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—Ged Shields, Vice President, Marketing, Ronseal

PERSUADE

USING THE SEVEN DRIVERS

of MOTIVATION

TO MASTER INFLUENCE

and PERSUASION

Philip Hesketh



CAPSTONE
A Wiley Brand

Persuade

**Using the seven drivers of motivation to
master influence and persuasion**

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Introduction: Our seven psychological 'drivers'

It's no secret that being part of a social group provides an all-important sense of belonging. For years, American Express has spent millions telling us that 'membership' has its privileges. But there is more to it. People believe a sense of belonging to a social group also gives their life more meaning.

But what's with this in-built desire to join social groups? In the animal kingdom the reason is easy to understand since it's mostly about survival. That's why wolves hunt in packs, birds fly together for safety and ants achieve more by working in unison.

Like Ant and Dec, for instance.

However, for humans, belonging to a group helps us form a view of our social identity which, in turn, contributes to our sense of who we are.

Back in the 70s, a famous study by Henry Tajfel demonstrated how complete strangers stuck together even when they had only the smallest thing in common. In his experiment, a group of boys were gathered together and then told they were to be split into two teams. Despite not knowing each other at all, most favoured being in a team with those immediately around them rather than those furthest away. Better the devil you know, I guess.

Tajfel was also able to demonstrate that merely putting people into groups – effectively categorizing them – is sufficient for people to discriminate in favour of their own group and against members of the other group.

It's a bit like meeting your countrymen abroad when on holiday. Walking along the promenade of a UK resort you would happily pass by without saying a word. But in a foreign country you're likely to at least exchange pleasantries when you recognize that they're from these shores. Wearing Union Jack shorts helps in this respect.

What's more, a funny thing happens when we join a group. We start to behave just like everyone else and follow the group 'norm'.

Even when there's nobody in the group called Norm.

One of the most famous experiments showing how easily we conform to unwritten group rules was

conducted by Solomon Asch of Rutgers University in New Jersey. He asked participants to sit amongst a group of strangers and judge the length of queues that were being formed in front of them. What he didn't tell them was that all the other people had been instructed to lie when asked which was the longest queue. Sure enough, 75% of participants denied all the evidence from their own senses and instead conformed to the group view.

A similar experiment run by psychology professor Philip Zimbardo of Stanford University wasn't quite so successful. His idea was to place young men in a simulated prison environment with some assuming the role of prisoners whilst others played the part of guards complete with riot gear. Despite being a psychologist, he clearly hadn't thought through the consequences of the experiment and the likely long-term effects on the mental health of the participants.

To summarize, he recruited clean-cut young men as volunteers, none of whom had any kind of criminal record and who all rated 'normal' on psychological tests; and he randomly assigned half of them to play the role of prisoners and the other half to play guards. His plan was that he would step back for two weeks and observe how these model citizens interacted with each other in their new roles.

What happened next has become the stuff of legend.

Social conditions in the mock prison deteriorated with stunning rapidity. On the first night the prisoners staged a revolt and the guards, feeling threatened by the insubordination of the prisoners, cracked down hard. They began devising creative ways to discipline the prisoners, using methods such as random strip-searches, curtailed bathroom privileges, verbal abuse, sleep deprivation and the withholding of food.

Not surprisingly, many of the prisoners began to crack. It was clear that for everyone involved the new roles had quickly become more than just a game. Even Zimbardo himself felt seduced by the corrosive psychology of the situation. He began entertaining paranoid fears that his prisoners were planning a break-out, and he tried to contact the real police for help. Luckily, at this point Zimbardo realized things had gone too far.

After less than a week the experiment had to be scrapped when some of the ‘prisoners’ were becoming too submissive and some of the guards a little too zealous when meting out discipline. The prisoners were relieved; but tellingly, the guards were upset. They had been quite enjoying their new-found power and had no desire to give it up. Needless to say, the emotional fallout from the experiment outweighed any positive conclusions. In fact, I think some ‘prisoners’ are still on the roof protesting.

Only joking.

So if you want to join a group and become its leader, the first thing to do is conform. Then, when you feel trust has been gained, it's safe to start to show the way. And if you decide to start a group outside of work, don't forget to invite me. Because just like everyone else, I hate to be left out.

Today, people connect on LinkedIn and socialize on Twitter and Facebook partly to satisfy this need to be part of a group. The popularity of social media websites serves to underline this basic need in us all. Not just to share embarrassing pictures with the rest of the world, but rather to 'belong'. Outside of cyberspace, fans flock to football grounds to support their team in a show of unity. Even Brian, from Monty Python's 'Life of Brian', had his devoted followers whose overwhelming need to belong saw them follow him everywhere. Even though it turned out he wasn't the Messiah after all, just a very naughty boy.

There are seven psychological 'drivers' for us all. They are what make us 'tick'. Throughout the book we will explore these drivers and how, by understanding them, we can improve our relationships with the people around us, communicate better and get our own way more often. I have asked people all around the world 'What is most important thing in your life?' The answer is almost always 'My family'. And that is why the first three – and most important drivers – are to be loved, to be important and to have a sense of belonging.

But these are what drive all successful relationships – whether at work or with your friends. The word ‘love’ can mean so many things but often what it means in this context is that we want to feel that someone truly cares about us. It’s why *you* need to show you are truly interested in the other person. And the word ‘important’ does not mean that you want to be the top dog. Rather, it means that people want to feel like what they are doing *matters*. That their contribution is valued.

In Greek mythology the greedy and deceptive Sisyphus was condemned to an eternity of hard labour. His task was to roll a great boulder to the top of a hill, but every time Sisyphus – after the greatest of exertion – reached the summit, the boulder rolled back down again and he had to repeat the task. It was the futility of it that took its toll. The exact opposite of the job having importance and mattering to someone was what really made Sisyphus suffer for his many crimes.

And Zimbardo’s experiment in a simulated prison environment shows how quickly both the ‘prisoners’ and the ‘guards’ became part of a group. They started to behave as they did because their uniform told them they were part of a group. And they behaved like they thought other members of the group would behave.

We’ll look more at these seven psychological ‘drivers’ throughout the book and show how, by understanding what makes us ‘tick’, we can not only be more persuasive and influential, but happier too.

So here are the top three drivers:

- We all want to be loved.
- We all want to feel important.
- We all have a deep-seated need to 'belong'.

Nat Lambert of Brigham Young University in Utah explored the implications of 'belonging' in an experiment where he asked participants to close their eyes and think of two groups to which they really belonged. Then they were asked about how much meaning they felt life had. The results were compared with those of two other groups where the participants were asked to think about something else. In one, they were asked to think about the value of other people, and in the other, the help that others had provided them.

The results showed that the participants who had been thinking about the groups they belonged to felt the highest levels of meaning in life. Proof that belonging to a group provides meaning over and above the value of others or the help they can provide.

But why is this? Well, it's more than just bonding. It seems that people who really feel like they fit in with others report the highest levels of 'meaningfulness' in their lives. I guess this is why the followers of some religious sects often seem like they have been brainwashed. A deep-seated and unshakeable belief in something often manifests itself in the strangest behaviour.

Think Tom Cruise jumping up and down on a chat show sofa.

Now stop.

Here's the really interesting bit:

People who feel that life is meaningful are more likely to be in good physical and psychological health. And – you guessed it – people who feel that life is not so meaningful are more likely to suffer depression and illness.

So it seems that there's a lot to be said for adopting a positive mental attitude, finding a real meaning in it all and socializing more.

And if you believe that, then you are much more likely to find true meaning in life because the need to *believe* is the fourth of the seven psychological drivers.

Indeed, success is most often achieved by those who just don't believe in failure.

Those words of wisdom came from none other than the stylishly elegant and fabulously chic Coco.

Not Coco the clown, of course, but the French fashion designer, Miss Coco Chanel. Her affirmation that anything is possible if you believe in it is a view shared by many a successful business entrepreneur.

But just how powerful is the act of believing and what part does it really play in determining success or failure? The answer may lie in a study by Irving Kirsch of Harvard Medical School, who conducted a series of trials featuring placebos. As I'm sure you know placebos are nothing more than sugar pills with no active ingredient that researchers use to test the efficacy of real drugs.

How and why placebos work is still something of a mystery. Some patients taking them report an improvement in their condition, some even claim to be suffering from the drug's side effects.

In a study of Parkinson's sufferers, it was discovered that placebo patients who reported an improvement had changes in their brain identical to those caused by the actual medication, Levodopa.

So why did these sufferers get better? Quite simply it was a case of mind over matter. They believed that what they were taking would help and so it did. Sportsmen and women use the same psychology to help them run faster, jump further and last longer. Some football teams believe they will score a goal in the last few minutes of a game and they often do. Aided by their opponent's belief in the very same outcome.

In his study, Kirsch reviewed the results from 35 clinical trials of modern antidepressant medication, such as Prozac, and concluded that placebos

duplicated more than 80% of the improvement observed in the drug groups. In other words, 80% of people's improvement after taking a sugar pill they thought was Prozac was exactly the same as if they had actually taken Prozac. He also concluded that the effect of placebo on pain is about 50% of the response to pain medication.

So how does this phenomenon translate into the business world? Well, it seems to me that the vital ingredient is the expectation of benefit. In my work as a motivational speaker, I talk about these seven psychological drivers that we all possess – and, as I say, the fourth one is the need to believe. We all *want* to believe, we all *need* to believe. And it seems that if you believe enough, you'll go a long way to achieving your goals.

So here are the next four of the seven psychological drivers:

- The need to believe.
- The need for some certainty and some uncertainty in our lives.
- The need for 'a place'.
- The need for growth and improvement.

This need we have for some certainty and some uncertainty in our lives is all about having things to look forward to. If we know exactly how our life will be mapped out it takes away the fun and interest. But if

we dread the future we have too much uncertainty in our life and are equally unhappy.

The first chapter in the book explores the psychology of having something to look forward to – and the role ‘curiosity’ plays in our lives – and the rest of the chapters in this book are crammed full of well-researched tips and techniques that help you improve your ability to relate to people, influence them and have a more successful and happier life. And that, in turn, makes you make feel more loved, more important and more acceptable to any group you want to be part of.

We’ll cover the most successful persuasion technique there is, how to give better first impressions, how to make better decisions, avoid procrastination and increase the odds of people doing what you want them to do.

In other words it gives you ‘more’ – and that is why you are reading the book – for growth and improvement.

If you are typical, you sit in the same seat each night at home. You will probably have a favourite seat at your dining table. You might have a preferred seat on the bus, an area of the local bar where you and your friends meet. It’s all down to this driver we have for ‘a place’. A place we feel comfortable and we can call our own. It brings order and stability to our lives – it makes us feel comfortable – that is where we belong.

But for now, remember that the more you have a sense of ‘belonging’, the more meaning you will make of life.

All of the chapters refer not only to the ‘drivers’ but also to psychological experiments that give us real insights into why we do what we do and how you can get colleagues, clients and friends to behave more as you would wish them to.

And the final chapter summarizes the ‘drivers’ again; and how to live a happier and more successful life through a better understanding of our own behaviour.

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