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The Art of Influence and Persuasion

Why did you buy this book?

If you are like most of the people and organizations that have come to us for assistance over the last few decades, you likely bought this book because you want to persuade colleagues, sell more, convince bosses for more budget, motivate your staff, or communicate more effectively. Perhaps you are frustrated that you missed out on landing a huge account, were passed over for a promotion, or are having trouble getting colleagues to prioritize your projects. You know how important persuasion is, yet until now, you did not know your success in this area was limited by your not having a process. Stick with us, all the way through this book, and we promise, guarantee even, you will become more persuasive. And, unlike any other book before it, your newly found persuasiveness will not be the result of memorizing a few tactics but instead actually understanding why and how the brain works to improve performance in any future situation you may face.

Humans have been studying the art of influence and persuasion for thousands of years. From ancient philosophers like Plato, Aristotle, and Cicero to the thought leaders of today, such as Carnegie, Cialdini, and Shapiro, the craft of influence and persuasion has fascinated humankind for centuries. Though there is likely more that we do not know than we do know, we have collected a wealth of knowledge on the power and process of influence and persuasion. This wealth of knowledge has come from philosophers, psychologists, economists, medicine, sociology, and other domains, all constantly wanting to better understand why people do what they do.

To accomplish our promise, meaning to improve the way you persuade others, we will summarize the most relevant and supported research over the last two centuries, add the findings of our own extensive research and experience, and convert it all into a practical process, tools, and habits. What you are reading is the result of the following:

1. Over a decade of extensive research in this field by the three authors.
2. A pilot study and research study conducted by the authors that involved more than 1000 decision makers from all over the world, testing the various persuasion and influencing techniques referenced throughout the book.
3. Countless iterations to our model, tactics, and tools through training tens of thousands of people via various academic institutions and our corporate training firm, the Shapiro Negotiations Institute (SNI).

Given the above, and as you will quickly notice beyond this chapter, a tremendous amount of information is packed into this book. *As a result, we recommend reading it in chunks, one chapter at a time, with the expectations that you will refer back to it when needed.* Almost as if each chapter is its own short book. Though it will be an enjoyable read, it will also be challenging. To make this easier, we have included summaries at the end of each chapter and one at the end of the book to refer to again.

Finally, to conclude this introduction and before we go any further, we need to get one administrative item out of the way. Importantly, what is influence and persuasion? According to the *Oxford Dictionary*, influence is “the capacity to have an effect on the character, development, or behavior of someone or something, or the effect itself.” Persuasion is “to cause (someone) to do something through reasoning or argument.” Though both terms are not completely synonymous, we will use them fairly interchangeably and will refer to our definition, which is to cause someone to do or say something.

So, without further ado, Jeff, Shaun, and I hope you enjoy the book and find it helps you improve your communication, persuasion, and influencing skills, professionally and personally.

Ethics of Influencing

You are negotiating with a terrorist and the only way you can prevent him from setting off a bomb is to deceive him. Do you do it?

Hopefully, you are not faced with this situation; however, this question is an example of many tough questions we face when dealing with the ethics of influencing and persuasion. Does the end justify the means? What role does intention play? Will this decision impact others? These are a few of the many fair questions we need to ask when we are working through the ethics of persuasion.

This book will improve your ability to influence and persuade others, but with this improved skill comes a responsibility. Our hope, or more directly stated, our request, is that you use the information in this book with positive intentions, in a truthful manner, and respecting all of the other parties involved. A fine line exists between “white hat” and “black hat” uses for these tools, but we trust you will decide where that line belongs. This is a dynamic decision, one that you should think about while reading this book, as opportunities arise, and continuously address as needed. We cannot tell you where to draw an ethical line but your being aware and thoughtful of this aspect will increase the likelihood the knowledge, tools, and tactics in this book are used the right way.

The Tenets of Ethical Principles

The five tenets of the Ethical Principles of Psychology¹ is a simple method you could use to determine the ethical use of the concepts covered in this book:

1. **Beneficence:** Approach influence and persuasion with the intent to benefit others and do no harm. To do this, you must be alert to the wants and needs of others and balance these against your own motives and self-interest.
2. **Responsibility:** Your obligation to be loyal and faithful and do what you say. You must hold your end of any agreement and accept your own responsibility for the outcomes.

3. **Integrity:** Your dedication to use accuracy, honesty, and truthfulness in your pitches and arguments. You should not lie, use fraud, or deceive to elicit self-serving interests, and you should strive to correct any misconceptions that lead to mistrust.
4. **Justice:** The sense of fairness behind your outcome or intended outcome. In your attempts to influence and persuade, you should be looking for the win-win, where everyone benefits and there is no loser.
5. **Respect:** People have the right to privacy, confidentiality, and to their own self-determination. This means not taking advantage of people and allowing them to come to their decision without being manipulative or forceful.

The Influence and Persuasion Process

As we previously mentioned, the study of influence and persuasion has been around for a long, long time. In approximately 350 B.C., Aristotle, one of the most famous and impactful philosophers in human history, introduced the concepts of Ethos, Pathos, and Logos, three elements of rhetorical persuasion, which are the basis for many models we continue to use.

Ethos is about a person's credibility and character.

Pathos is about appealing to the audience's emotion.

Logos is about using logic and reason.

Since then, for thousands of years, philosophers, businesspeople, marketers, entrepreneurs, agencies, negotiators, politicians, and many other professionals and organizations have used these concepts to persuade audiences. Today, one can find the triangle shown in Figure 1.1 in many offices, textbooks, and websites.

Since the early 2000s, our sales, negotiation, and influence training company, Shapiro Negotiations Institute (SNI), has studied and taught this concept. In 2005, SNI developed its own model, based upon these principles, which you will see in this book. Since its first iteration, many aspects of the model have evolved, and rightfully so. Through our decades of experience, the growing body of scientific studies, and our own research, we have tweaked our tools and techniques,

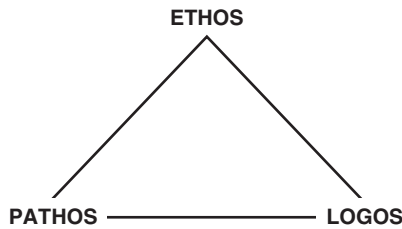


Figure 1.1

developed new exercises, and evolved our methods and model, using this knowledge to advise people and organizations all over the world. All of this has led Jeff, my partner in the business, Shaun, a friend and fellow researcher, and myself to write this book.

We chose to base our influence and persuasion model and our Influence Without Authority™ training program on Aristotle's concepts because they are strong, simple, and actionable. However, we felt compelled to update this model for two key reasons:

1. The world, and how we understand it, had changed. Around the time that Aristotle proposed these concepts, Alexander the Great was in his prime. Wars were constant, and if you were a man of age, you would almost certainly be drafted into the army. When not at war, you might attend symposia, which were drinking parties that lasted for days. Attending public trials commonly ended with the execution of those found guilty. Gender and socioeconomic status defined who you were. If you were poor, you were unable to vote or get an education. If you were a woman, you probably did not control your life; instead, your father, brother, husband, or son controlled it. Since that time, we have evolved in the way we interact and in our knowledge of the most effective ways to communicate, influence, and persuade.
2. Aristotle's philosophies needed adaptation to become a practical process. Aristotle did not address when to use ethos, pathos, or logos. When are they appropriate? Is there an order? How do I build credibility? What emotions should I engage? These were all the questions we felt needed to be answered more specifically in a model people and organizations could implement to improve their influencing abilities and performance in a sustained and repeatable fashion.

Figure 1.2 shows the Four-Step Process of Influence and Persuasion based on over 15 years of research, analysis, and experience.

In 1943, American psychologist Dr. Abraham Maslow famously published his controversial hierarchy of needs, in the form of a pyramid, which described how humans are motivated by basic needs first and then work their way up from there. Similar to Maslow's hierarchy of needs, we use a pyramid to represent the hierarchy of the influence and persuasion process. The pyramid is built in such a way where each layer is built upon what comes below. In our case, building credibility is the first step in persuading someone. Without it, the other party will not care enough or not put enough stock in whatever you do or say to be influenced. Second, engaging the other party's emotion is what allows you to impact the way they think or behave. Though difficult to do, you can do it, and we will show you how. Third, and only then does logic play a role in the influencing process. Our years of research and experience have shown us that the timing and the way logic is used is the most common mistake people make when persuading others. Finally, Facilitating Action; this was not in Aristotle's notes but a product of the research and many iterations of development we discussed above. This is the extra step that allows you to reap the fruits of your influencing labor.

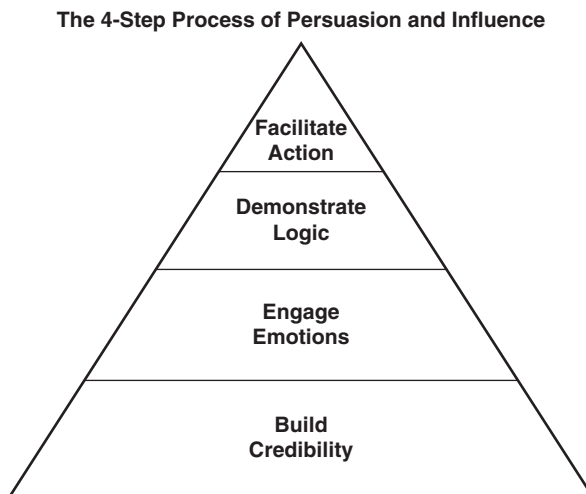


Figure 1.2

Our book will use some of these principles to influence you into using this process. We will share countless sources to support our claims as well the results of our own research to demonstrate our expertise in the field. We will leverage stories to engage you emotionally and give you a sense of the practical nature of this process. We will provide our evidence in a succinct and persuasive manner so you can see how it works and easily use it yourself. Finally, we will provide you with summaries and other tools throughout the book to make it easy for you to use it to obtain results quickly.

