put LARGE public service billboard (“Drive carefully”) on their lawn

❖ 17 % complied

❖ California homeowners were first asked to put little 3-inch-square sign.

❖ Almost everyone complied

❖ Two weeks later, the same people were asked to display large “Drive carefully” sign

❖ 76% complied



Foot-in-the-door technique

When does it work?

- Especially for prosocial issues where self-perceptions, consistency needs, and social norms arise
- FITD is NOT likely to succeed if the second favor is immediately after the first one.



Low-Ball

- Compliance technique which is rooted in the tendency of people who agree to an initial request to still comply even with the changed and less attractive request.
 1. An advantage is offered that induces a favorable purchase decision
 2. After the decision has been made, but before the bargain is sealed, the original advantage is changed
- Explanation: People often add new reasons and justifications to support the wisdom of commitments they have already made



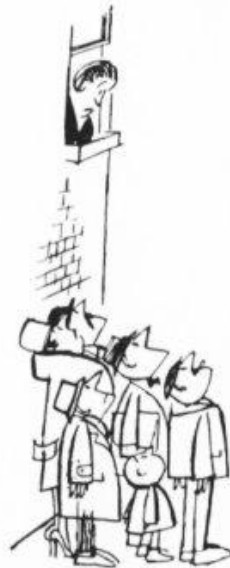
Commitment and Consistency - Defense

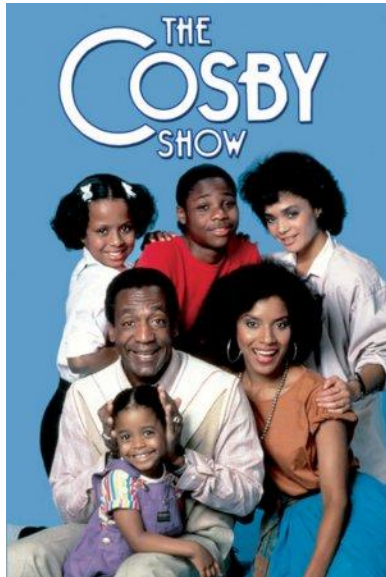
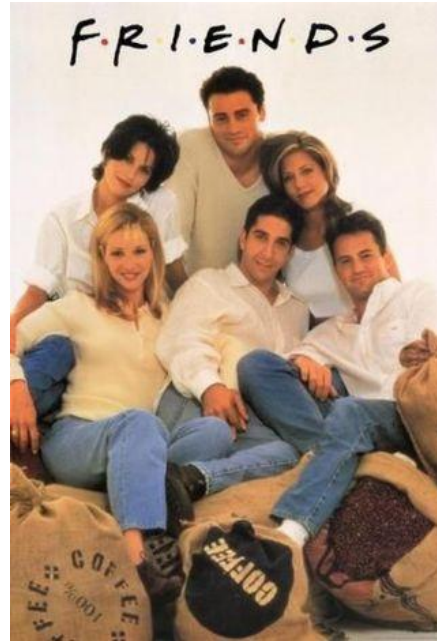
- Consistency is generally good and vital
But **be aware** that it might be foolish and rigid
and you have to avoid it.

Think!



Social proof





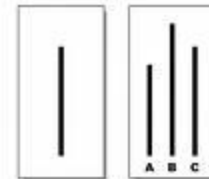
Informational social influence

- The influence of other people that leads us to conform because we see them as a source of information to guide our behavior. We conform because we believe that others' interpretation of an ambiguous situation is more **correct** than ours.
- “To be right”
- More important in the Social proof principle than the Normative social influence

Normative social influence

- Influence based on the need to be accepted and approved by others
- “To be liked”
- Solomon Asch – Conformity

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R6LH10-3H8k>



Normative Social Influence



Need to be liked or accepted



Others are able to reward or punish us



Conflict can arise between our own and other's opinions



COMPLIANCE

Informational Social Influence



Need to be certain



Seek information to reduce our uncertainty



Look to others for guidance



INTERNALISATION

Practical Use - UNCERTAINTY

- Bystander effect
(Pluralistic ignorance, Diffusion of responsibility)
- *“Hey you, man in the red shirt! Help me!”*



Practical use

- *“Operators are waiting, please call now!”*

VS.

“If operators are busy, please call again”

- *“Largest selling”*
- *“The #1 market leader”*
- *“1.000.000 copies sold!”*
- Testimonials from satisfied customers
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W_xmphS8168
- Salting your tip jar
- Waiting line in the front of the club

Practical use

- What's wrong here?
 - “This year Americans will produce more litter and pollution than ever before.” (Campaign against littering)
 - “4 years ago, 22 million single women did not vote.” (Woman vote campaign)
 - “Many visitors have removed the petrified wood from the park. People take more that 14 tons a year.” (Petrified Forest, AZ – campaign against petrified wood removal)

What's wrong? These slogans focus the audience on the prevalence, rather than desirability, of the behavior.
⇒ Incorrectly used the Social Proof principle.

Practical use - SIMILARITY

- Teacher motivating a student ~~should~~ NOT point out (or solicit comments about the benefits from) students in the front row but rather from students similar to the target student.
- If you are selling software to the owner of a string of local beauty salons, the owner would be more influenced by information about how pleased.....
... other salon owners are with the software rather than how pleased the managers of Škoda Auto were.

Social Proof - Defense



- Realize whether the crowd is not fabricated
- Think whether the crowd could not be possibly wrong

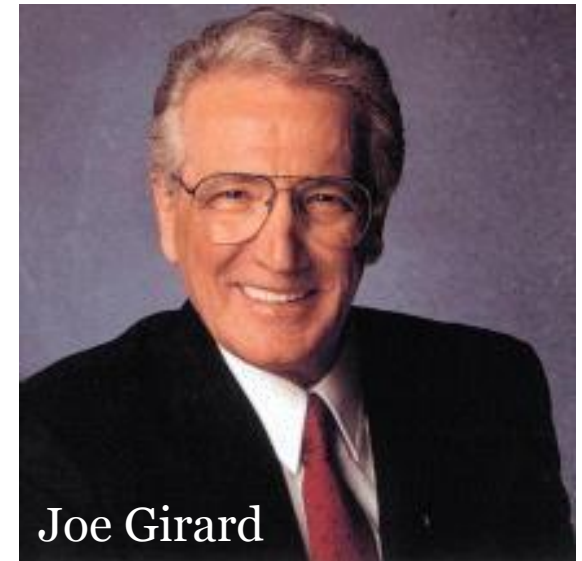
LIKING



Liking



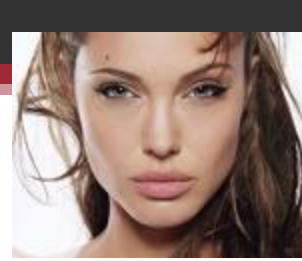
Liking



Joe Girard

Liking

- “Endless chain” method
 - Door-to-door sales
 - E.g. “Mr. _____, a friend of yours, felt you would benefit by giving me a few moments of your time...”



Liking

!!! PHYSICAL ATTRACTIVENESS !!!

- Halo effect
 - More physically attractive people are:
 - Better liked
 - Obtain better jobs
 - Have more social power
 - Have higher self-esteem
 - Receive better grades
 - Are more communicated with
 - Are less likely to be convicted at court
 - Are more successful
 - Are perceived as more talented, kind, honest, intelligent and persuasive

Factors influencing liking:

- **Physical attractiveness**
- **Propinquity (closeness)**
 - Face-to-face communication is more effective than mediated
 - Propinquity effect = the more we interact with people, the more likely they are to become our friends
- **Similarity**
 - E.g. dress, look, hobbies, demographics, ideology etc.
- **Congeniality**
 - Compliments (social acknowledgement) - We have automatic positive reaction to compliments
 - Anxiety, stress, loneliness, and threat reduction
- **Familiarity**
 - Mere exposure effect = the more exposure we have to a stimulus, the more apt we are to like it
 - Conditioning and association
- **Cooperation**
 - Robber's Cave Experiment (Sherif, 1961)
 - Jigsaw classroom (Elliot Aronson)
 - Good cop / Bad cop

Bonding with others

- Make friends with the other person. Build emotional bonds. Find things in common. Thus when you ask them to do something for you, they will feel as if they are doing it for themselves.



How to win friends and influence others



How to win friends and influence others

- Don't criticize, condemn or complain
- Give honest and sincere appreciation
- Become genuinely interested in other people
- Be a good listener. Encourage others to talk about themselves
- Remember that a man's Name is to him the sweetest and most important sound in any language
- If you're wrong, admit it quickly and with emphasis
- Talk in the terms of the other man's interest
- Avoid arguments

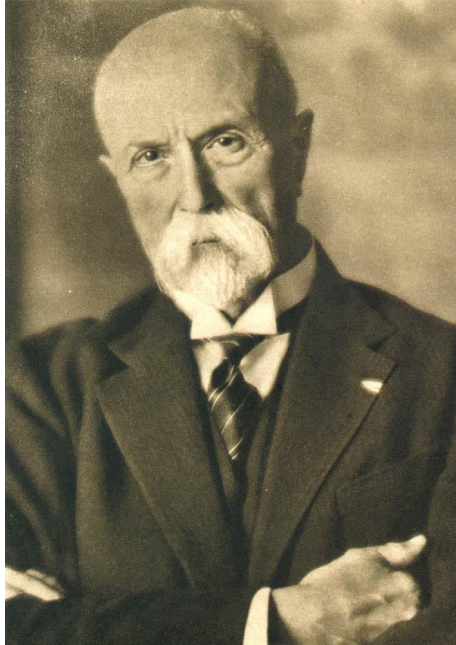


Defense

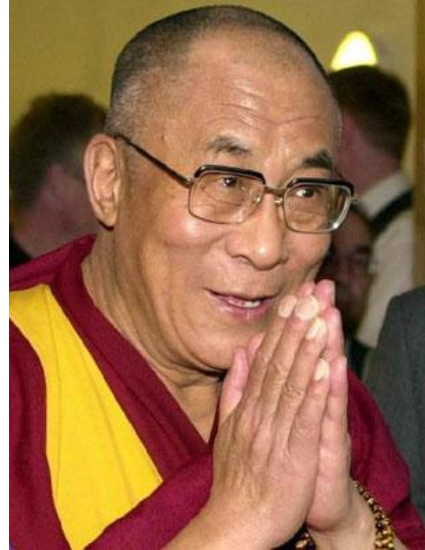


- Mentally separate the communicator from message
- Realize: Do you want to comply only because you like the person?

AUTHORITY



V. G. Masaryk.

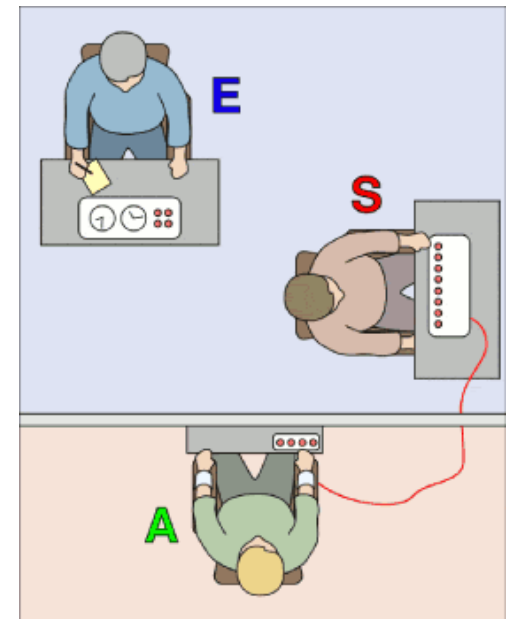


Authority

- Stanley Milgram (1974)

Obedience to authority: Experimental view

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7nS8PsbRUkM>



- **Recommended reading:**

<http://www.ocf.berkeley.edu/~wwu/psychology/compliance.shtml>

Milgram study - Obedience to Authority

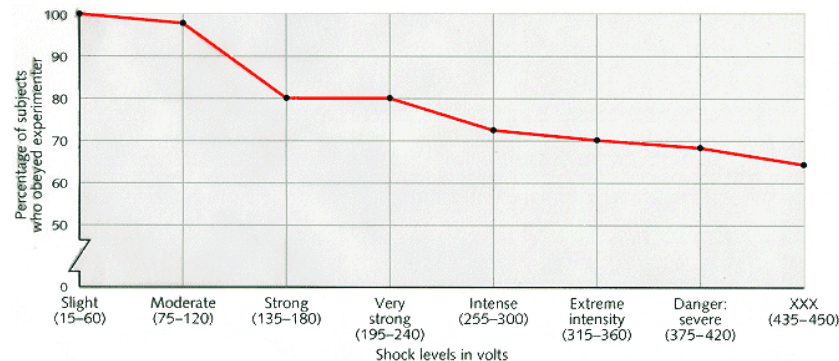


- Experiment investigates punishment in learning
- “Teacher” (subject) and “student” (confederate)
- Shocks 30V – 450V (by 15V). From slight shock to XXX
- In the case of subject’s unwillingness, the experimenter issued commands:
 - Please continue.
 - The experiment requires that you continue.
 - It is absolutely essential that you continue.
 - You have no other choice, you must go on.
- Student’s responses:
 - 75V – grunts
 - 120V - shouts in pain
 - 150V - says that he refuses to continue with this experiment
 - 300V - silence

Milgram study - Obedience to Authority



- Expected results:
 - 14 Yale senior psychology majors (3% - 450V)
 - Milgram's colleagues (hardly anyone will go beyond 240V)
- Actual results:
 - 26 out of 40 reached 450V



- *“I observed a mature and initially poised businessman enter the laboratory smiling and confident. Within 20 minutes he was reduced to a twitching, stuttering wreck, who was rapidly approaching a point of nervous collapse. He constantly pulled on his earlobe and twisted his hands. At one point he pushed his fist into his forehead and muttered: “Oh, God, let’s stop it.” And yet he continued to respond to every word of the experimenter and obeyed to the end.”*

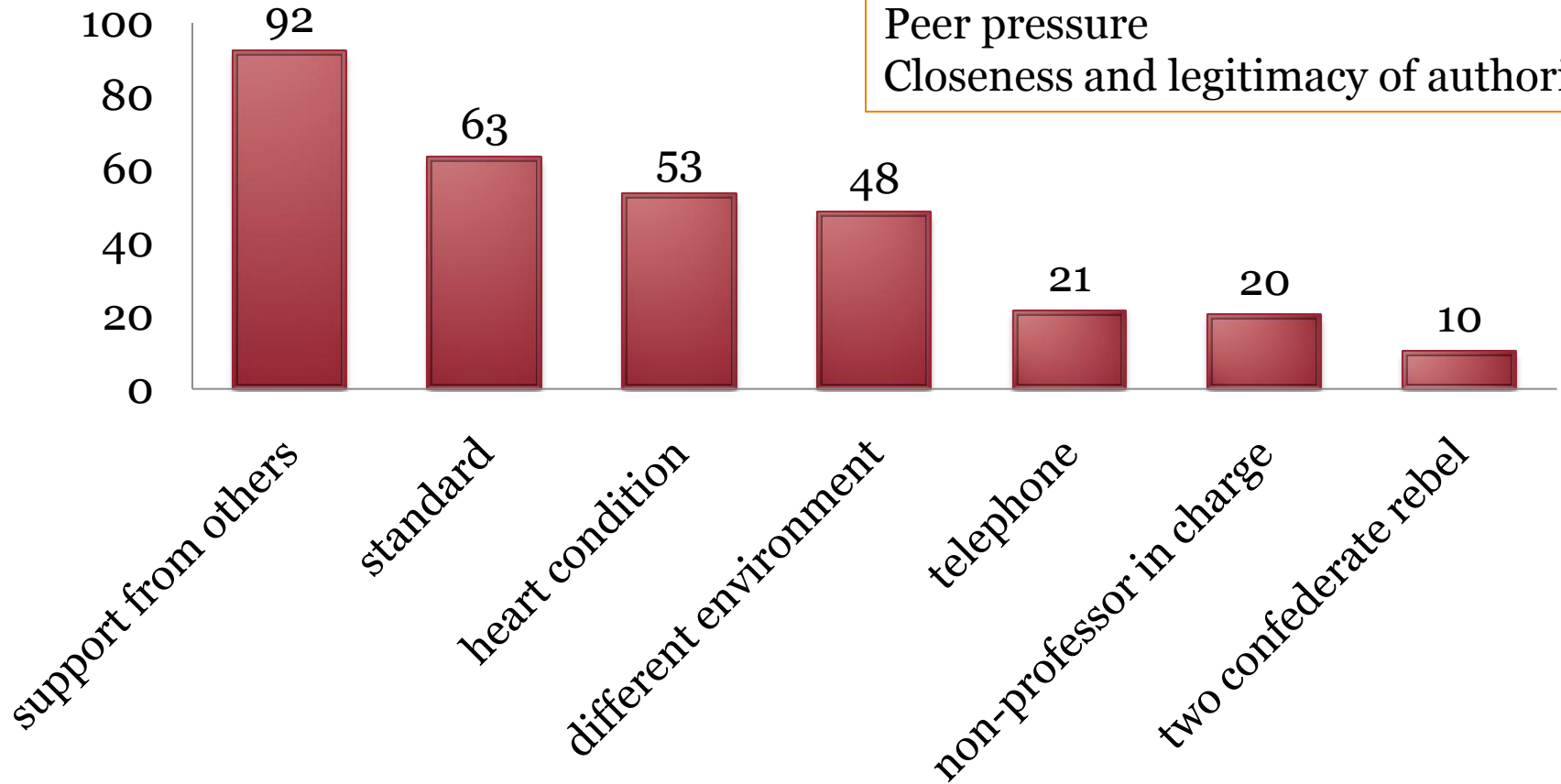
(Milgram, 1963, p. 377)

Situational factors

Important variables:

Peer pressure

Closeness and legitimacy of authority



Milgram study - Obedience to Authority



- Replication of Milgram's study

<http://video.google.com/videoplay?docid=6110809571753386112>

- Ethical concerns

Questioning authority

- Right Ear \rightarrow R Ear \Rightarrow “Rectal Earache”



Questioning authority



1. Researcher called to 22 nurses and directed the :
to give 20 milligrams of a drug to a specific patient.
2. There were 4 large reasons regarding why not to comply:
 - I. The prescription was given by phone (direct violation of hospital policy)
 - II. The medication itself was not authorized
 - III. The dosage was dangerously excessive (Twice as much as “max. daily dose”)
 - IV. The directive was given by a man the nurse had never met or seen before

21 out of 22 nurses complied!

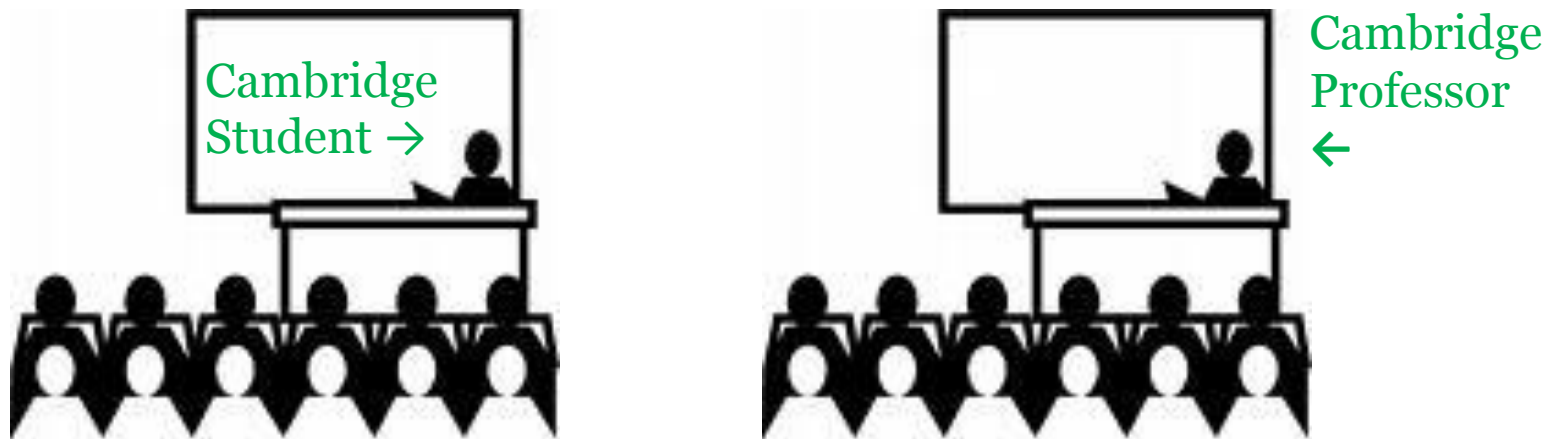
Symbols of authority

- Titles
- Clothes

- Symbols can reliably trigger our compliance in the absence of genuine substance of authority

Symbols of authority - Titles

- Professor, doctor, scientist, manager, dad, etc...



The “professor” was perceived 6.4cm taller than the “student”



Symbols of authority - Clothes

- Lefkowitz, Blake, & Mouton (1955)

A man crossed the street against the traffic light. He was either in suit or in work shirt and trousers.

3.5 times as many people followed the man in the suit

- Bickman (1974)

Asking for some sort of odd request. The requester was dressed either casually or as security guard.

Under 40% obeyed the civilian. More than 80% obeyed the guard.

Symbols of authority - Clothes

“Bank Examiner Scheme”

- Focused on elderly living alone
- Man in formal dress and bank guard



Authority - Defense

- ! Heighten your awareness of authority power !
- ! Recognize how easily authority symbols can be faked !

Is this authority truly an expert?

How truthful can we expect the expert to be?

SCARCITY



What do you prefer?





Scarcity

- If an item is rare or becoming rare , it is more valuable
- In other words, the less available something is (opportunity, product, etc), the more valuable it seems



Scarcity

- People are more motivated by the thought of **LOSING** something than by the thought of **GAINING** something of equal value
 - Managers weight potential losses more heavily than potential gains (Shelley, 1994)
 - Stronger emotions when asked to imagine losses as opposed to gains in
 - Romantic relationships
 - Grade point average
 - The case of illness (breast cancer self-examination)

“Limited numbers”





“Limited time”

- “Deadline” tactics
 - “Limited edition”
 - “The SALE ends in 3 days”
 - “Call now! If you call in 10 minutes you’ll get...”



Candyblog





Dean-German-Grocery
GERMAN SPECIALTIES









etchstar.com





Scarcity - Explanation



- Psychological Reactance Theory (Brehm, 1966)

Whenever free choice is limited or threatened, the **need to retain our freedoms** makes us want them significantly more than before

- As opportunities become less available, we lose freedoms. And we DON'T LIKE to lose freedoms we already have!

Psychological Reactance Theory

(Brehm)



- Psychological reactance is an aversive affective reaction in response to regulations or impositions that interfere in freedom and autonomy
- Perceived decrease in freedom create an emotional state, called psychological reactance, that elicits behaviors intended to restore this autonomy
- Reactance often encourages individuals to follow an opinion that opposes the belief or attitude they were encouraged, or coerced, to adopt. As a consequence, the reactance often increases resistance to persuasion

Psychological Reactance Theory



- Wording of a message has a great impact on eliciting psychological reactance

(Miller, Lane, Deatrick, Young, & Potts, 2007; Grandpre, Alvaro, Burgoon, Miller, & Hall, 2003)

Imperatives (must, need)

- *Dogmatic language* (“...cannot deny that...” “This issue is extremely serious“)
- *Contempt for other perspectives* (“Any reasonable person would agree that...“)

- *Possibility of choice* (“You have a chance to...”)
- *Qualified propositions* (“There is some evidence that...” “This issue is fairly serious“)
- *Avoidance of imperatives or ridiculing language*

YES

Individual differences



- Reactance should be more pervasive in individuals who seek autonomy and feel they are competent and informed enough to choose their own courses of action.

Burgoon, Alvaro, Grandpre, and Voloudakis (2002)

- Applications?

Consequences of reactance:



- reactance can provoke behaviors that oppose the rules or courses of action that were imposed and encouraged
- engage in acts that are similar, but different, to the behavior that has been restricted (smoking instead drugs)
- reactance promotes unfavorable attitudes towards the behavior or proposal that has been prohibited
- reactance provokes adverse attitudes towards the source of any restriction



Scarcity experiment (Worchel, Lee, & Adewole, 1975)

1. Participants were in a “consumer preference study”.
2. They were given a chocolate chip cookie from a jar and asked to taste them and rate its quality
3. Half of the raters took the cookie from a jar that contained 10 cookies. The other half took it from the jar that contained only 2 cookies

The cookie that was in the jar with only two cookies was rated as:
more desirable to eat in the future,
more attractive as a consumer item,
more expensive

The joy is not in the experiencing of a scarce object but in the possessing of it.

Scarcity defense



- Stop! Think!
Panicky reactions have no place in wise compliance decisions!
- Think, is it a real scarcity? Who said you cannot get the same thing somewhere else?

WE

TOP SECRET

SUMMARY

- Reciprocity
- Commitment and consistency
- Social proof
- Liking
- Authority
- Scarcity