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INFLUENCE

BY

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my notes

When we ask someone to do us a favor we will be more successful if we provide a reason. The word “because” triggers an automatic compliance response.

Instead of stacking all the odds in their favor by trying painstakingly to master each of the things that indicate the worth of turquoise jewelry, they were counting on just one - the one they knew to be usually associated with the quality of any item. They were betting that price alone would tell them all they needed to know.

“Civilization advances by extending the number of operations we can perform without thinking about them.” - Alfred North Whitehead

When a man enters a clothing store with the express purpose of purchasing a suit, he will almost always pay more for whatever

accessories he buys if he buys them after the suit purchase than before.

A real estate agent watches his prospects' eyes light up when he showed the place he really wanted to sell them after they had seen the run-down houses. "The house I got them spotted for looks really great after they've first looked at a couple of dumps."

One of the most potent of the weapons of influence around us - the rule for reciprocation.

The rule says that we should try to repay, in kind, what another person has provided us.

Simple mail appeal for donations produces a response rate of about 18 percent.

But when the mailing also includes an unsolicited gift (gummed, individualized address labels), the success rate nearly doubles to 35 percent.

It is the obligation to receive that makes the rule so easy to exploit.

The obligation to receive reduces our ability to choose whom we wish to be indebted to and puts that power in the hands of others.

People will often avoid asking for a needed favor if they will not be in a position to repay it.

His request that I purchase some one-dollar chocolate bars had been put in the form of a concession on his part:

It was presented as a retreat from his request that I buy some five-dollar tickets.

If I were to live up to the dictates of the reciprocation rule, there had to be a concession on my part.

As we have seen, there was such a concession: I changed from noncompliant to compliant when he changed from a larger to a smaller request, even though I was not really interested in either of the things he offered.

It had not mattered that I do not like chocolate bars; the Boy Scout had made a concession to me, click, and, whirr, I responded with a concession of my own.

Because the rule for reciprocation governs the compromise process, it is possible to use an initial concession as part of a highly effective compliance technique.

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.

Then, after I have refused, you would make the smaller request that you were really interested in all along.

Provided that you have structured your requests skillfully, I should view your second request as a concession to me and should feel inclined to respond with a concession of my own, the only one I would have immediately open to me - compliance with your second request.

The rejection-then-retreat tactic spurs people not only to agree to a desired request but actually to carry out the request and, finally, to volunteer to perform further requests.

Positive by-products of the act of concession: feelings of greater responsibility for, and satisfaction with, the arrangement.

Compared to the two other approaches, the strategy of starting with an extreme demand and then retreating to the more moderate one produced the most money for the person using it.

These subjects reported that they had successfully influenced the opponent to take less money for himself.

Once a stand had been taken, the need for consistency pressured these people to bring what they felt and believed into line with what they had already done. They simply convinced themselves that they had made the right choice.

But because it is so typically in our best interests to be consistent, we easily fall into the habit of being automatically so, even in situations where it is not the sensible way to be.

Sometimes it is the cursedly clear and unwelcome set of answers provided by straight thinking that makes us mental slackers.

There are certain disturbing things we simply would rather not realize.

Because it is a preprogrammed and mindless method of responding, automatic consistency can supply a safe hiding place from those troubling realizations.

They very much wanted to believe that meditation was their answer.

Now, in the form of my colleague, intrudes the voice of reason, showing the theory underlying their newfound solution to be unsound.

Panic! Something must be done at once before logic takes its toll and leaves them without hope again.

Quickly, quickly, walls against reason are needed.

How several of the big toy companies jack up their January and February sales:

They start prior to Christmas with attractive TV ads for certain special toys.

The kids want what they see and extract Christmas promises for these items from their parents.

Now here's where the genius of the companies' plan comes in:

They undersupply the stores with the toys they've gotten the parents to promise.

Most parents find those things sold out and are forced to substitute other toys of equal value.

The toy manufacturers, of course, make a point of supplying the stores with plenty of these substitutes.

Then, after Christmas, the companies start running the ads again for the other, special toys.

That juices up the kids to want those toys more than ever.

They go running to their parents whining, “You promised, you promised,” and the adults go trudging off to the store to live up dutifully to their words.

A sample of Bloomington, Indiana, residents surveyed, asked 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.

Once he has agreed to a request, his attitude may change, he may become, in his own eyes, the kind of person who does this sort of thing,

A volunteer worker had come to their doors and asked them to accept and display a little three-inch-square sign that read BE A SAFE DRIVER.

It was such a trifling request that nearly all of them had agreed to it. But the effects of that request were enormous.

Because they had innocently complied with a trivial safe-driving request a couple of weeks before, these homeowners became

remarkably willing to comply with another such request that was massive in size.

Once you've got a man's self-image where you want it, he should comply naturally with a whole range of your requests that are consistent with this view of himself.

Amway Corporation, for instance, has hit upon a way to spur their sales personnel to greater and greater accomplishments.

Members of the staff are asked to set individual sales goals and commit themselves to those goals by personally recording them on paper:

One final tip before you get started: Set a goal and write it down.

Whatever the goal, the important thing is that you set it, so you've got something for which to aim - and that you write it down.

The more public the better. Whenever one takes a stand that is visible to others, there arises a drive to maintain that stand in order to look like a consistent person.

The Chinese prisons withheld large prizes in favor of less powerful inducements:

They wanted the men to own what they had done. No excuses, no ways out were allowed.

A man who suffered through an arduous hazing could not be given the chance to believe he did so for charitable purposes.

We should never heavily bribe or threaten our children to do the things we want them truly to believe in.

No matter which variety of lowballing is used, the sequence is the same:

An advantage is offered that induces a favorable purchase decision

Sometime after the decision has been made but before the bargain is sealed, the original purchase advantage is deftly removed.

It seems almost incredible that a customer would buy a car under these circumstances. Yet it works.

We feel it in the pit of our stomachs when we realize we are trapped into complying with a request we know we don't want to perform.

Kids watched 23 minutes of a movie showing kids being social and accepted.

While the withdrawn children who had not seen this film remained as isolated as ever, those who had viewed it were now leading their schools in amount of social activity.

It seems that this 23-minute movie, viewed just once, was enough to reverse a potential pattern of lifelong maladaptive behavior.

Such is the potency of the principle of social proof.

Why a sports fan is involved in the outcome of the match: Because he, personally, would be diminished by a hometown defeat. How? Through the principle of association. The mere connection of

birthplace hooked him, wrapped him, tied him to the approaching triumph or failure.

You root for your own sex, your own culture, your own locality - and what you want to prove is that you are better than the other person. Whomever you root for represents you; and when he wins, you win.

The pronoun is “we” designed to imply the closest possible identity with the team.

To connect themselves to success by using the pronoun “we” to describe their school-team victory - “We beat Houston, seventeen to fourteen,” or “We won.”

In the case of the lost game, however, “we” was rarely used.

Instead, the students used terms designed to keep themselves separate from their vanquished team - “They lost to Missouri, thirty to twenty,” or “I don’t know the score, but Arizona State got beat.”

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.

Authority status in our culture: the well-tailored business suit. It evokes a telling form of deference from total strangers.

The waiter proved to be a trustworthy informant, because he recommended dishes that were slightly less expensive than originally ordered.

Rather than trying to line his own pockets, he seemed to have the customers' best interests at heart.

To all appearances, he was at once knowledgeable and honest, a combination that gave him great credibility.

Something that, on its own merits, held little appeal for me had become decidedly more attractive merely because it would soon become unavailable.

I routinely will interrupt an interesting face-to-face conversation to answer the ring of an unknown caller.

In such a situation, the caller has a compelling feature that my face-to-face partner does not: potential unavailability.

If I don't take the call, I might miss it (and the information it carries) for good.

People seem to be more motivated by the thought of losing something than by the thought of gaining something of equal value.

For instance, homeowners told how much money they could lose from inadequate insulation are more likely to insulate their homes than those told how much money they could save.

Convince customers of an item's scarcity and thereby increase its immediate value in their eyes.

When increasing scarcity - or anything else - interferes with our prior access to some item, we will react against the interference by wanting and trying to possess the item more than before.

Tendency to want what has been banned and therefore to presume that it is more worthwhile.

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.

Customers who heard of the impending scarcity via “exclusive” information purchased six times the amount.

The drop from abundance to scarcity produced a decidedly more positive reaction to the cookies than did constant scarcity.

We are most likely to find revolutions where a period of improving economic and social conditions is followed by a short, sharp reversal in those conditions.

Thus it is not the traditionally most downtrodden people - who have come to see their deprivation as part of the natural order of things - who are especially liable to revolt.

Instead, 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.

This pattern offers a valuable lesson for would-be rulers:

When it comes to freedoms, it is more dangerous to have given for a while than never to have given at all.

The parent who grants privileges or enforces rules erratically invites rebelliousness by unwittingly establishing freedoms for the child.

There was a certain cookie that was the highest rated of all: those that became less available because of a demand for them.

As soon as we feel the tide of emotional arousal that flows from scarcity influences, we should use that rise in arousal as a signal to stop short.

Panicky, feverish reactions have no place in wise compliance decisions.

We need to calm ourselves and regain a rational perspective.

In his book *Future Shock*, Alvin Toffler provided early documentation of the unprecedented and increasing rapidity of modern daily life:

we travel more and faster

we relocate more frequently to new residences, which are built and torn down more quickly

we contact more people and have shorter relationships with them

we are faced with an array of choices among styles and products that were unheard of the previous year and may well be obsolete or forgotten by the next.

Novelty, transience, diversity, and acceleration are acknowledged as prime descriptors of civilized existence.

Source: [Influence - by Robert Cialdini | Derek Sivers](#)