
BOOK REVIEW

"Influence: The Psychology of Persuasion" by Robert B. Cialdini

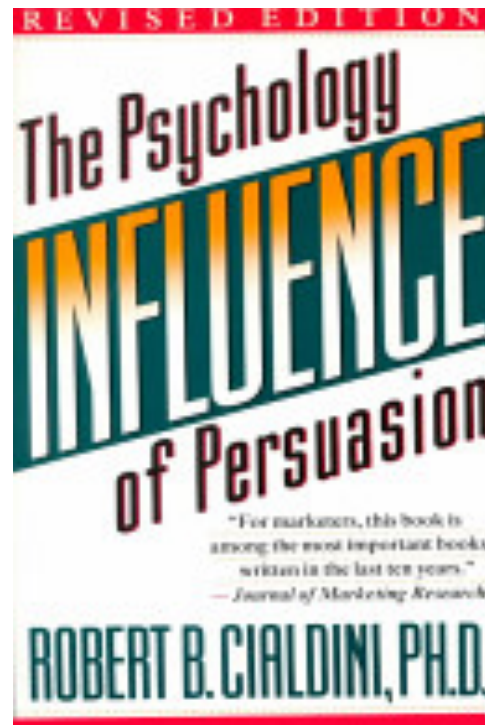
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You have probably come across people who just can't take 'No' for an answer and you may have found yourself in big trouble after complying with their wishes. Perhaps instead, you have found yourself in a situation whereby other people find their agendas more important than yours? How about putting an end to it all? "Influence: The Psychology of Persuasion" is a book that gives you insight on how you can defend yourself against manipulation from others.

It is a book that guarantees you two things. Firstly, you will be able to identify when these tendencies occur and be in a position to avoid being misled in future. Therefore, you will never say 'Yes' again when deep down there is a resounding 'No.' Secondly, you will become more persuasive than ever. Sounds great, doesn't it? All you have to do is to get this book that is written by an insightful author by the name Robert B Cialdini.

Dr. Cialdini, a social psychologist became interested in knowing why people comply with the demands of others and decided to carry out a research on the subject. He assumed the role of an undercover agent and decided to take his research in fields such as sales, advertising, fund raising and PR among others. At the end of his research, he compiled a summary of his findings and put them together in the book, "Influence: The Psychology of Persuasion." Therefore, this book is full of practical advice that is backed up by research and anecdotes. Every chapter of the book is riveting and very useful. So, brace yourself to receive the power of persuasion right at the comfort of your home or office as you peruse through the pages.

The author of the book has identified 6 ways in which people are consistently, unsuspectingly and automatically persuaded. They are as follows:

1. Reciprocity

The supreme rule of reciprocity states that a favor should be returned with another. Therefore, a just exchange does not involve deceit in any way. If someone gives you something, we tend to feel indebted towards them and are therefore in a sense "vulnerable." If you find out that someone is using the reciprocity rule to extort a favor from you, it is perfectly fine for you to decline the favor.

2. Consistency and Commitment

This involves trusting your inborn instincts, which is the best way of preventing yourself from falling prey to manipulative people. Trust the very first feeling that you get to experience whenever you are caught up in a situation. If your guts tell you to look the other way, do not hesitate to do so.

3. Liking

It is very easy for you to be tricked by someone into thinking that you like him/her and you can end up being persuaded to do or say something that you do not want, just to avoid hurting his/her feelings. Before being convinced to do anything, it is important for you to evaluate the relationship you have with a person, and also determine the period of time you have known each other. This can help you to prevent others from taking advantage of your friendship.

4. Social proof

This is a powerful tool that can help you from being constantly overwhelmed by little and insignificant matters. You must keep in mind that, just because a huge number of people have a different opinion from you doesn't necessarily mean that they are right

and that you are wrong. These days, you will come across many 'actors' who will be more than willing to put up an act just to convince you otherwise.

5. Authority

Be sure to question the authority of other people and ask yourself whether their authority is genuine and relevant as well as what they stand to gain. If someone's authority is not genuine, then it is only wise for you not to trust anything that he/she says.

6. Scarcity

The scarcity of resources tends to force us to grab whatever we find in search for survival. Phrases like, "discount only of the first 25 sold" or "only 10 left" are designed to make you act promptly. Many people will try to change your mindset and show you that you will only find what you need from them. What you should keep in mind is that, just because someone is providing something that seems to be scarce, doesn't mean that whatever he/she is providing is of the best quality.

"Influence: The Psychology of Persuasion" is definitely a book to read if you think that you belong to the group of people that get manipulated easily. It's also a good read for the rest of us. The author has ensured that after reading the last chapter, you will have the power to stick to your 'NO' and no one will change your mind about it.

(Dr Darryl is a clinical and organizational psychologist as well as a credentialed executive and personal coach. He is also an author, international speaker and university lecturer. Dr Darryl assists people to find their strengths and reach their goals. Further information on Dr Darryl can be accessed from www.DrDarryl.com.)