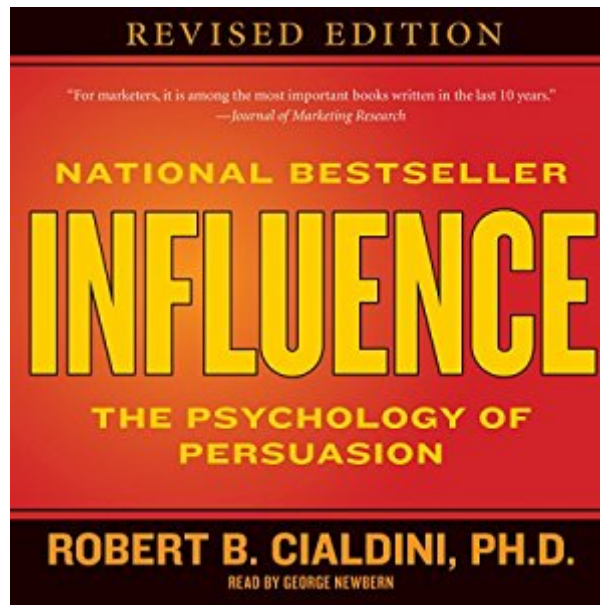


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Influence: The Psychology Of Persuasion



Synopsis

Influence, the classic book on persuasion, explains the psychology of why people say yes - and how to apply these understandings. Dr. Robert Cialdini is the seminal expert in the rapidly expanding field of influence and persuasion. His 35 years of rigorous, evidence-based research, along with a three-year program of study on what moves people to change behavior, has resulted in this highly acclaimed book. You'll learn the six universal principles, how to use them to become a skilled persuader - and how to defend yourself against them. Perfect for people in all walks of life, the principles of Influence will move you toward profound personal change and act as a driving force for your success.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

As I sit here and write, I wonder why I did not draft this review long before now. I read Cialdini's book about five years ago and have been hooked ever since. It is simply a superb book about influence. Cialdini believes that influence is a science. This idea attracted me. As a rhetorician, I have always thought of persuasion as more of an art. Cialdini, however, makes a first-rate case for the science point of view. But maybe most importantly, he makes his case in a well-written, intelligent, and entertaining manner. Not only is this an important book to read, it is a fun book to read too. He introduces you to six principles of ethical persuasion: reciprocity, scarcity, liking, authority, social proof, and commitment/consistency. A chapter is devoted to each and you quickly see why Cialdini looks at influence as a science. Each principle is backed by social scientific testing and retesting. Each chapter is also filled with interesting examples that help you see how each

principle can be applied. By the end of the book, I had little doubt that these are six important dimensions of human interaction. I highly recommend this book to all professionals. It does not matter if you are a manager, sales person, pastor, or non-profit volunteer. The ideas in this book, once applied, will make it easier for you to accomplish your goals. In a video featuring the author, Professor Cialdini even goes so far as to promise that these principles can help you influence the most resistant of all audiences--your children. With a claim like that, who wouldn't be intrigued? My advice is to read this sooner rather than later. You will be quite glad you did.

Most books of applied psychology fall prey to one of two weaknesses: Either they lack scientific content (or over-simplify) or they present solid information in an academic manner that readers find difficult to absorb and apply. Robert Cialdini's book stands out brilliantly from these books.

Combining wide and deep scientific scholarship with an engaging, lucid, and personal style, *Influence* may be the single best work on the topic. The intent of the book is to show how we can understand and defend against pervasive non-rational influences on our decision-making. Of course the same principles could be applied to market products or influence colleagues and rivals either in place of or in addition to genuine reasons. One sign of the range of the book is the fact that Cialdini doesn't get to the famous Milgram experiment on "Obedience to Authority" until p.208. The book concentrates on several factors that evolution and culture have drilled into us to produce compliance for good reasons, but which can be abused by "compliance professionals": reciprocity, commitment and consistency, social proof, liking, authority, and scarcity. Any reader will find the research results stunning and frightening. Fortunately, Cialdini concludes each compelling chapter with hints on "How to say no". No matter how intelligent you are, you have undoubtedly fallen for many of these techniques used deliberately or accidentally. How many poor business investment decisions, product purchases, or strategic moves have been influenced by non-rational factors? You have to read this book. Why? Because I've done you a favor with this review and you owe it to me; you can't say you're a rational person if you don't; everyone else is reading it; I'm attractive, friendly, well-dressed, similar to you, and you like me; I'm a psychology expert and I recommend it; and you need to buy it now before all copies are sold!

The human mind is a wonderful thing, capable of the most wonderful thought processes and ideas. Yet the brain is on automatic pilot for most situations. That allows the conscious mind to really focus. The drawback is that some people will use our conscious inattention to sneak one by us, like a fastball pitch to a hitter looking for a change-up. *Influence*, the book, is very useful in this regard,

because it uses interesting examples to help us be aware of our own tendency to let automatic pilot thinking take over. Since I first read this book many years ago, I have been watching to see if the circumstances I see support or invalidate Professor Cialdini's points. By a margin of about 9 to 1, Cialdini wins. Given that we are easily manipulated by our desire to be and to appear to be consistent with our past actions and statements, swayed by what the crowd is doing, and various other mechanisms, the only way we can be armed against unscrupulous marketing is to be as aware of these factors as the marketers are. At the same time, I appreciated how the book explores the ethics of when and how much to apply these principles. Without this discussion, the book would come off like Machiavelli's, *The Prince*, for marketing organizations. That would have been a shame. By dealing with the ethics, Professor Cialdini creates the opportunity to educate us intellectually and morally. Well done! I have read literally dozens of books about marketing and selling, and I find this one to be the most helpful in thinking about how influence actually works. Even if you will never work in marketing, you will benefit from reading this book in order to better focus your purchases and actions where they fit your needs rather than someone else's.

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