

BigBrain Radio Show
July 29, 2006

(music)

D: Hey, good morning; it's Saturday morning. Welcome to the BigBrain Radio Show. I'm Dr. David Stussy, you can call me Dr. D.

Z: And I'm Dr. Zena Xanders and you can call me, Dr. Z.

D: And we are...

B: The BigBrain Radio Show!

D: So Dr. Z... we had quite a show ... ah... we had quite a few good shows. We had one about Spaceship Earth that people really, really liked...

Z: Yes.

D: We got all kinds of feedback on that. We had some people asking us to ... to do a show on how the moon affects people's personalities and the different stratospheres. And we actually are going to do that.

Z: We got some really great feedback and we will take requests for future shows so if there's something you'd love to hear about make sure you email us.

D: I think it was Eric, but anyway, Eric, we're going to do that.

Z: And you can email us at info@bigbrainradioshow.com.

D: And you know we recorded on video last week. I played it in my clinic. People liked it. You were a star of course.

Z: Well, I heard that we must be destined for great things.

D: (laughter) So, did you enjoying the show last week?

Z: Oh yeah. It was great. It was great.

D: Now, surely someone with a splendid intellect that our audience has...

Z: Yeah, the BigBrain audience we have.

D: Yes, who's going to enjoy the show. They are just the helpful people who want to share the use of information. So I'm going to make a request: Would they tell at least 10 people about the BigBrain Radio Show.

Z: Well in order for them to honor the request you have to give them something, don't you?

D: Well, maybe if they could just share with one. If they couldn't do 10, they could do one.

Z: Well we should introduce this concept of reciprocity pretty soon because...

D: Well, that's coming next...

Z: (laughter)

D: ... but don't say yes yet... because then if you can send us authorization that you referred ten people, we will send you two or three copies of the BigBrain Radio Show... our best shows.

Z: Well, that's great.

D: That's a pretty good deal isn't it?

Z: It is. You know also we should mention we have our shows on our website.

D: Right.

Z: So you can actually go and download any show that you're interested in at www.bigbrainradioshow.com.

D: By the way, I love that outfit you have on.

Z: Why thank you. And your shirt is just smashing. Very dapper.

D: Now, if people are wondering why we're doing all that because our show today is about persuasion and influence. We've been talking about the metaphysical experience and the physical experience and a lot of times sometimes we seem like we're automatic... our values and what drives us... and so we're going to talk about a concept called persuasion or influence that has a lot to do with what we make decisions about, how we make them, and then the consequences of making them. That's kind of about it, right? Don't you think?

Z: That's right. And may I give an introduction of why this might... how this might have occurred?

D: Go right ahead.

Z: Well, they did a study with turkeys... and they found that – Dr. Cialdini actually found... not human turkeys, real turkeys – found that when they hear “cheep cheep”, they take whatever being is around it and pull it up under them to nurture. And they even did experiments with polecats... I guess is the natural enemy of the turkey. And if they made this little stuffed animal cheep, the turkey mother would pull the polecat in as if it were her own. But without a cheep, she'd destroy it. So, they did many studies and they realized that this cheep cheep is an automatic response. And he calls it – Dr. Cialdini in the book “The Psychology of Persuasion Influence” the click and whirl... it's an automatic response... It's actually necessary for survival.

D: You find yourself in a situation where someone is telling you something and you find yourself being enrolled in it even though you know that that's really not your... your click whirl that kind of going in your head... what is happening to me, why am I going along with this when it doesn't seem natural?

Z: I think we've all been introduced to the idea that we have kind of automatic tapes that play in our head or that we can get triggered by things. But the interesting point I think in today's show is that we actually need these programs to run efficiently. If we had to stop every time something happened and analyze every piece of information we'd be paralyzed in our life. But, the point of his book is that some people exploit these.

D: Why don't we just make it clear about this book. This is a book that I discovered a number of years ago by a man named Robert Cialdini, and he is a psychologist... a PhD.... at Arizona University. And the name of the book is "The ...

Z: The Psychology...

D: ... "The Psychology of Persuasion"... and the name of the book is actually called "Influence". And although it has been mimicked many times it's really kind of the... what would you call it... what's the word? What's the one that kind of stands for everything? About studying influence and how we make decisions. And this really kind of goes on top of what we've talked about already with "Blink"... you know where they talk about we make automatic decisions... we have to in order to be able to get by. But there are situations when that blink gets us in the wrong place. Okay? When we make a decision on top of something. Well there happens to be six ways that Dr. Cialdini found that we are definitely influenced. We can't help it. We are made to move in that direction. It's very powerful. It's automatic, but it has a downside that we can become victims of our automatic ness I guess. And so his book really isn't about how to use it to manipulate better, it's about how to not get caught up in these. Right?

Z: Right. The great part is that at the end of each chapter he makes these six distinctions that are the most common click-whirl or automatic behaviors. And at the end he tells you how to make sure that you're not being taken. And if you are, how to use them to actually support yourself in your premise instead of being taken advantage of.

D: You have to learn to say no.

Z: So learn to say no.

D: So he said if you ever feel you're tricked into saying yes... whoops... (laughter) How'd that happen?

Z: You're brain's getting too big.

D: Anyway...

Z: Too much information.

D: Ever been tricked into saying yes? I guess I have, yeah?

(laughter)

D: Whoa... that one came off...

(laughter)

D: Anyway, have you ever been trapped into buying something you did not really want? Everybody goes... "yes"... Do you ever really want to subscribed to any suspicious sounding cause? Yes... Have you ever wished you understood why you acted in this way so you could understand that clever poise in the future? Then this is the show for you?

Z: Great. Are you going to tell us what the six underlying principles of influence are?

D: Yes I am. Would you like to hear...

Z: I would love to hear them.

D: ... them in order? Okay. Well the first one is called reciprocation... and that is one of the most common ones.

Z: Reciprocity... yes.

D: Or reciprocity. He calls it reciprocation... reciprocity...

- Z: And what is that exactly?
- D: Well, that's the willing... people are more willing to comply with a request from those who are provided things first.
- Z: So it's kind of like if I extend a favor or an offer to you, then socially, genetically, you feel obligated to return the favor.
- D: Well, there are all kinds of ways this is applied... you know with coupons... all kinds of stuff... things that you give clients... There's a negative reciprocity you can do...
- Z: What's the second principle?
- D: It's called commitment and consistency.
- Z: And what's that about?
- D: People are more willing to be moved in a particular direction if they see it consistent with something they've already made a commitment too.
- Z: People feel obligated on some level to stay with the behavior that they've created. They don't want to look foolish.
- D: And again, a good way to look at this is just look at relationships. Reciprocity happens in relationships all the time. If you've made a commitment in a relationship it's very hard for you to back out because you don't want to look like you aren't keeping your commitment. And so even when people change their mind, they don't change their mind. Okay?
- Z: Or if you say that you are a certain kind of person or you hold yourself to be a certain way, then it would feel awkward or you feel foolish to act inconsistently with that. So sometimes you do things without thinking that aren't in your best interests.
- D: But once you've made a statement you're kind of stuck with it.

- Z: Right. So there's a way around that too.
- D: There is a way around it, but it's very powerful.
- Z: What is the third one?
- D: Authority. People are more willing to follow directions or recommendations of a communicator to whom they attribute authority or expertise.
- Z: That's right.
- D: You know ... that's kind of the one that I... in our definition of evolutionary health is to not be taken in by the fact that the concept of the expert of the authority, but that our own authority is as powerful or more powerful.
- Z: Right. And there we have to analyze the way people are dressing and the positions they hold, and not just take them at their word necessarily if we're suspicious.
- D: All right. Then social validation... people are more willing to make a recommended action if they see evidence that others are doing it. Okay? So it's kind of like the one and the many... the masses kind of drive it.
- Z: Great. It if you see someone else doing something and then you see more and more people doing it, you think that that's valid and then you tend to do it.
- D: Yeah. And there's some very powerful things, but TV would be a really good example of that... how the TV shows tend to follow trends, etc., etc.,... what other people like. Scarcity – people find objections and opportunities more attractive to the degree that they are scarce, rare or dwindling in availability. Scarcity.
- Z: Makes them more valuable if you can't get them.
- D: Oh I think we've all got caught on them. It's the last time... you gotta get this... I just got a call, this is the last one...

Z: Final offer.

D: Final offer.

Z: Yes.

D: And the last one is liking or friendship. People prefer to say yes to those they know and like.

Z: And also what makes people like other people is if they complement them, if they're good looking. So we'll discuss some of those factors.

D: It's an inner liking with consistency and commitment and reciprocity by saying those things.

Z: Okay. And why don't you tell us why you find this topic so interesting... that you really wanted to do this show.

D: Because I used it all the time.

Z: Oh, because you use it. Well I just thought you said that the reason we're doing this show is so that you won't be used by it.

D: Well that's...

Z: It's not for manipulation necessarily, it's for awareness.

D: No, it's not for manipulation, but it's for awareness. But in all the trainings I do with staff, etc., they have to understand if they want people to have a... there's a word they use in here all the time called "compliance"...

Z: Okay.

D: And if you want compliance in the things that you have organized, there are certain ways of communicating with people and setting up with people so it feels consistent with what they want to do and you get better compliance...

Z: that's right.

D: ... it takes the stress... it really consists with the word that I use all the time called preemption.

Z: Well, you know we started looking at this for this week's show and so I started using some of these principles or being aware of them. And one of my favorite examples – and you'll have to tell me which principle it is – but they did a study where they had a woman in line with copies. She was standing in line to have copies made... and she had five sheets of paper. And the first time she requested she said, "I have five sheets of paper. May I please go to the head of the line?" And I think at about 50% of the time, people would let her go ahead of them. Well then they tried another experiment and they said... had her say ... "I have five copies and I need to make them right away because I'm in a hurry." And when she put in the word "because"... like gave a reason why she wanted to go to the front of the line, almost 90% of the people let her go ahead. But then they did the most interesting thing. They gave her a third script and what she said was "I have five sheets of paper, I need to make copies because I need to make some copies."

D: (laughter)

Z: And still 90-95% of the people let her go to the head of the line.

D: Because she gave a reason.

Z: Because she said "because". It's actually the word "because". So I've been experimenting with that in my life, because I sometimes resent people having to know why I want to do something. You know, this is what I'd like to do... you know especially if you're a mom or dad, you don't need to know why... I just want to do this. You know? Because? Because I say so. That's probably why it works with parents. Why do I have to do that mom? Because I said so.

(music)

Z: Well, we'll be right back to explain.

D: Well there is a little bit on this... part of the thing about parenting.

Z: Yeah, in human compliance. So this is the BigBrain Radio Show. We're talking about influence today.

D: We have a little influence here. We have "Bad Influence" by Eric Clapton.

Z: All right. Stick with us. This is AM 950 Air America Minnesota.

(music)

(music)

D: Hey welcome back to the BigBrain Radio Show. We're talking about persuasion and influence...

Z: Yes we are.

D: ... so a little influence music. That was Beautiful Persuasion by Jim Wallace and the Sons.

Z: I'm sorry, but I don't know who they are.

D: That's what I love about this...

Z: (laughter)

D: ... I get to find these... there is one cute song that we got here. I just love one song of the songs today. This is great.

Z: All right. Well what are we back to here? We're talking about "Influence: The Power of Persuasion" by Robert Cialdini. The first principle you wanted to talk about was reciprocity. Is that right?

- D: Yeah, I just wanted to go back to the term persuasion as defined by Webster. It is the act of persuading or the power to actually influence the result. All right?
- Z: All right.
- D: And we ... we always think that we are totally so in control of what we do and a lot of what we're saying is that our values and the way we see things are easily manipulated by people who take advantage of our tendency to be automatic... because we have to be. We have to kind of look at things and try to make a decision based on our past. And so the first one was reciprocity. It's like if you're nice to me, I'll be nice to you as well.
- Z: That's right.
- D: I still think the number one example is relationships. Okay? And it's probably one of the downfalls of relationships because people automatically assume that because they are nice... I mean I know guys have been caught in this many times where you should have known or whatever. But there is also a tendency to want to do a favor back just because of that. So I think it happens a lot in relationships.
- Z: It... Dr. Cialdini says that all societies subscribe to a norm that obligates individuals to repay in kind what they have received. So there is like a social obligation.
- D: All right. So there's the opposite like food stores will give free samples. They'll come and do free in-home inspections... no obligation obviously they say...
- Z: Is what they say.
- D: A health club will give you a free workout... you know...
- Z: Right.
- D: ... but you get enticed by the environment.

Z: Then you feel obligated on some level to purchase what they're offering or participate in what they're requesting.

D: Well there was in here the one thing... a lady talking about that she had to stop accepting drinks from people at bars...

Z: Oh yeah.

D: ... men at bars...

Z: Oh yeah.

D: ... because there were certain perceptions. And even people who were involved... if they said if they observed it they would have had the same perception.

Z: Right.

D: That if the woman accepted a drink then she was accepting an invitation for other things.

Z: It's almost like they're saying there is no free lunch... there is no no strings attached.

D: Right.

Z: Whenever you accept something, socially there is something expected. There is a string attached.

D: Unless you were to say "yes I will take a drink from you but I just want to let you know...":

Z: You know what? As a woman that doesn't even work. Because when you say no to a guy in the bar, then there's just another drink. (laughter) How many drinks 'til she'll say yes.

D: Are we going to have bar stories, by Dr. Z.?

Z: No, no, no.

D: Okay.

Z: That's another show... the persistence of the male human being.

D: Are they persistent?

Z: Ah... tend to be.

D: Okay.

Z: That's probably for survival too.

D: Okay. So anyway, reciprocation... but there are some very sneaky ways that's it's done. One of them is called reciprocation and retreat.

Z: What's that?

D: When you make a request and then you back off it and then you make another request on top of that knowing the first one wouldn't get accepted. There are all kinds of variations on this. There is... for a lot of money... like if I was going to ask you... and I needed \$5.00 and I asked you for \$10.00...

Z: And you say, "No, I'm sorry, I can't give you the \$10."

D: But if you gave me the \$10 I'd have twice as much. But if I know that if I asked the \$5 next you'd probably say, "Yeah, I think I can do that."

Z: Okay... it's okay... I can't do \$10, but I could do \$5.

D: And I think we do that all the time. And then there are groups... there is an extreme example of people who went up and said would you take a bunch of juvenile delinquents for a whole day...

Z: (laughter)

D: (laughter) What if they did this...

Z: To the zoo, right?

D: To the zoo. Right.

Z: Would you supervise this group of juvenile delinquents for a day at the zoo? And everybody said, “No.”.

D: Well actually, not everybody. Some people said yes.

Z: Like 15% maybe I think it was.

D: Yeah. And then they said well then would you spend an hour a week or something like that... with them being a counselor... and then people would agree.

Z: Right.

D: Happens all the time. I think that one is played on us a lot.

Z: Okay.

D: I can just look at three times that happened to me yesterday.

Z: (laughter) Three times it happened to you. Wow, you're a sucker. I mean excuse me, you're very influenceable. Influenceable. Easily... easy to persuade.

D: Anyway, in this book there was a cute story about Nixon. Now not everybody is going to remember Nixon...

Z: A cute story about Nixon. That doesn't ... that seems like an oxymoron... but go head.

D: Well he was a cute looking guy, wasn't he?

Z: (laughter)

D: They talk about the...

Z: Barnacle man.

D: ... they talk about the break in... now just for those who are so young they don't remember, during the... during... when Nixon was...

Z: President.

D: ...he was against George McGovern, right?

Z: Oh, running for president, right?

D: Yeah.

Z: Yep.

D: Was it George McGovern? Boy, I'm getting old on history. Anyway, he ... they did this break in at Watergate, which just changed everything for Nixon and who was president, etc. And they couldn't understand why it happened. Because Liddy... G. Gordon Liddy was kind of a flake and he asked for \$250,000 in untraceable cash. Okay? And then he asked John Mitchell to do something that was illegal. It was a highly risky operation and they didn't expect to find anything anyway, so why did they do it?

Z: We don't know.

D: Well it was because that Liddy... this was not his first proposal... that he had other proposals that were other more expensive...

Z: Oh... this was like his counter offer.

D: ... and so they...

Z: Second or third counter offer.

D: ... they go through this whole thing but it eventually ended up being that people got caught up in the psychology and they threw him a bone...

Z: Somehow they thought they were getting a good deal on a very bad deal.

D: I don't even know if they thought they were going to get a deal. They just wanted to get him taken care of... or let him do something... and it got botched. So the power of reciprocity actually affected the outcome of the ... of the President of the United States.

Z: Hmm.

D: And it had to be with all the different people that were... that were involved in it. That's what really kind of threw it off because they all kind of started feeling in it and it built up momentum. So that can happen and not... and individuals ... it can happen as a group. Can you think of times when groups have gotten involved and... or had something that they weren't planning on doing and then they ended up all voting for it? Can you think of anything?

Z: I think that happens. I think we call that the herd... kind of the herd instinct or something.

D: So the retreat is the real common used one with sales people. What's the brush people? Fuller brush? Maybe they're not around anymore. Amway...

Z: So how do you learn how to say no or be ware of this tactic if you're being exploited with it?

D: Well you're the expert in the no part... have you got that there?

Z: Well, I guess you should just know that you're going to be getting... if it's a smooth salesperson, they're going to be setting you up, so just beware. One of the things I learned in the book is when... because I like to go shopping... you're a fashionista... when you ... when a man goes to look for a suit, they're taught to show you the most expensive suit first.

D: Mm hmm.

Z: Because then once they decide later to help you with the accessories... the belt, the shoes, the sweater... everything looks really cheap compared to the price of the suit. So there are some... not only is there bargaining by how you present things and counteroffers, but then there's contrast. The first thing that you show is going to look more desirable... make the other things look less desirable too.

D: Yeah, when they... they were talking about our ability to perceive things. They can take things that look... that are not the same... that are the same but by the way they present them, one of them looks more powerful than the other.

Z: Right.

D: And it's... it's a fact of reciprocation. Okay?

Z: That's right.

D: So tell me more about saying no. That's what I wanted to know.

Z: Well, I think the thing to be aware of is if you're constantly being given counteroffers, you know that you're inside of some ploy. So the thing is to learn to say "no thank you". And the thing to be aware of is if you accept something, you know there's an automatic human behavior... if you're walking down the street and someone goes like this to you... you automatically take it.

D: Oh yeah... let's talk about that.

Z: So you have to be careful whenever someone's handing you a flower... or handing you a free sample, as soon as you see that thing coming at you you kind of have to program yourself... if you touch it or accept it, you're going to now be obligated to that person.

D: The most common one is ... nothing about the Hari Krishna, but the Hari Krishna were the ones that were asking for in all the airports for all these donations.

Z: Right.

D: So people complained and so they stopped them. They couldn't ask people for donations. And they're the ones that started out handing the flowers...

Z: And they wouldn't ask for donation, right? They would just give it as a gift.

D: Mm hmm.

Z: And then there was some social obligation that they felt to reciprocate.

D: And then there was another sample in here where the woman talked about that... someone ... a guy asked for her to give him a kiss on the cheek...

Z: Yes.

D: And somehow ... and she thought that well she'll give in.

Z: (laughter)

D: But that ended up having her continue to...

Z: By the way, would you sign up for this magazine subscription?
(laughter)

D: That was it. It was a ski magazine. So it's all over the place. Okay?

Z: Yeah, you have to really be careful, but you don't want to be too jaded. Because if a small child comes to offer you a glass of lemonade or a flower, and you've just become im... you know you don't want to penetrate that... you can actually insult people.

D: I hate to tell you, but the kid's working you too.

Z: Well, I don't know. Some people it's genuine is the point. It's not always a scam. It's AM 950 Air America Minnesota. This is the BigBrain Radio Show.

(music)

(music)

D: Well we've kicked things up. This is... Hey, welcome back to the BigBrain Radio Show.

Z: Who's this?

D: Ah, this is Kane Hill.

Z: All right. Hey, Justin had a really good example of reciprocity and that I guess maybe he's been to Las Vegas a time or two.

D: I think he has.

Z: What was that example he gave?

D: Well you're walking down the street in Las Vegas and they're handing you stuff all the time to go to this bar, to do this... and then this magazine... you know and pretty soon... you throw them away and pretty soon you take one magazine and you ...

Z: (laughter)

D: ... kind of turn it a little bit... maybe... no wait a minute... he forgot his wife was with him.

Z: (laughter)

D: (laughter) He points to his ring.

Z: After the 30th flyer... 30th flyer then you feel obligated to at least consider the possibility of going to that strip joint, right?

D: Well they do it so much.

Z: Oh, it's ridiculous.

D: You now in Las Vegas they've got all those signs on top of the cabs?

Z: What do they ... oh, for the advertising.

D: Advertising and stuff like that.

Z: Yeah.

D: That guy is a multi, multi millionaire.

Z: (laughter)

D: He was the first one to do that and that thing is just... he's just done great on that. They're starting to copy it... I mean sure...

Z: All right, well let's go to our second principle. And by the way, I wanted to say... you're kind of thinking this is all for scam and manipulation...

D: No I'm not.

Z: But I wanted you to know...

D: I'm going to argue with you... no I don't.

Z: Well, just listen. This is what Robert said. This isn't me. He says these six basic tendencies of human behavior come into play in generating a positive response. And then they help to govern our business feelings, our environments and our personal relationships. And knowledge of these rules of persuasion can be thought of as empowerment. So you made it seem kind of negative I thought.

D: No I didn't.

Z: Like the kids are working us too. We all know the kids are working us.

D: Actually, no... what I'm saying is ... that they are learning these things because some of it is somewhat genetic...

Z: Oh yeah.

D: ... our ability to...

Z: And socially learned.

D: ... survive. And so they're learning these techniques. What we want to know is they are going to be done by people who are committed to their product, who are committed to their out... their goal, or whatever, and we as individuals have to be aware of it. Like... because it's going to happen all around us...

Z: Right. I think we've all been taken once or twice.

D: ...even the little kids. The shoeshine boy...

Z: And we always wonder how did I get into that situation.

D: ... you know that does a little dance.

Z: So what's consistency? The second principle.

D: We behave consistently with our public commitments... even seemingly minor ones in a direct future action.

Z: Yes, and I have a good example of this. I love this example because I love restaurants... and I used to work in restaurants in my other lives. They... you know I think one out of 10 reservations – the no shows – they never call. They never let you know they're not coming. They did a simple experiment. When you made a reservation at this restaurant, instead of saying "Please call if you have to change your plans"... that was not an effective way to get compliance. If you said... if the receptionist said to the person making the reservation, will you please call if you have to change your plans... and then this is the key... they paused... and they waited for the person on the other end of the line to make a commitment... a

public commitment. And the rate of people no-showing or not calling if they couldn't come just dropped. They had almost everybody either calling or showing up for reservation. But the key here is to pause and to let people make a public commitment because then they feel obligated to be consistent with who they said they are.

D: Yeah, social commitment is the key. And you have to... when people actually make the commitment, even if it's seemingly innocent...

Z: Or minor, yeah.

D: ... they will act consistently. They ... in this chapter they talked a lot about the ... the... the POWs from Korea and China.

Z: Okay.

D: And during World War II, the POWs were very good at not giving any information. For some reason...

Z: Name, rank and serial number, right?

D: ... in the North Korean war it was the Chinese that were very good at getting people to give all kinds of information...

Z: Ah.

D: The way they did it is they started lightly. They'd get people to agree with... well America's not perfect, right? Well they would say, "Yeah, it's not perfect."

Z: Small things.

D: And then they would get them to repeat it. Then they would get to write it. And the biggest one is if they could get them to write it down and put it in essay form.

Z: Wow. Then they felt obligated to be consistent with what they had said.

D: So written testimonials, written things are very, very powerful. And so you see these companies, they have all these little contests for you to write in and give this and give that. And they look like they're kind of trivial, but they're not because the people writing in are reduplicating their belief in the product...

Z: Yes.

D: ... and they're more likely to spread the word...

Z: And they're kind of declaring something and then they feel obligated...

D: Right.

Z: ... to line up with their declaration.

D: Yeah, it produces a compliance that's very, very high.

Z: Wow.

D: And so... it's actually good because you should use it ... and even in your social commitments you'll say "Can you be there by 2:00?" And pause, like you said...

Z: Yeah and the person says yes.

D: and then he'll say "Yes"... because we can all think of a time when we wanted to break our word, but we didn't because...

Z: Because we had said.

D: ... we had said we would ...

Z: And we don't want to look foolish.

D: ... keep our word.

Z: The main thing about keeping your word and being consistent is we're afraid we will look foolish if we say we're one way or we'll

do something, but then we don't do it... or we do something else. It makes us look foolish.

D: Right. So I want to talk a little bit more about the written policy. Because a lot of times what they'll do is... there's lots of ways... in a company if you have people write down their goals...

Z: Mm hmm.

D: ... and then write them down and hand them in, they're more powerful. So if you write something down and then you share it with somebody...

Z: Right.

D: ... then that makes you do it even better. He gave an example of a guy... I think himself... he quit smoking. But he had to share it with his uncle and his aunt and his wife and his cousins. But once you've done that you've kind of pretty much put yourself out on the naked edge and you have to keep your word.

Z: Right.

D: Now, not all smokers are going to do that. But it raises the possibility... in fact, he did quit smoking because of it.

Z: Great.

D: So you can use this in a very powerful way...

Z: Yes, and positive ways.

D: ... social benefits.

Z: That's good.

D: So commitment and consistency is very, very important. Something else you had over there?

Z: Yes, well what I thought was interesting is this happens so fast... in a blink of an eye... that you don't even realize that you're feeling obligated to be consistent. So he gives a little coaching about how you can know if something's off. If you're starting to get yourself into a corner and you're going to make a commitment that you don't want to make, because you feel obligated to make it because you said something else and you don't want to be inconsistent... he said you gotta listen to your gut. And I love this one because I listen to my gut a lot. So usually your stomach knows if you're about to do something you really don't want to do... even though you maybe thought it was consistent with what you said before. So he says you have to check your gut... kind of that pit in the feeling... in the pit of your stomach ... that you feel like you're going to get trapped. And... how many times have we given a social obligation we wish we wouldn't have. Someone calls and says hey, I miss you... love to get together... you know you want to go to dinner? And before you can even... you know you say yeah, I miss you too... so now, you know, like you want to stay consistent... and they say well let's go out for dinner and it's actually someone that you prefer not to go out to dinner with... but now you're stuck because you said you missed them too and you want to seem consistent.

D: You get that whirl thing...

Z: And your stomach goes oh man.

D: ... and in your brain you get that little click-whirl...

Z: Well you don't even know that that's happening necessarily, but you get this feeling in the pit of your stomach like I don't want to have to do that. So if you can catch yourself there. Here's the thing: you have to be willing to be inconsistent without looking foolish.

D: Well, you've got to be willing to look foolish probably.

Z: No, well you can say you know... you just have to know that you don't want to get stuck. This happens enough times.

D: Well there's a couple... the extent that people carry this... when they had made a public commitment and later something came

up to change the force of it, they actually doubled their efforts to make that commitment. Once... because they had made it, even when evidence showed to the contrary, they doubled their efforts to stand by their commitment.

Z: Yeah, and that's being foolish, because then you're just choosing something that's not good for you anymore but are being consistent.

D: But it was really consistent. Like they had these people... they wanted them to save money on gas... on energy... you know with the utilities. Talking to them, educating them didn't work. When they got the people to say we're going to put your picture in the paper, their bills went down tremendously. Then at the last minute they called them and told them we're not going to be able to put your picture in the paper, their bills went down even more. Because something went in their head and made them want to act consistent with what they've committed to, even though now it wouldn't be public knowledge.

Z: Hmm.

D: But even...

Z: Well that might be an example of not using these tips wisely. The idea here is if you...

D: No, it was... because they saved money on gas.

Z: Oh, okay. If it was a positive example I didn't understand. But the idea here is that you can get taken by yourself. You can get yourself in a corner and you have to be willing to recognize you're doing that and just call yourself on it.

D: I guess really what I was trying to say is the automatic-ness of it.

Z: Yes.

D: It just... it's kind of a natural thing to redouble your efforts. Because once you've said you're headed in that way, you're going to head that way. Then there's another one... is when people go through kind of a group thing and they talked about fraternities and hell week. And this brought back a little few memories...

Z: (laughter)

D: Because I was a fraternity president and went through hell week as they called it. And that whole thing of this group effort of going through this ... of action together... where you're committed together and you make statements... They even give you like you're the lionhearted person, or you're this way. Then you act consistently. Especially in an initiation. I'm sure there are other fraternities... social orders... where they do this. They say you're going to be the brave heart and then from then on, they act consistent with that when they're given the designation.

Z; Right.

D: Boot camp is another thing. Boot camp... even though people don't like it, you'll never hear anybody say that boot camp... they'll always have something to say very positive about it because it did something to make them to commit to part of their self for the future.

Z: Well, I think we've all heard too about the studies in schools where if a teacher holds that a particular child is a troublemaker, they'll act consistently...

D: Oh really.

Z: ... with being a troublemaker. That same child in a different teacher's class, they say you're the star, they'll act consistently with that.

D: Right. Now there's an even more important part of this that they found out. The most important part was called the inner choice.

Z: And what's that?

D: Where you actually make an inner choice to have that be what you represent. And they use this term in parenting... and they said ... they... like if they were... They tried to get a group of kids to do something and they said this toy was a bad toy. And then they walked out of the room and most of the kids didn't play with it. But later on, when given a chance they did. Because they said there would be a... a... consequence. You know and that scared the kids a little bit. But remember, you were all teenagers. How long did that last? Okay?

Z: Oh, don't do this so then you won't do it.

D: Because there's a consequence. But when they just told them don't do that and then they let it go at that...

Z: Mm hmm.

D: They found later on that they continued to not do it because they had kind of internally take that as a...

Z: Hmm.

D: ... inner choice that they had made based on the information they had got.

Z: Hmm.

D: And they used the example some churches do this. And some religious upbringing do this. They do a lot of it in fact. They get them to make inner choices.

Z: Okay.

D: And that... in terms of a parent, that is one of the biggest things. Instead of giving them a threat is show them how to make an inner...

Z: Right.

D: By giving them the information and letting them make an inner choice they will tend to carry it out...

Z: That's much more powerful than having to control your child.

D: In fact, I think we've all been surprised by the fact that we've got some advice from our parents, we didn't really believe it, they never really pushed on it, and then later on we found ourselves acting consistent on that information they gave us.

Z: Right. We made some internal choice.

D: Yeah. It's kind of cool.

Z: Okay, good.

D: Isn't it?

Z: All right...

D: Consistency.

Z: What's the next... what's the third or fourth...

D: Wait a minute, you've got to tell people how to say no.

Z: Um, I did actually. We covered that already.

D: We did?

Z: Yes. That pit in your stomach? You know? That's how you tell if you might be going to make a decision that's consistent but not good for you.

D: Well I got a little bit more to share on that. Okay?

Z: Okay, go.

D: There's a term they call "grow legs"...

Z: Okay.

D: This inner thing... this inner choice that you make actually tends to grow legs... where you expand the places that it goes to and it becomes really a part of you...

Z: Mm hmm.

D: And that's the churches that do that the most.

Z: And how does that help you to say no? Or what's the antidote?

D: Oh, no that's ... where you make a commitment so you have to act consistent in the future. So you actually take the...

Z: So I think what we're saying is you can use it in a positive way if you want to hold your feet to the fire on something, but also the point is if you don't want to make a decision and you're feeling like you have to because you said something earlier, you can also graciously decline.

D: Well you have to realize that it has extended in other parts based on that decision. All right/

Z: Okay. What's the next principle?

D: Well, I think it's called social validation...

Z: Social validation or social proof. And what is that exactly?

D: Well, we follow the lead of similar others... of people we think are like us.

Z: So, social validation... we are more likely to do what others are doing. And the more people that are doing it, the more valid it looks.

D: Correct.

Z: So sometimes we start doing things just because other people are doing them. We never made a conscious choice about it.

D: And he started out in this chapter talking about canned laughter...

Z: Oh right.

D: Wondering why do people...

Z: The laugh tracks, right?

D: ... we all know better... but there's something that when people do things that are similar to what we would do we follow...

Z: You know what? It works. Because when you hear those tracks you start laughing.

D: Well have you ever been at a show when you're by yourself and you're laughing by yourself? Have you ever been in a show where everybody is laughing...

Z: It is so predictable.

D: ... and then you see the movie later and it's not as funny? Because there weren't as many people laughing. You thought it was hilarious...

Z: Well I thought this was interesting. They.. during the early time of the opera, they used to actually hire people...

D: Oh right.

Z: ... to laugh... or to clap... or to say bravo. They actually hired people and seated them in the audience.

D: That was very common.

Z: To get a particular response.

D: Mm hmm. They were paid to do that. There was actually a term for that, but I forgot what it was called.

Z: Yes and you can... Clacker I think it was.

D: A clacker.

Z: I think that's what it was. Anyway, they even advertised for it in the newspaper. So the modern day laugh track is an example of those early opera people that were paid.

D: You know they had a... I think this was in social proof... they had these people where they asked them to put a sign on their yard...

Z: Okay.

D: And ... um... they... it was a big sign and because they made a commitment socially that they believed in this cause...

Z: Yes.

D: ... like over a phone conversation they made a week earlier...

Z: Okay.

D: Then they came out and asked these people about this huge big sign and then they would do it...

Z: Right.

D: ... because they'd already made a social commitment.

Z: Kind of like political party when people are running for office how you put the signs...

D: Oh, politics...

Z: ... in the yard.

D: Politics they do it all the time. And to get people to go to polls. They go and they talk to them ahead of time and make them to make some social commitment based on their similarity to their beliefs

ahead of time and then when they ask them to do the bigger thing they do it. You can see these are kind of starting to look a little bit alike.

Z: Right. You get people to acknowledge something and then you ask them to follow through and they feel obligated.

D: You know when they found ... like if somebody is hurt at a scene...

Z: Mm hmm.

D: ... if there's one person there, the person will help them every time. But if there's a bunch of people there and no one's acting, nobody does anything.

Z: Oh, because it's being socially validated to not act versus to act.

D: Right, there was this big story where this woman was viciously attacked and it took place over thirty minutes in a neighborhood where 35 people saw it...

Z; Wow.

D: Well they wanted to write a story and say well it's because New Yorkers were this and that. Well they found out what it was was people didn't see anybody else acting so they didn't act...

Z: Wow.

D: ... They thought it was appropriate. It's kind of weird, but it's true...

Z: That is weird. Isn't this the example too where if you have one person stop on the sidewalk and look up a certain number of people will also stop and look up?

D: Right.

Z: And then if you have a group of five or ten people stop and look up then exponentially you get like 100 people stop and look up.

D: You got it. You got it.

Z: They're looking for the social validation.

D: There was the other thing of ... if you are a... you come on a scene where there's a bunch of people standing around and nobody is doing anything... If you immediately go to that person and turn and say "you do this and you do that" ... you know you go call the police, you do this... then the people will act.

Z: In that setting.

D: In that setting.

Z: But someone has to take charge.

D: Someone has to take charge. So...

Z: Because that kind of like vapor of social being just kind of overtakes everybody.

D: I always remember that one because there was somebody... I was at a gymnastics meet with my daughter... that my daughter was in and someone fell and hurt themselves. You know I was just in the audience and they had trainers and all this stuff, and everybody was just sitting there. And so I went down out of the stands and got down there and started, you know, telling the girl that she was all right... asking her the questions I should ask her... and then everybody else kind of came and wanted to know what I was doing there and all that stuff. But they were just standing there, not doing anything. And I had just... I was familiar with this so I went down and took some action even though probably it wasn't appropriate that I was the one, I just had to do it anyway. So... you know... and I can remember that girl's look on her face when I... because I asked her a couple of questions. I said you're going to be just fine. You're just going to be sore and that's all.

Z: Hmm.

D: Nothing's permanently injured.

Z: Hmm. Well what... I think what you're point to is how he says to say no to the situation. Kind of that vapor that descends and you start acting like everybody else. What you're supposed to do is look for inaccurate information because if you start discerning that something else needs to happen, you can do something differently. Like you went down and just took charge.

D: Right.

Z: You like looked for different information. Otherwise, everyone just stands there kind of paralyzed acting the same way.

D: Oh they do. We are very socially orientated to how we act.

Z: That's right. We'll we're talking today about the book the psychology of persuasion. It's called *Influence* with Robert Cialdini. This is the BigBrain Radio Show, AM 950 Air America Minnesota.

(music)

(music)

Z: Oh cool... my favorite Frank Sinatra.

D: Hey, welcome back to the BigBrain Radio Show. And that's Mr. Blue Eyes. We had a show about eyes, so these are the blue eyes. Kind of nice, isn't it?

Z: I love Frank Sinatra.

D: We always end up with one of his songs.

Z: He's so persuasive.

D: Anyway that last song that was on the way out is called "Pyro Persuasion", which means hot persuasion. It had to do with interact between a lady trying... giving all the little tips that we talked about in order to have things go her way...

Z: By Jeanie Webster... who I'm not sure who Jeanie Webster is...

D: It's a very cute song, though. Okay? So we have gone through... We've gone through reciprocity. We've gone through social proof. We've gone through commitment and consistency. Those are three factors that make... that control decisions we make.

Z: What are the last three?

D: The last three are whether you like somebody.

Z: Yes.

D: Whether they are perceived authority. And whether there might be scarcity, which they kind of scare you a little bit with that.

Z: All right.

D: And sometimes scarcity is true. There is scarcity. Okay?

Z: All right.

D: But liking is pretty obvious. If you like somebody you're more likely to do what they want. And they make you like them by the things they say to you and act, but the biggest thing is do they look similar to you?

Z: People prefer to say yes to those who they like and who are like them.

D: But the big thing here is they had to have some similarity to you it was more likely you were going to like them...

Z: It's like oh, you're from Minneapolis? I'm from Minneapolis too.

D: Yeah, like that. Right.

Z: They also showed that what makes people likable too is physical attractiveness. You get a much better response if you're physically attractive... so do everything you can to be physically attractive.

D: Maybe that's why ... maybe that's why you're so successful.

Z: Oh, listen to you. No then that would be the third reason... compliments. When you compliment someone it makes them like you more.

D: Yes, and it's a little bit of reciprocity, right?

Z: And then you feel like you have to say I like your shirt too.

D: And, it's a little bit of commitment.

Z: (laughter)

D: So you'll start seeing how all these kind of really fit in when you're doing something. They're all at play all the time. It's kind of fun actually when you get into evaluating it. At least my kind of fun okay. (laughter)

Z: Well I guess.

D: (laughter)

Z: And just the coaching on that is if you're in a situation where you feel like you're liking this person more than you should, that's the red flag. So it's positive to use these characteristics. The one place you may want to be careful is if all of a sudden you're with a salesman and you're buying a new car, or a saleswoman, and you just feel like best buddies with this person, and you really don't have the depth of relationship to be feeling that much toward them, there may be a few persuasion factors at play.

D: Well, salespeople are definitely taught to do that to get in relationships...

Z: They are. And you know the other thing is a good salesperson, they are like that naturally too. It's hard to train people to be like that. The best sales people are naturally likable. So again, you want to take everything with a grain of salt. It doesn't mean you're always being worked, but you may be. (laughter)

D: Well just ... I don't even know if worked is the right idea. Everybody is out to produce a result where they're at and they're going to use whatever techniques and human tendencies are available if they're smart.

Z: All right, well what's the fifth...

D: Well, authority...

Z: ... quality.

D: ... A man could increase 350% the number of pedestrians who would follow him across the street simply by wearing a suit and tie.

Z: So what people where ... if they look authoritative they will create a certain response where people will follow them.

D: That's something I learned from my friend John Demartini.

Z: (laughter)

D: John Demartini. You probably noticed that when I go on airplanes and stuff I have a suit and a tie. I wear a suit... I don't wear a tie. Actually, I don't wear a tie. I wear a suit all the time now.

Z: Okay.

D: Except for here...

Z: Because it gives you some perceived authority.

D: Right. It... it always...

Z: Better service.

D: ... you know have you seen...

Z: More respect.

D: ... have you ever seen everybody like they're in shorts and then later on they show dressed up? I mean like totally different person.

Z: You get a different response.

D: It totally changes who you are. Uniform is another thing. Uniforms are very, very powerful.

Z: Yes.

D: They make... people make decisions. They did some studies here that were very obvious that people were more likely to be swayed by uniforms and/or perceived authority. And perceived authority doesn't necessarily mean they have to wear a costume. It may be that they are held out as an expert...

Z: Right, or a role they play. Like my favorite one is Robert Young, who used to be on Marcus Welby, M.D. You know he wasn't really a medical doctor, but then he did a television commercial about the health benefits of decaffeinated coffee and people believed him because he had a perceived role of authority from the television show.

D: Because he was Marcus Welby. Right.

Z: But he was really an actor. So.

D: And they even knew better.

Z: Yeah, they knew better, but they still wanted to believe him.

D: And they liked him.

Z: They still liked him.

D: They liked him too. Right. Okay.

Z: All right... and what's the final?

D: The final one...

Z: Property.

D: ... is scarcity.

Z: What is scarcity?

D: Scarcity is when ... well you know they call up and they say we've got two left and you've got two days to make up your mind and there's somebody who has called. There was a study in here where they had people who called... where they called and there was a certain type of beef they were selling and they said it was scarce. And then when they said ... and they added another factor of scarcity to it, it like tripled the sales right away.

Z: Or the example I love is that if you're trying to sell a car and someone... and you place a great ad and you get several responses, you book everybody to come at the same time. Because the first person is there kicking the tires and being real critical of your car. But then when the second person walks up all of a sudden this item is becoming scarce. Now all of a sudden it's becoming more valuable. Then if a third person shows up at the exact same appointment time, there's this whole dynamic... that the car's getting scarce.

D: I've got two... I got... that made me... I got two stories to share. I had this... I wanted to get... I found this orange VW bug that I wanted. And it had been brought in from Germany so it was kind of rare and I made the guy an offer and he didn't like it. So then I sent a friend over there and had him look at it and then he asked if he had any offers, and when the guy told him, he says man you ought to take it because I don't think you're going to... I think that's the best ...

Z: (laughter) You used reverse psychology.

D: The guy called me ... the guy called me three minutes later and gave me the car.

Z: (laughter)

D: (laughter)

Z: I don't know which one that is. That's like reverse psychology scarcity.

D: But the one I...

Z: Scarcity is a seller.

D: ... What they did is they had a group of people...

(music)

D: (laughter) I guess we'll talk about that some other time...

Z: (laughter) So anyway.

D: Well we've got two minutes.

Z: All right. Good.

D: Anyway, they took four countries: USA, China and Spain...

Z: And Germany.

D: ... and Germany and they gave them the same request. And they all worked for Citibank and they responded differently. If they were from the USA, they responded based on reciprocity. If they were from China, they responded based on authority. If they were from Spain, they based it on whether they liked you or not. And if they were from Germany, they were based on consistency and authority.

Z: So culturally, the most important principle depends on the country. All these properties are working in every country, but they have different values on which ones are most important.

D: They may work one place, and they won't work the other.

Z: That's right.

D: Okay?

Z: Great.

D: Man, we keep finding out more about the metaphysical world...

Z: (laughter)

D: don't we? Huh?

Z: Well I just have to say you're looking just dashing today Dr. D.

D: (laughter)

Z: And that... I... I... really think that we should... we're running out of time. So that's a scarce commodity. So I think we better come back next Saturday for another show.

D: And we should do another show. Okay?

Z: All right.

D: And... we're going to be talking about trusts and money and about cosmic things and stratosphere and...

Z: Come on back and hear the BigBrain Radio Show. This is AM 950...

D: Brain waves to radio waves.

Z: ...Air America Minnesota.

(music)

(end of show)