

The 6 Principles of Influencing People

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The 6 Principles of Influencing People

Introduction

"Leadership is a word and a concept that has been more argued than almost any other I know. I am not one of the desk-pounding types that likes to stick out his jaw and look like he is bossing the show. I would far rather get behind and, recognizing the frailties and the requirements of human nature, would rather try to persuade a man to go along, because once I have persuaded him, he will stick. If I scare him, he will stay just as long as he is scared, and then he is gone." - Dwight David Eisenhower

"We control fifty percent of a relationship. We influence one hundred percent of it." - Barbara Colorose

"People are generally better persuaded by the reasons which they have themselves discovered than by those which have come in to the mind of others." - Blaise Pascal

I've been excited about writing this article ever since discovering the six principles of influence set out in Robert B. Cialdini's *Influence: The Psychology of Persuasion*. The whole subject of influence is captivating to me because it is powerful and exciting to learn how you can get other people to do what you want. It may sound "evil" at first when you hear about getting other people to do what you want, but it depends on how you use the skills of influence. Any type of persuasion can be immoral or unethical if used incorrectly or for unhealthy motives.

The funny issue with influence and persuasion is when people say it is "wrong". These people still attempt to manipulate others in their everyday lives. We all have a need to influence or persuade people. Whether it be asking for a cup of water or getting a sale, persuasion and influence occurs many times throughout your day whether you notice it or not. It is an inherent want within each of us to get what we desire, but it is the techniques we use and how we use them that determines if we are successful in getting what we want. The six principles I am sharing with you are effective techniques for influencing people to successfully get what you want.

In *Create Your Own Future* the author, Brian Tracy, provides the seven elements of human nature. They are the following in no particular order:

- 1) Selfish – You desire things for yourself.
- 2) Lazy – You want easier instead of difficult.
- 3) Greedy – You want more instead of less.
- 4) Impatient – You want things now instead of later.
- 5) Ignorance – You ignore information because you can't know everything.
- 6) Ambitious – You desire something better after taking action.
- 7) Vain – You have pride in yourself and your achievements.

I mention these elements of human nature because selfishness, laziness, and greed appear to be "evil" at first glance like influence is when hearing you can get other people to do what you want. However, if you think more deeply about each element, the seven elements each have their own degree of usefulness in our lives.

Firstly, take laziness as an example. We are all lazy by nature as we would rather to do things in an

easier fashion than in a difficult manner. This inherent laziness drives us to seek better solutions, innovations, paths of less resistance, and so forth. We would all rather be able to push a magical button to stop a person arguing with us than have to endure emotionally intense conflict.

I'll use ignorance as another example of the seven elements of human nature having their usefulness in our lives. By acknowledging that you will not know every little tidbit of information you force yourself to make an educated decision without knowing all the facts. You put yourself into a state of decisiveness. However, if you have too much ignorance, then you begin to make errors, poor decisions, and people will lose trust in you.

The same principles hold true with influence and persuasion. It has its good uses and bad uses. If you excessively use influence to get what you want because you are selfish, then it can begin to hurt yourself and your relationships. If you excessively use influence because you are greedy, then you will lose friends and persuasive power as you'll soon see in the first principle of influence. If you excessively use influence because you are lazy, then you will have poor relationships and fail to hungrily seek your own goals.

All principles of influence work at a subconscious level. As you will learn in the principle of authority, we don't hear of the title "doctor" and think to comply with the doctor's medical advice because of the person's title. We are influenced subconsciously which makes the certainty of such influential principles powerful. We think the decision to comply with a person's influential request comes from our own reasoning yet it is the influential principles penetrating into our subconscious mind which are the true causation of our decision. This is the difference between influence and persuasion. Influence is a way of affecting someone's behavior, attitudes, or beliefs, while persuasion tries to get someone to carry out a specific action.

“We think the decision to comply with a person's influential request comes from our own reasoning yet it is the influential principles penetrating into our subconscious mind which are the true causation of our decision.”

Once you go out and use these six principles of influence, if you ask somebody what were the influential principles that affected their decision, they will not be aware of such influences and say they came to the decision themselves. As long as someone perceives that they made a decision themselves, they will be far more likely to follow through and commit to the decision.

Behavior is strong when a decision is made on the person's own terms. This is the true power of influence. As a leader, parent, friend, or influencer of many people's lives, if you can get a person to comply with your request on their own terms, the person will have a phenomenal dedication and commitment that otherwise would not have been achievable.

These six principles I'm about to share with you will help you overcome the need to manipulate people through suspicious techniques like poor praise. The principles are successful most often in influencing people because they appeal to our human psychology. These principles “take advantage” of the short-cuts each of us are born with which we use to make decisions in our everyday lives. As you continue reading this article, you will discover why we become “victims” of each principle and from this you will increase your influential power.

I'd like to point out that the six principles of influence I'm about to share with you are from Cialdini's book on influence so if this whole topic interests you, then you'll love his book which is titled [*Influence*](#) (a must-read).

1. Principle of Influence: Commitment and Consistency

"Until one is committed, there is hesitancy, the chance to draw back, always ineffectiveness. Concerning all acts of initiative and creation, there is one elementary truth, the ignorance of which kills countless ideas and splendid plans: that the moment one definitely commits oneself, then providence moves too. A whole stream of events issues from the decision, raising in one's favor all manner of unforeseen incidents, meetings and material assistance, which no man could have dreamed would have come his way." - William Hutchinson Murray

"Repetition of the same thought or physical action develops into a habit which, repeated frequently enough, becomes an automatic reflex." - Norman Vincent Peale

"A habit cannot be tossed out the window; it must be coaxed down the stairs a step at a time." - Mark Twain

I know of couples who are not at all happy together and get nothing pleasurable out of their relationship. Each day is misery. The lady complains about how careless, unloving, and selfish her partner is. The guy complains about how he doesn't care about her and that she is so nagging. They have little positive feelings towards one another. Why then do the individuals remain in a relationship?

In many cases, the individuals remain in a relationship because of the commitment and consistency principle of influence. The commitment and consistency rule states that once we make a decision, we will experience pressure from others and ourselves to behave consistently with that decision. You can be pressured into making either good or bad decisions depending on your past actions. In a relationships context, the commitment and consistency principle is a destroyer of [having a clear decision to break up](#).

Put yourself in an individual's shoes who is experiencing extremely negative emotions towards his or her partner and think about how the commitment and consistency principle would influence your decision to stay in the relationship. Perhaps you have children, possessions, or family who are close together that pressure you to not break up. All these influences do not need to explicitly encourage you to not break up. Rather, they indirectly influence you to not break up because doing so would destroy the consistency which is present in your life. It would be disrupting, uncomfortable, and bewildering to break up.

Cognitive Dissonance

Think of the last time you purchased something really expensive. Was it a car, computer, or insurance? Now, think about the thoughts you had after making the purchase. You would have felt excited, but after a few days of the purchase you would begin to question your decision. You would ask yourself questions like: "Was it the right thing to do?" "Did I make a mistake?" Or "Should I have purchased the other option?" This process where you have after-thoughts of a purchase is known as *cognitive dissonance*.

You may be thinking that cognitive dissonance (second-guessing your actions) and the commitment and consistency principle (past decisions guide your future actions) are conflicting. Not so. Think of that expensive item I asked you about just before. While you would have experienced cognitive dissonance, you would have been searching for as much information to reinforce that your initial decision was in fact the correct one to have made. You felt pressured into reinforcing your past decisions with beliefs, thoughts, feelings, and outside information that tell you your decision was a

good one. It is the commitment and consistency principle at work in your life!

Starting Small Steps

Adapting the commitment and consistency principle more directly on our communications with one another, it is as powerful as elsewhere. Let's say I am collecting donations for a foundation that helps fund the operations of sick children. I knock on your door and am dressed casually. You open the door and do not know who I am. With a smile on my face, I start some good small-talk with you. After engaging you in a conversation for a minute or even only ten seconds, if I can elicit positive emotions and words from you, then my influential power will drastically increase. Once I get you to express yourself positively, I then make my request for a donation.

Since you have explicitly stated a positive message or two about yourself such as how good you are feeling, how great of a day it is, or how nice I am :) , it becomes more difficult for you to not make a donation. By declining to make a donation you are breaking the commitment and consistency principle because you said you are feeling great yet you did something “negative” by turning down my request. When refusing to make a donation you are no longer behaving consistently. (By the way, are you feeling good? Cool! [Donations welcomed](#) :) .)

“Once we make a decision, we will experience pressure from others and ourselves to behave consistently with that decision.”

The commitment and consistency doesn't mean you will always give a donation to someone when you publicly declare that you are feeling great, but it does increase the chance of such an event occurring. This is the reason why [publicly stating your goals can increase the chances of you achieving them](#). Once you tell others about your goals, your subconscious mind forces you to behave consistently with the public statement and achieve your goals.

Congruency

The basis of the commitment and consistency principle in communications is to get the person(s) you are trying to influence to express themselves in a way that is congruent with what you want them to do. The secret here is “congruency” such that the initial steps you get the person to take are aligned with the larger steps you hope for them to take. We all know little changes are easier to make than big changes so use this to your advantage when communicating with people. The little steps you initiate in the other person creates a path that he or she feels compelled to follow. Should there be pressure tactics in the situation, the person will feel pressured by the situation and not you which is what influences the person's decision to remain committed and follow your ultimate request.

Overcome Commitment and Consistency

If you are worried about the commitment and consistency principle badly influencing a decision you are trying to make, use what Brian Tracy in [Change Your Thinking, Change Your Life](#) calls “zero-based thinking”. You simply ask yourself, “Knowing what I know now, would I get into (state the problem) again?”

To demonstrate zero-based thinking, let's come back to the individuals who were extremely unhappy with each other at the start of this principle. These people would use zero-based thinking by asking, “Knowing what I know now, would I get into the relationship again?” If the answer is “no” and you

desire to remain in the same circumstance, then it is the commitment and consistency principle that is influencing your decision to remain committed. If this is the case, I'd strongly advise you to rethink your situation.

The commitment and consistency principle is a powerful influencer in the decisions we make everyday. By knowing how this principle works you are able to get people to take small steps that are aligned with your ultimate request and have them follow up on a long-term basis without you constantly nagging the person. The commitment and consistency principle ensures a long-term commitment to any decision.

2. Principle of Influence: Reciprocation

"When you give yourself, you receive more than you give." - Antoine de Saint-Exupery

"Trying to get without first giving is as fruitless as trying to reap without having sown." - Napoleon Hill

"Whether by presenting us with an initial favor or initial concession, the requester will have enlisted a powerful ally in the campaign for our compliance. At first glance, our fortunes in such a situation would appear dismal. We could comply with the requester's wish and, in so doing, succumb to the reciprocity rule. Or, we could refuse to comply and thereby suffer the brunt of the rule's force upon our deeply conditioned feelings of fairness and obligation. Surrender or suffer heavy casualties." - Robert Cialdini in [Influence](#)

Have you ever wondered why organizations: give you free samples of their products, donate money to charity, or do something that is generally perceived as nice? Yes, they can get you to trial their products and if you like the products then they will have you as a buying customer. They also can get free publicity by donating money to a charity. However, there is another side to this story.

The rule of reciprocation states that humans have an inherent desire to return favors. This influential principle is beneficial to an organization when you feel their free sample or donation is a favor for you. By doing you a favor they will have influenced you to return it in the form of buying their products or services.

The organization example is not the best to demonstrate the principle of reciprocation because we sometimes don't perceive it as a favor. If we perceive a tactic as a trick, then it will backfire. The principle of reciprocation says we return favors with favors and not tricks with favors. Do not fall for making a decision or getting another to make a decision based off a trick.

In the introduction of this course, I mentioned [how each influential principle can be misused](#). Even though a principle can be used for the wrong reason, it does not make the principle itself "wrong". It is up to you to not manipulate others with the reciprocation rule in tricking the person that you did them a favor.

Reciprocation in Personal Relationships

There are stronger applications of this influential principle than the one I provided where an organization gives you a free sample of their products. Think of how the rule of reciprocation could apply to our relationships. Do you think it would be possible to get an attractive partner by doing them favorable things?

The short answer to this question is "no". The human emotions of attraction, love, and intimacy

cannot be consistently manipulated with favors. If a person believes it can be, then they need to contrast their current experience with a non-manipulating experience and they will see the difference. This isn't to say that people like supermodels won't marry rich guys for their favors. The couple just won't feel the attraction and intimacy. They will experience an unfulfilling relationship based on gifts. Attraction is too strong of an emotion to be manipulated by a favor. Those who are in relationships because of favors have ulterior motives.

“Humans have an inherent desire to return favors.”

I don't know whether this is clear to you, but think of guys who buy women drinks at a bar or nightclub. The guys are unknowingly using the rule of reciprocation in a poor context by trying to do the woman a favor and hoping for something in return. Of course, the women accept the drinks then give the guy a cold shoulder.

Reciprocation has its place in getting the relationships you want, but only to a degree. This influential principle does not replace the rules of relationships. It is only complementary meaning it must be used with other relationship skills. In a serious relationships context like trying to strengthen your marriage or finding a lifetime partner, reciprocation will be less useful than if it was for a normal friendship.

Verbal Favor and Reciprocation

The power behind compliments lays in the basis of the reciprocation rule. You'll notice that when someone gives you a “verbal favor” like a compliment, you all of a sudden feel compelled to return the favor by complimenting the person back. If the compliment was well delivered, you'll stutter your way into quickly trying to find something you can compliment the person on. The principle of reciprocation has as much power through words than it does through physical gifts.

Do the Favor First

You can get more out of the reciprocation principle by firstly doing the person a favor prior to making your request. This isn't just religious, but a proven component of reciprocation within influence. Investing in your relationships and most other things upfront, will give you a future return that will often be larger than your investment. It is not unusual to receive a large favor from someone at a later time in reciprocation to a small favor you gave earlier on.

Business owners are generally encouraged to offer something upfront to another business before requesting a partnership or some joint venture deal. Doing so increases the strength of the relationship and the likelihood of the giver to receive a larger return later on. To move up in your career of choice, I advise you to begin donating your services to those who influence how successful you become. Join groups, clubs, and organizations where there are “big players” in your career, then offer your time and efforts. If you constantly do so with enthusiasm and in a successful manner, I can almost guarantee those “big players” will want to help you.

Contrasting Principle

A salesman will offer you an expensive item which he knows you will reject. He then offers you a cheaper item which is made to appear as an attractive offer because of the contrasting with the expensive item. The salesman uses the contrasting rule where the less expensive item is seen as desirable solely because it is contrasted against an expensive item. The example also incorporates the reciprocation rule because the cheaper item acts like a favor he is doing for you because he is

“saving” you money.

Realtors have been known to use this influential tactic unethically by taking their potential customer to a steeply overpriced house the housing agency has reserved for this specific influential tactic. Once the customers see the undesirable house, the Realtor then shows the house the customer is most likely to buy. The cheaper and more desirable house is seen as a wonderful deal when compared against the overpriced dump seen earlier. The Realtor is making use of the contrasting and reciprocation principles.

The contrasting principle does not work when the first request that is made appears to be unreasonable. In fact, the influential tactic is likely to backfire and decrease your influential power. It is absolutely necessary for the first request to appear reasonable such that the person believes the “jump” from the first to second request isn't extremely large. Your first request can't be seen as a bluff. We all know when an initial request is extreme and we feel manipulated as a result. The contrasting principle is believable and honest. You don't have to expect the person to accept your first request though it should be within reason for them to. If a person does accept your first request, then you have just received more out of the situation!

To further demonstrate the contrasting principle, let's say you are trying to get your children to do the dishes by using the contrasting principle. The principle would backfire when you make your first request, “Would you all like to clean the entire house?” which the children would straight-away decline as they know it's unreasonable. You follow it up with the request that is your goal, “Would you children please do the dishes?” Your children would likely refuse to do the dishes because you made an unreasonable first request where you “abused” the contrasting principle and principle of reciprocation.

You would have greater success in getting your children to do the dishes by firstly making a larger request that appears reasonable such as, “Would you children please sweep the kitchen floor and then do the dishes?” You follow this initial request up with the second request you wish for them to accept, “Okay. Would you children please do the dishes?”

You don't have to be limited to giving gifts and other donations to use the principle of reciprocation. As you remember from above, giving well-deserved praise such as a compliment can influence the person to return the favor. Think of ways you can use reciprocation and contrasting in your conversations and you'll be well on your way to increasing your influential power.

3. Principle of Influence: Scarcity

"Forbidden things have a secret charm." - Publius Cornelius Tacitus

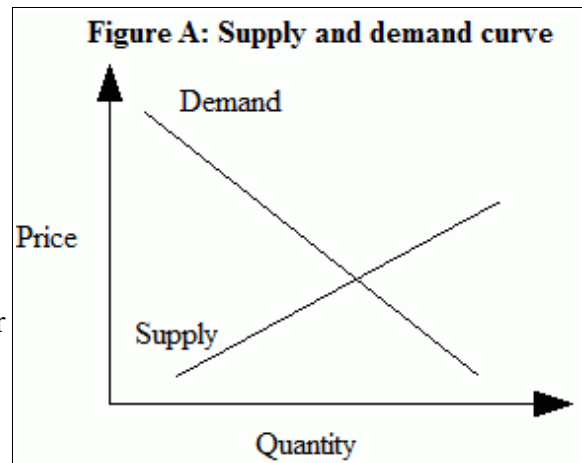
"One cannot collect all the beautiful shells on the beach. One can collect only a few and they are more beautiful if they are a few." - Anne Morrow Lindbergh

"Without a sense of urgency, desire loses its value." - Jim Rohn

When I came to write about the principle of scarcity, I had a limited idea of how the principle relates to communication, relationships, and success. It is a great principle to use in business and sales, but I had trouble relating it to these areas that we are interested in. Then it hit me. Scarcity is far more abundant (pun intended) in our everyday lives than we realize. This relates back to influence in general which often goes undetected in affecting our decision making.

The principle of scarcity states that we are more easily persuaded when the resource is limited. Scarcity is a fundamental principle in economics within the supply and demand curve. (As I explain scarcity in a business and economics context, I want you to think of how it applies to communication and relationships.) Referring to figure A, you can see that as supply decreases, so does the quantity in demand. However, people are willing to pay more for those fewer resources. On the contrary, when the quantity is large, people will pay less for the resources. My university microeconomics' lecturer would be proud of me after that description.

Organizations and salespeople use scarcity to increase demand. They will bring in the most profit when they calculate the point at which the supply and demand lines intersect. The organization will often not change the number of items available, but communicate the item is scarce. It is a matter of communicating to consumers that a shirt, car, or collector stamp, is only available in a limited quantity. Consumers can have a total “mind-shift” where a once disinterested consumer becomes hungry to devour the product.



When sales are on, you will hear scarcity phrases like “limited time only”, “only 50 available”, “sale ends tomorrow”, and “don't miss your chance”. These all get us to go into the respective stores and purchase their products instead of procrastinating about the purchase decision.

If you haven't realized yet, you can adapt these same principles businesses use, in everyday conversations for persuading people. Tell the person there is “limited time”, “a rare opportunity”, or “high demand because it's popular”. In the case of getting someone to go out with you and have fun, you could use a sentence along the lines of “Come out because we haven't had the chance since (last time you went out). It's rare we have such an opportunity.”

“We are more easily persuaded when the resource is limited.”

To take similar phrases to the next level, use scarcity picture words. I think the scarcity phrases mentioned above appeal to both the left and right brain functions because they are verbal and mathematical numbers (left brain) but also contextual and focus on the future (right brain). Picture words use the right brain because they get the person to visualize and feel the emotions of those pictures. A few examples of scarcity picture words you can use are:

- “The opportunity is falling through our fingers and we need to grasp it now before it's too late.”
- “The hourglass was turned a while ago and has almost run out. We need to act now.”
- “This is as rare as your boss buying you a BMW. If you're lucky enough for it to happen, you better take advantage of it because it ain't going to happen again.”

The primary reason scarcity is so effective for influencing people is that generally we are more motivated by loss than gain. Scarcity implies rarity, high quality, and high demand, all influences that increase our demand for the resource. We can become irrational when a resource is scarce and do things we never thought we would do. It is difficult to think clear when scarcity is being intensely used.

Job Interview

To further expand on how the principle of scarcity influences our everyday living (because I think most people do not comprehend it's high frequency), take the example of job interviews. If you have one job interview, then the scarcity of interviews makes you highly value this one interview. This puts extreme pressure on you to get that job and is likely to cause you to perform poorly in the interview. On the other hand, if you have many job interviews, you place less emphasis on each interview as each one is not very scarce. The interviews possess less value which allow you to relax, perform better, and increase the chances of you landing a job.

Dating

When a single-person becomes extremely fixated on dating somebody of the opposite sex, the value of this person greatly increases causing the single-person to think about and micromanage any interaction when they are together. All this does is amplify the scarcity principle and make the single-person become stressed, anxious, and desperate. In the dating world for men, guys who become extremely fixated on one girl are diagnosed with “one-itis”. It's a very common plague for men and the cure is to go date more women because the men are being deluded with scarcity. They need to see there is an abundance of opportunities out in the world.

Keeping on the dating topic, a woman's attraction for a guy is increased when the guy is scarce. Yes, like resources, people are a commodity. A guy who is surrounded by women is heaps more attractive to other women. In fact, a woman's attraction can become so distorted from such a situation, that she'd do things which would surprise many people including herself.

Competition

The scarcity principle states that our demand for a resource increases when it is scarce and even more so when we are in competition for the resource. Whenever you have the chance in persuading people, communicate that there is competition for the opportunity at hand or how other people are desperate in this circumstance to take action. What you are doing is communicating that there is competition and scarcity in the situation. Social proof is another influence in this situation, which you'll learn about in the sixth principle of influencing people.

What makes scarcity very interesting to me is that we actually don't enjoy having the scarce resource more than if it was an abundant resource. The pleasure isn't gained from using the resource. It is gained from merely just having the resource. Knowing we have it provides a sense of pride and security. You're not going to have a better relationship with a person who is highly sought after by others. You'll merely derive an illusion for yourself when the influence comes from scarcity.

Romeo and Juliet Effect

There are many applications of scarcity that would be great to discuss in depth, but I'll only discuss a few more. Expanding on scarcity in relationships, Robert Cialdini in [Influence](#) mentions a study that had some astonishing findings about the “Romeo and Julie effect”. The study analyzed parental influence on 140 couples in the American state of Colorado. When parents hindered the relationship, each individual in the couple were more critical of the other. The amazing finding was that in spite of this, the couples also experienced more love and romance. So a note to all parents who are against their children's love relationships: the more you intervene in the relationship, the more you will increase the love and romance in relationship.

Availability of Information

An interesting law of happiness is that we are happy to the degree which we are controlled. The more you are out of control in your life, the less happy you will be. An “out of control life” can consist of other people telling you what to do, obligations you must fulfill, and general things against your will. A powerful and frequent message in my [communication secrets of making people like you program](#) lays in teaching people to not control others; whether it be through criticism, giving advice, threatening, or sending solutions. All these are negative influences that will destroy a relationship because it causes the person you are communicating with to “lose control of their life”.

When governments, parents, managers, and partners, limit the availability of information, the person being controlled will usually want it more. A partner who forbids their loving other of interacting with a certain person, whether it be because of jealousy or pride, actually increases their partner's desire to be with that person. The amazing fact with this is the thing which is banned can all of a sudden be wanted a lot more because becomes scarce. Stephen Worchel has done several studies on how censorship affects our demand for the resource. When things become censored, banned, or in some way restricted, we have an increased desire to obtain the information. In addition, we gain more pleasure when we possess such information.

“The pleasure isn't gained from using the resource. It is gained from merely just having the resource.”

Parents can be extremely tempted to remove their children's access to certain things when they disobey a rule. As a parent or manager, remember that if you take away something, you are increasing its scarcity. The most common reaction to this is rebellion and wanting the resource more. A good parent will be consistent in what they offer towards their children. This establishes what areas in the child's life he or she can be expected to be controlled or not controlled in.

By limiting a resource you are increasing the child's desire for the resource more so, then if it were already at that level of availability. When a resource is made less available than if it were already at the reduced level, we are more influenced to want the resource. If you haven't been consistent in your parenting, then the best thing you can do now is to begin being consistent and that may mean starting scarcity. It'll be hard to change the behavior in the beginning, but it will change and become easier. The sample holds true for managers changing the behavior of employees and the like.

I feel the dilemma where we don't value the time spent with family is because of scarcity. Spending time with family is an abundant resource for most us that it loses its value. Many people would prefer to hang out with their friends or new loved one. However, if they do that, then the demand and supply curve shifts causing a diminishing value of the “resource”. If you constantly hang out with your friends, then you will have less value in the time you spend with them. It won't be as much fun.

In conclusion, scarcity is a common influence in our everyday decision making. We are frequently unaware of how it affects our decisions. Scarcity influences us in how we respond to opportunities, find a partner, procrastinate, and spend time with family to name a few situations. By understanding the principle of scarcity and its many applications, you are able to incorporate yet another powerful principle of persuasion into your communication skills to get people to do what you want.

4. Principle of Influence: Authority

"Language is surely too small a vessel to contain these emotions of mind and body that have somehow awakened a response in the spirit." - Radclyffe Hall

"All things are subject to interpretation whichever interpretation prevails at a given time is a function of power and not truth." - Friedrich Nietzsche

"You don't have to hold a position in order to be a leader." - Anthony D'Angelo

The doorbell rings at home and you are greeted by two men in police officer uniforms. They ask you if they can come into your house to discuss the recent kidnapping that took place in the neighborhood. You are keen to help the police in their investigation so you let them inside and begin discussing the kidnapping with them. After five minutes discussion, one of the officers sees a necklace on the table and says it is similar to the victim's necklace on the day of the kidnapping. Shocked, you begin defending yourself by saying where you got the necklace and how long you've had it. The officers agree with you and are calm about the situation, but they say the necklace should be verified that it isn't a part of the crime scene by taking back to the station. They tell you to pick it up tomorrow and give you the address of the police station and the ID number of the necklace for reference purposes.

Would you give them the necklace? If somebody were actually in the situation and experiencing the emotions, I believe most people would actually comply with the officers' request. "So what?" I hear you ask. Here's the thing. Who said they were truly police officers? They aren't police officers. They are con men. If you just gave them your necklace, then I'm sorry to say that you were conned!

The principle of authority states that we are more easily persuaded by those with authority. When a doctor gives you medical advice, you are much more willing to follow the doctor's advice than if an ordinary person gave you the same advice. If Andre Agassi were to give you tennis lessons, you would follow his advice more thoroughly than if you received advice from a local tennis coach.

"We are more easily persuaded by those with authority."

You maybe thinking that authority is authoritative power like an overbearing boss. It can be, but that isn't the type of authority in influence I recommend you begin developing. Author of *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, Stephen Covey, says "Most people think of leadership as a position and therefore don't see themselves as leaders." You need to know that you can influence others without any assigned position of power. An overbearing boss will influence you because of the person's title, but you don't need to be in an assigned position of power to possess authority. There are symbols of authority you can use to increase your authority and persuasive power.

Symbols of Authority

Most people would be deceived by con men because of symbols of authority. The three typical symbols of authority are title, clothing, and perceivable wealth. Title can be the occupation's prefix like "doctor" and "professor" or even the occupation's name like , "officer", "lawyer", "surgeon", "trainer", "gardener", and "consultant". The second symbol of authority is clothing which consists of all the clothing a person is wearing. Lastly, perceivable wealth can consist of the respective person's car, house, jewelery, business, and any other wealth the person being influenced can see.

In the police example, the con men used clothing as a symbol of authority in deceiving you that they were police officers. When the "officers" knocked on your door, did you stop to ask for proof

of their position as police officers? Or did you perceive their clothing as proof of their position as police officers? If you were conned, you would have assumed their wearing of officer uniforms meant they were police officers. Clothing has an enormous amount of authority; maybe as much as the position itself. Mark Twain humorously said, “Clothes make the man. Naked people have little or no influence on society.”

Manipulating the Symbols of Authority

Con men can manipulate the symbols of authority so it is also possible for you to alter them and for more ethical purposes. Firstly, I'll discuss clothing. Whatever message you are trying to communicate, make sure your clothes match the message. If you want to communicate wealth and power, then a well-fitted suit will do. If you want to communicate attractiveness, then wear stylish clothes that match you as a person. If you want to communicate freedom, relaxation, or leisure, then wear casual clothes like a plain shirt, shorts, and even sandals.

Next is title. Depending on what qualifications you have, you can search for the appropriate [job titles](#) and begin using them more often. If you find there are no titles that you can use, then perhaps consider doing some training to gain the title. Maybe you want to be a “counselor”, “practitioner”, or “trainer”, and to get these titles just involves doing a little extra learning. The knowledge gained from the training won't do you any harm in increasing your expertise.

Lastly is perceivable wealth. Clothing can communicate wealth, which further emphasizes the need to dress well. However, the most wealthy usually don't dress the best. They have no need to. You shouldn't need to dress in the most expensive clothing, but it's fine to be the most stylish. However, be careful with how much perceivable wealth you have in some situations. When you have excessive perceivable wealth, people can think you are overcompensating for other areas in your life and the tactic could backfire. Be aware of the trade off between overcompensation and influential authority.

Follow the Leader

What happens if you have a successful leader at work, sport, or in the family? You follow the leader. The person's influence isn't once off or temperamental. The leader is able to influence others on an ongoing basis. You continue to follow the leader. The law of good continuation is a principle of Gestalt laws of perceptual organization and states objects are perceived to be smooth because of a pattern. (My [communication secrets program](#) has four other Gestalt laws of perceptual organization plus an entire chapter on perception because it is the filter that determines how we interact with the world.) When we are presented with patterns of consistency, we assume the same consistency will exist into the future.

The law of good continuation in leadership means followers of a leader will “blindly” accept the leader's decisions because of past successes. Followers fail to critically think and question the leader's actions because the leader has proven himself in the past to make good decisions. The great Albert Einstein said, “Unthinking respect for authority is the greatest enemy of truth.” It is a common and fair enough mistake to make.

The law of good continuation tells us that you will meet less resistance by most followers you are influencing once you get into the position of influence. However, should you get yourself into such a position of authority, don't be afraid to encourage those following you to continually question your actions, because in the end the outcome will fall back on you.

Size and Status

In the animal world, size is often a way to communicate status. Kangaroos stand on their tails to appear taller as they enter a fight, Puffer Fish fill their stomachs with water to enlarge their body and scare off predators, and Bearded Dragons can straighten the skin on their head to appear larger and fend off threats. Prior to a fight, many animals have this natural mechanism of sizing each other up to gain an understanding of how powerful their competitors are. If an animal is intimidated by the size of its competitor, then the fight may not take place. It is nature's way of discerning the healthy alpha males from the less healthy and weak males without the specie making itself extinct by constantly fighting.

“When we are presented with patterns of consistency, we assume the same consistency will exist into the future.”

In the human world, we have a very similar natural selection process. This selection process is far more sophisticated and expands into areas beyond fights. However, in terms of size and status, we aren't at all very different. Taller people and those who are more muscularly defined, are seen to possess more status in our society. From what I know, there isn't much you can do about height, but you should workout at the gym to improve your strength and pack on muscle.

What the animal world doesn't have which the human world has, is a vice-a-versa relationship between size and status. While size relates to status for animals and humans, status influences size for humans. By improving your status, people will perceive you as being bigger than you really are. This in turn can increase your ability to influence people.

I was once listening to a DVD by [David DeAngelo](#) and a guest speaker, [Dr. Georges Sabongui](#), was talking about the relationship between size and status. Dr. Sabongui was once a commander in the Canadian Navy where he learned how to project a presence. It was absolutely necessary for him to project a powerful presence because anyone in the room he was in had to know he was in charge. He is five foot six, but people often mistook him for being six foot tall because of his powerful non-verbal communication. You can project a presence and more authority through powerful body language.

To increase people's perception of your size and at the same time increase your influential authority among many other benefits, there are some simple body language tips you can start using. These body language tips will further help you to project a powerful presence. Firstly, behave “as if”. Act out the body language you would have in a room if you were the person in authority. Secondly, look people in the eye. Thirdly, take up more space. Spread your legs, lean, and have movement in your gestures. A powerful President doesn't look like he is constricted to a cage. This tip applies more so for men than it does for women. Lastly, have a confident posture. Lift your chest up and this will bring your neck, back, and head perfectly into place.

Remember that all principles of influence get the person to comply with the request on their own terms. They come to the solution “themselves”. Using the advice given in this principle to increase your influential authority will make others comply with your requests and have people liking you more; unlike a bureaucratic boss that employees resent. By implementing the four body language tips and combining them with the three symbols of authority, you will greatly increase your authority and influential power.

5. Principle of Influence: Liking

"Man prefers to think what he prefers to be true." - Francis Bacon, Sr.

"Leadership comes through respect, and a large part of respect is liking someone." - Carol Leonard

"Each man is led by his own liking." - Virgil

You arrive at a bus station where you wait for a bus to go to work. While you are waiting, a poor looking guy with messy hair who is dressed in dirty clothes sits next to you at the bus stop. "Ready for a big day today?" the man asks you and the conversation starts from there. You're surprised that he is so open to talking with you as most people who wait at the bus stop hardly make eye contact with anyone.

The two of you have a fun and interesting conversation for five minutes, then your bus arrives and the two of you get up to walk on the bus. However, the man says he doesn't have a couple of dollars to pay for the bus fare, but you happily pay his fare for him. The principle of liking is at work in this situation and is a powerful influence in how we interact with anyone.

The principle of liking says that people will say "yes" more often to those they like. Had the poor man not made you like him through the interesting conversation, you would have been less likely to comply with his request of paying his bus fare. If there was a situation of choosing who would likely follow your request between a complete stranger versus a friend, you can be very confident in knowing your friend is more likely to comply with your request than the stranger.

"...people will say 'yes' more often to those they like."

There are six principles of liking: physical attractiveness, familiarity, compliments, association, cooperation, and similarity.

1. Physical Attractiveness

Attractive women have a lot of influential power. More so around guys. Most men would bend over backwards for an attractive woman (pun intended). If the woman asked of these guys to do something for her like: buy her a drink, drive her somewhere, or to borrow his mobile phone for a call, the guys would very likely comply. It is a fact that more guys would comply with an attractive woman's request than an unattractive woman's request. The same goes for women being more likely to comply with requests from handsome guys than ugly guys. Physical attractiveness also influences someone in same gender situations.

People who are more physically attractive are generally more liked. If you're not so good looking, you probably hated reading that, but don't ignore this component of liking. It doesn't matter if you think looks are superficial because people will be judging you nonetheless. An unwillingness to use this component of liking means you will have less influential power with people.

On a scale of 1 to 10, I estimate that 99.99% of people can look at least a 5 (average looking) if they use the following tips. People just don't realize what parts of their looks are holding them back. In the [principle of authority](#), I provided some basic advice on clothing to improve your power and authority. I'm no stylist so the advice is very simple. Guys, if you have a partner or girl friends, ask them for their advice and perhaps they'll go shopping with you. Okay, they will definitely go shopping with you like metal to a magnet. They will love the idea of helping you out as long as you aren't all depressed about this whole "looks" subject.

In addition to clothing, there are plenty of other things you can do to improve your looks. Workout at least three days a week and eat healthy. This is the most powerful of the tips and is more life changing than just in improving your looks. You will have a lot more energy and a positive attitude which instantly affects: how you feel about yourself, how you influence people, and how you interact with people and yourself in general.

Get a modern haircut that is stylish. You can feel like a whole new person and dramatically get an upbeat attitude. Don't be afraid to try something new like bleaching, dye, or perming, but ask others beforehand about what they think. Before doing anything to extreme with your looks, it never hurts to ask others what they think would be good for you.

Always keep clean, hygienic, and smell good. Don't overdo makeup and jewelery. Keep all body hair to a clean level. If you're a guy with a beard, you'd likely benefit from shaving your beard off. A beard acts as a shield which can "prevent" you from connecting with people. It can also act as a mask that subcommunicates devious behavior such as lying. Funny by true. I don't think Osama Bin Laden did anything good for guys with beards.

2. Familiarity

We all like things that are familiar to us including people. Familiarity is a way of sorting through what's safe versus dangerous, good versus bad, reliable versus unreliable, fun versus boring, and believable versus unbelievable. If you cannot make someone feel familiar with you, then you'll lose out on a whole lot of influential power. I would hold more influential power towards you in this article if you are familiar with me. If you aren't familiar with me, then I don't have the full power of the liking principle working for me.

Each of us are usually familiar with those whom we have long-term relationships. We come to expect certain behaviors from these people. This provides us with a level of comfort because we like the known. We love to comprehend what we can expect from people and how somebody we've met fits into our lives. We are creatures of comfort and love familiarity even if there is a thing we hate because we then know to stay away from it.

"We are creatures of comfort and love familiarity..."

Making yourself familiar to someone is far more than asking each other questions and talking for hours. In fact, I think that is the least effective method for creating familiarity. A "dirty" tactic you can use to make someone like you is to link yourself with someone or something the person you are talking to knows about. You heard the person say they like gardening so tell them how much you enjoy gardening. You see the person wearing football socks so talk to them about the latest game. Talk about subjects that are familiar and enjoyable to the other person.

By using this technique for building familiarity, you not only get the other person doing most of the talking because they are talking about what they enjoy, you are incorporating two other components of liking: association and similarity. What you are doing is subtly linking yourself to information the person already knows about. The person will unconsciously associate qualities of people who love gardening or football to you. By the principle of association, you all of a sudden become familiar to the person.

3. Compliments

Compliments can be an “iffy” subject. Think about it. A salesman knocks on your door and tells you that you are looking great. You'll instantly think, “What the! What does he want from me?” A coworker or employee tells you your hairstyle is looking great today. You'll instantly think, “Thanks. Wait... What was wrong with my other hairstyle?” A guy comes up to and awkwardly tells you how beautiful you are. If you're a guy you'll freak out and punch the guy. If you're a lady you'll think, “Ugh! He's hitting onto me.”

On the other hand, if the salesman complimented you on the lovely paving he walked across when he approached your front door, you'd feel happy and liking him more. If a coworker or employee thanked you for doing something today that made them feel better, you'll become all warm and fuzzy inside and like the person more. If a guys comes up to you and says “you've got great taste in your style”, then you'll likely be: caught off guard, thanking him for the compliment, and liking him more. However, should the guy continually give you compliments and other types of praise, then you'll begin to hate him!

Receiving well delivered praise is such a wonderful feeling, but when done wrong it can destroy a relationship. Think of a time someone gave you effective praise. How did that make you feel? You would have felt great and liking the person more! Given that the person complimented or encouraged you in an effective manner, you would have felt more “magnetized” towards the person. Now think of a time you were given poor praise. How did that make you feel? You would have felt manipulated and wondering what were the person's ulterior motives for praising you.

Compliments and other forms of praise when delivered effectively possess a lot of power to make people like you. It is no wonder than that I've written an entire chapter on giving people praise using things like encouragement, compliments, and other forms of behavioral conditioning in my [communication secrets of making people like you program](#). Go check it out for more powerful tips on making people like you.

4. Association

Ivan Pavlov's well known experiment around the 1890s about getting dogs to salivate at the ringing of a bell is important in making people like you. Pavlov developed what is known as reflex conditioning, classical conditioning, or association. Prior to the experiment, Pavlov noticed his dogs would go through routines prior to being feed. To further explore this reaction, he feed the dogs and rang a bell simultaneously over a period of time. After a while, Pavlov decided to not feed the dogs and just ring the bell. At the sound of the bell, the dogs began to salivate without being feed any food!

My dog has been conditioned to bark like a maniac whenever he hears the house doorbell ring because he associates the doorbell with an intruder. Even if just my family or I use the doorbell, he'll start howling until he sees who is at the door. Even then he sometimes doesn't stop barking!

In Richard Bandler and John Grinder's *Frogs Into Princes*, the authors discuss a neuro-linguistic programming (NLP) technique called “anchoring” which utilizes classical conditioning. Anchoring involves creating “bells” to make people “salivate”. For example, you can touch people at a certain time when they are happy and when they become unhappy, you touch them again and evoke happiness. The NLP technique is beyond this article, but if you'd like to learn more about it, go check out my review on the popular book and grab your copy.

There are other and more basic techniques you can use to create associations and increase your liking. Humans experience classical conditioning in so many ways you wouldn't believe it occurs almost every minute of our lives. One basic tip you can begin using the next time you tell some

recent news or events is to link yourself with good news and not bad. Another tip that you can use is from my [communication secrets program](#) where I encourage readers to tell somebody when they were praised by another person.

***“By becoming the 'middleman' of positive messages,
you transform into a likable person...”***

By becoming the “middleman” of positive messages, you transform into a likable person through the principle of association. Telling somebody good news or a compliment another person mentioned about them is almost as good as it originating from you. Sharing praise is a great way to give compliments without the risk of it being rejected and blowing up in your face. Link yourself with as many good things as possible and you will increase your liking.

5. Cooperation

Cooperation is a powerful step for teachers who want a successful classroom, parents who want a happy family, and managers who want happy and productive employees. From an ecological perspective, cooperation involves organisms living in a specific area and receiving mutual benefits. From a sociological perspective, cooperation involves the participants receiving mutual benefits like members on a sports team. From an economic perspective, cooperation again involves the participants receiving mutual benefits like an organization doing well.

Regardless of the perspective, we can see that cooperation goes beyond just working together. Cooperation is more than working together as a happy team. It is working towards a common purpose that involves each member receiving a benefit.

The opposite of cooperation is competition. From an ecological perspective, competition is fighting for water, food, and other necessities. From a sociological perspective, competition involves fighting for a common goal with losing and winning results. From an economic perspective, competition again involves competing and obtaining as much beneficial resources as possible.

Regardless of the perspective, we can see that competition goes beyond just “fighting” against someone else. Competition involves obtaining something such that the other participant misses out on the thing you obtained. It is working towards a common purpose for your own benefit and causing someone else to miss out on the benefit because you already have it or some portion of it.

When you are in cooperation with somebody, you will like the person more than if he/she was in competition with you. You see this affect in gangs and wars where members hate members of the side they are battling against purely because they are in competition with one another. I remember reading a poem in high school, which I can't find, where the poet writes about war and the perspective of competition. The two sides battling against one another would actually be friends had they not met in the heat of intense competition. However, because they are under brutal competition and fighting for the resource of living, they hate one another.

At work, socially, and in the family, we too often put ourselves and others in competition whether it be for a pay raise, attention, or love. We can exist on the same team yet competition will be present should the parties involved be after a resource that is limited or made available to only a select few. When competition is combined with the [principle of scarcity](#), you have a powerful combination for conflict. Internal conflict explodes when team members have individual ulterior motives that aren't in the team's best interests because of the principle of competition and cooperation. Wherever possible and whenever possible, cooperate with people such that you and them receive mutual

benefits should you both succeed. Also, minimize competition where the participants are not fighting over a beneficial resource.

6. Similarity

Take a look at your friends and other groups of people with whom you have happy relationships. You'll likely find one big similarity and that is similarities! Whether it be looks, hobbies, interests, occupation, or social activities, we like people who are similar to us.

“...we like people who are similar to us.”

The liking component of similarity is powerful for those who know how to successfully “manipulate” the technique. You can increase your similarity with somebody and hence increase your influential power with them, by using the same technique shared in the familiarity component of liking. If you are concerned about ethics, this is in no way unethical. All you are doing to “manipulate” the situation is expressing things about yourself which are similar to the person you are talking with.

Most people either aren't aware of how similarities affect friendship, leadership, influence, and most relationships, or they aren't proactive enough about making those similarities clear. We all are far similar to each other than most of us believe. It is a matter of having the skills to communicate those similarities.

Now, there are three main ways you can go about finding similarities. Firstly, you can spend a lot of time with the person and get to know them. The problem with this is we don't have time for whatever reason to frequently use this method. A second option involves peppering the person with questions until you are able to “mine” and “dig up” something about the person which is similar to you. Lastly, you can be smart about exploring the similarities by using a combination of techniques listed below:

Observe – look at what the person is wearing, observe the person's friends and other people he or she is with, and be on the lookout for other information that provides hints with what the person is interested in. If you see the person browsing the computer games section of the stores or wearing a football shirt, talk about these topics and be sure to eventually show a level of enthusiasm towards the subject which matches the enthusiasm the person communicates. You ask a person what computer games they are into after seeing them looking at the games, but it turns out they hate games and are just looking at them as a present for someone. Did you stuff up? No. You can talk about your dislike towards computer games because someone you knows wastes a lot of time playing them.

Listen for keywords – when we are in a conversation, we will use terminology or references to subjects that we like. This technique is a little more advanced, but very successful if you find these keywords when listening to someone talk. There are variations of this technique that can be used depending on the outcome you want like twisting words around to spark attraction or misinterpreting words to be funny for example, but we will use it for finding similarities. All you do is listen for keywords that indicate the person's interests and you then link yourself to that information. If your talking about houses and the person starts talking about electrical work, then chances are the person is into electrical work and so you express your enthusiasm for this subject. You don't have to know a lot about the subject, but you can show an interest and liking in the subject, which is what it takes to have someone like you.

Ask questions – it's okay to ask questions, but do so sparingly. Best friends don't hammer each other with questions. You can use questions if you think you're “onto something” in finding similarities.

In conclusion, we follow things we like more so than the things we dislike. The same goes for people and influence. By improving your physical attractiveness, making yourself familiar, giving effective compliments, successfully using the principle of association, being in cooperation, and having similarities, you can make people like you and increase your influential power.

If you're reading this right now and you are after many secrets of making people like you and having great relationships with lots of love and minimal fights, then I highly recommend you go get my [communication secrets of making people like you program](#) by [clicking here today](#).

6. Principle of Influence: Social Proof

"Men are like sheep, of which a flock is more easily driven than a single one." - Richard Whately

"Like the herd animals we are, we sniff warily at the strange one among us." - Loren Eiseley

"We herd sheep, we drive cattle, we lead people. Lead me, follow me, or get out of my way." - General George S. Patton

In New York City, the year was 1964, and something terrifying occurred. Most people who have since heard the story, struggle to believe such an incident would take place. However, had they have been in the same situation, they would have behaved in the same manner.

The event I'm referring to involves a lady by the name of Catherine Genovese who was publicly stabbed and killed. This killing had a lot of debate surrounding it from many people in various roles and responsibilities. They were all shocked at how such an event could occur and left dumbfounded at how the observers of the killing did nothing to save the lady.

Robert Cialdini in *Influence* describes the killing as one that wasn't done discretely in a dark alley hidden from other people. The shocking event occurred loudly over a 35 minute period with 38 of her neighbors not doing a single thing. They didn't even phone the police.

The media had previously concluded that the public killing took place because society was “cold” and careless of others. The observers didn't provide much useful information as to why they did nothing to help the murdered victim. Most of them said something along the lines of, “I don't know.” Neither answer was the true reason for the observers doing nothing useful to help the attacked lady.

“...people look to others and follow what they are doing.”

Later on, a pair of psychologists eventually found an accurate explanation. Their explanation comes from the sixth principle of influence, social proof, which states people look to others and follow what they are doing. In times of uncertainty where it is difficult to determine what exactly is going on, we will become more ignorant in an effort to “stay under the radar” and not get noticed. Whether yells are cries for help or playful shouts, loud bangs are someone dropping a heavy object or a gunshot, or a person wobbling down the street at night is drunk or very ill, it is “more safe” for

us to follow what everyone else is doing and do nothing.

The psychologists later tested a theory of whether the number of people present in an emergency would affect whether the person(s) present changed the likelihood of the victim being helped. The researchers didn't bash people over the heads with baseball bats to create a victim-scenario! Rather, they had someone fake a seizure to create the scenario for research purposes. The researchers found that individuals who were alone with the victim were more willing to attend to someone who appeared to be in need of assistance than when groups of people were present.

You maybe thinking that what took place in 1964 is different to nowadays. Well, it isn't. The principle of social proof that explains the reason for "cold and ignorant behavior", is just as powerful today. In early 2007, there was an attack in Los Angeles during broad daylight which was caught on camera. You can [watch it take place](#) on YouTube before your very eyes as approximately a hundred people standby and do nothing. Watch the video and as you see a few people walk towards the attack, more people follow and watch closely. The whole video is an example of social proof at work.

As safety advice, should you find yourself in an accident, experiencing a health problem, or being in a situation that requires another person's help, the best thing you can do is to remove as much uncertainty as possible. Make it clear you are in need of help and talk directly to specific individuals while telling them exactly what to do like calling an ambulance. Remove as much uncertainty from the situation as possible so that social proof doesn't work against you. Do a friend, coworker, or family member a favor by emailing them a link of this article. You never know, they could find themselves in a dangerous situation and understanding how social proof works may safe their life.

Building Momentum and Leadership

The principle of social proof is a very important influential principle in leadership and generally getting masses of people to do what you want. It is quite possibly the greatest technique for persuading masses of people. Any leader has very little chance to get each individual of a group to do what he or she wants. This is where social proof comes in handy.

An effective leader can put the principle of social proof into practice by persuading those who will be more easily persuaded first through persuasive techniques and the [other five principles of influence](#). By getting a few people to follow your lead and doing what you want, other members of the group observe those who are doing what you want and are more influenced to follow your request.

You can think of social proof as a chain reaction. Your request is an explosion while the people you are trying to persuade are crates of explosives. The ones closest to the explosion (those more easily persuaded) are triggered (comply with your request) once you give an effective "explosion" using influence and persuasion tactics. The next ones who are a little further behind (less easily persuaded) are then triggered because of nearby explosions (witnessing other people comply with your requests).

This process can go on until eventually, the most cold-hearted individual who completely refused to comply with the person's request at the beginning, starts thinking "everyone else is doing it so I must be wrong. I'll do it as well." The principle of social proof is extremely powerful and can convert a defiant individual into agreement.

You can further make use of social proof to get what you want by arranging situations in a way that increases the chances of social proof. Some ideas I have of how you can rearrange a situation to

create social proof is getting people you know well to work with you and comply with the request.

Another idea you can use for when you are in a social situation is communicating both directly and indirectly to someone about how great a friend is so that someone or a group likes your friend more. The reasoning behind this is that they are uncertain of how nice is your friend. You provide social proof and build momentum or a “chain reaction” that gets others to like your friend. As long as you're not egotistic and not obvious you are boasting about your friend, this technique should work. Another example of social proof in social situations is provided later on.

“Arrange situations in a way that increases social proof.”

If you are running a training program, perhaps you can ask certain people beforehand to do what you want when the time is appropriate. This tactic has unethically been used by multi-level marketing companies at seminars. They have “set up individuals in the crowd” to rush to the back of a room and buy the companies product when the public speaker announces the audience can now buy their books, audio, or video programs. The tactic can set off a stampede of people. I don't recommend you use any influential technique unethically. It's up to you on how you decide to use [each principle of influence](#).

Popularity and Dating

If you are a guy or girl interacting with a person or group of people, you can leverage the situation and have them provide social proof to you through your body language. When a guy approaches a girl, a very common mistake is poor proxemics (positioning of the body). An unconfident guy will stand still while the group he is approaching remains seated. He places himself out of position which makes him look desperate and needy. If the guy were to make good use of proxemics, he would position himself such that it looks like the group he approached wants to talk to him. He subtly rearranges the group or manages to get himself in a more dominant position to build social proof. In *The Game*, author Neil Strauss achieved this when he approached two women at a bar who were facing the bartender. He lent against the bench between the two ladies instead of standing which allowed him to be more dominate in the situation and improve his social proof.

In the [principle of authority](#), I provided one of five Gestalt laws of perceptual organization which I discuss in chapter 2 of my [communication secrets of making people like you program](#). A second one of these perceptual laws is the law of proximity which states that objects near one another are grouped together. When we see groups of people together, we treat them in a collective manner. A guy who is with an attractive lady or another person who is generally perceived as popular like a celebrity, the guy will appear more desirable to both guys and women.

Another tip you can use with rearranging the situation to increase social proof is to influence those who are similar to others you would like to influence. Testimonials for a company's product or service is a great example of social proof, but by having those who are giving testimonials be similar to others who the company would like to purchase their product or service, social proof is injected with steroids! As was discussed in the [principle of liking](#), we like those are similar to us and hence are more easily persuaded by them. When seeing someone in a similar situation to yours who is similar to you, the influence of social proof will be very strong.

Overcome Fear

Social proof is a useful tactic to overcome fear. The principle of social proof is effective when we

are uncertain. As fear is often built from uncertainty and not knowing what could happen or thinking something bad could happen, observing someone else confront the fear we have provides proof and certainty that the situation is safe.

As is true with social proof in general, you will be more likely to overcome a fear through social proof if the person or persons you are observing are similar to you. A 30 year old professional male who has a fear of public speaking will be more successful in using social proof to overcome his fear if he were to observe another 30 year old professional male speaking in public at a similar event. If the guy was to observe a high school captain giving a talk at a school assembly, he won't gain much confidence from observing this situation.

Overall, social proof has many powerful applications to influence people. You can use social proof to have more people see you as their leader, boost your likability, increase the opposite sex's attraction towards you, and overcome fear, to name a few useful situations this influential principle is powerful. By using the principle of social proof, your persuasive power will increase and you will be more able to get what you want.

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I wish you the best in your communication and hope to hear from you soon,



Joshua Uebergang
EarthlingCommunication.com
Self Development Expert

If you have any questions, comments, media inquiries, etc. you are welcomed to contact Josh by visiting:

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Earthling Communication for articles written by other experts:

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Guide to mastering persuasion and getting others to do what you want:

<http://www.earthlingcommunication.com/redirects/persuasion-and-influence.html>

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