

The Book of Persuasion

How You Can Change People's Minds and Influence Their Decisions While Building Last Trust

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Introduction

“The only real power available to the leader is the power of persuasion.” Lyndon B. Johnson, 36th President of the United States

Listen carefully to the flow of any conversation. Someone exclaims. The intensity has increased significantly. There's laughter. Someone is pushing, and the other is backing down, and perhaps is on the defensive. And so it goes on. We're all attempting to get others aligned with our thinking. After all, why communicate unless we'd like something to happen afterward?

I used to believe that our decisions are based mostly on logic. Perhaps you do too? Studying persuasion, I increasingly realised that emotions and conditioning influence our decisions more than logic. Some of our decisions are wildly illogical. If you've ended up buying something on the spur of the moment that you really didn't need, you know exactly what I mean, don't you? My garage is full of things I never use because of my emotional impulses.

My serious study of persuasion and influence began in 1995 when I founded Congruence Training. I had to sell hard, otherwise my family and I wouldn't eat.

I studied everything I could get my hands on, including the works of Richard Bandler (neuro-linguistic programming), Carl Jung's archetypes, Joseph Campbell's *The Hero with A Thousand Faces* (The Hero's Journey), Dale Carnegie's *How to Win Friends and Influence People*, and Robert Cialdini's seminal work, *Influence: The Science of Persuasion*, among others.

I mastered persuasion and built a successful business that supports my family with a lifestyle I once only dreamed of. Perhaps becoming good at persuasion can help you build the life of your dreams?

I wrote this book to help you persuade others and achieve success in your endeavours. But before you delve into it, understand one truth: We're hardwired for survival, and this affects everything we do.

Hardwired for survival

“If you’re going through hell, keep going.” Winston Churchill, 62nd and 64th Prime Minister of the United Kingdom

Our instincts for survival guide us significantly, influenced by our innate biases. We’re hardwired to survive and pass on our genes to the next generation. It’s as simple as that. Survival is our prime directive. We’ll protect our young, ensure we have shelter, food, water, and protection from predators. We create organised group structures and efficient systems. These traits are innate to us; we’re born with them, and therefore, there’s no need for us to develop or learn them.

In his insightful book, *The Keys to Persuasion: Mastering the 10 Keys to Changing the Mind*, Gert J. Scholtz explores the dynamics behind the survival and eventual emergence of humans over millennia:

In their earlier and less developed forms, humans learned that survival improved within a group. Those who shunned the group faced the perils of survival on their own and eventually died out, failing to pass on their genes to future generations. Those who continued to exist in the group improved their chances of survival, passing their genes on to the next generation.

Why were groups of humans more likely to survive than individuals? Groups could coordinate activities better, whether it be hunting, child-rearing, finding shelter, defending the group from predators, or foraging for food. Larger groups could kill an animal more easily, and child-rearing could alternate between family members. For a baby or child, being socially connected to caregivers is essential to survival.

On your own, you were less likely to survive predator attacks, hunt and kill to eat, or have sufficient time and energy to look after the young, protect and feed them. So the genes of early humans who fitted into, and contributed to the group enterprise odyssey survival, were more likely to be passed on to following generations and continue the traits inherent to beneficial group behaviour.

As Charles Darwin said: “A tribe including many members who, from possessing in a high degree the spirit of patriotism, fidelity, obedience, courage, and sympathy, were always ready to aid one another, and to sacrifice themselves for the common good, would be victorious over most other tribes; and this would be natural selection.”

Group loyalty is a deep part of our psyches. Think back to your school days; remember how pleasurable and energising it was to be part of a social group, and how your selection for the sports team you wanted made you feel elated. Or, as an adult, how great it is being perceived as part of the "inside" group at work.

Around the campfire, long before Greek civilisation and the Roman Empire, the chief passed down and enforced the group's laws, often using stories. When survival was at stake, there was no time for debate, so the strongest men competed for women, and the chief decided who would fulfil which roles and duties. Following the establishment of the pecking order, the tribe lived and worked toward survival. Belonging to a group where resources could be pooled for the good of the collective secured our survival. The system must have been effective; our presence today is a testament to the survival of our ancestors. This need to belong remains embedded in us.

In today's world, a child left alone while both parents work is vulnerable to being recruited by a gang. The need to belong is so strong that we'd rather belong to something bad than belong nowhere.

In my work teaching people to deliver presentations, I'm often asked to explain the reason for presentation nerves. I know many reasons that cause anxiety about presenting, but every single fear stems from the same core fear: we fear making fools of ourselves; we don't want to mess up, be ridiculed, look stupid, and face rejection. We fear exclusion, because we're hardwired that way. We have an overwhelming need to belong.

CONTENTS

Part 1: Persuasion in context

1. Do persuasion skills matter?
2. Are some people born persuasive?
3. How logical are we really?
4. Heuristics
5. Persuasion or manipulation?
6. Bribery, corruption, and lies
7. Persuasion and integrity
8. Trust
9. Patience
10. Preparing the ground
11. Persuading yourself

Key Insights from Part 1

Part 2: The tools of persuasion

1. Providing choices
2. Admitting you are wrong
3. Negotiation
4. Knowing the price of things

5. Priming
6. Confidence
7. Consistency
8. The power of paper
9. Taking notes
10. Write it down
11. Social proof
12. Forbidden fruit
13. Scarcity

Key Insights from Part 2

Part 3: Persuasion devices

1. Change the order
2. Reframing
3. Differentiation
4. Friendship
5. Acknowledgement
6. Asking for help
7. Kindness
8. Reciprocity

Key Insights from Part 3

Part 4: Persuasion techniques

1. Tell a story
2. Get them used to saying "yes"
3. Contrast
4. When "no" makes sense
5. Ramping it up: the 1-2-3 decoy method
6. Persuasion by proxy
7. Authority
8. Charisma
9. Charismatic people

Key Insights from Part 4

Part 5: Communication techniques used for persuasion

1. Humour
2. The addictive power of laughter

5. Your engaging smile
4. Modelling behaviour
5. The hypnotic effect of mirroring
6. Why the words you use matter
7. The impact of the way information is presented
8. Asking the right questions
9. Asking for permission
10. Why arguing isn't always bad

Key Insights from Part 5

Part 6: Using senses to persuade

1. The power of images
2. The impact of body language
3. To touch or not to touch?
4. The power of your voice
5. Speaking
6. Engaged listening
7. The sounds of silence
8. When does the herd change direction?

Key Insights from Part 6

Conclusion

“This is an easy read, packed with real case studies and personal experiences and outstanding anecdotes that will inspire you while you learn. Paul's book outlines the psychology and science of persuasion in simple, practical terms, while revealing an abundance of amazing ideas and opportunities for you. Comprehensive, captivating, and riveting, this book will dramatically improve your ability to influence others and is a must-read.”

– Prof. Allan Pease, Author of 11 #1 bestsellers