NeuroMarketing

How to Change Your Brain to Build Your Business

The NeuroScience of PERSUASION



David Krueger, MD



This book is copyright © 2019 by David Krueger, MD
and Van Buren Publishing. All Rights Reserved.

Version 1.0 (First Edition)
Managing Editor: Christopher Van Buren
Layout Design: Immanuel Otto
Cover Design: Van Buren Publishing

1171 S. Robertson #124
Los Angeles, CA 90035

www.VanBurenPublishing.com

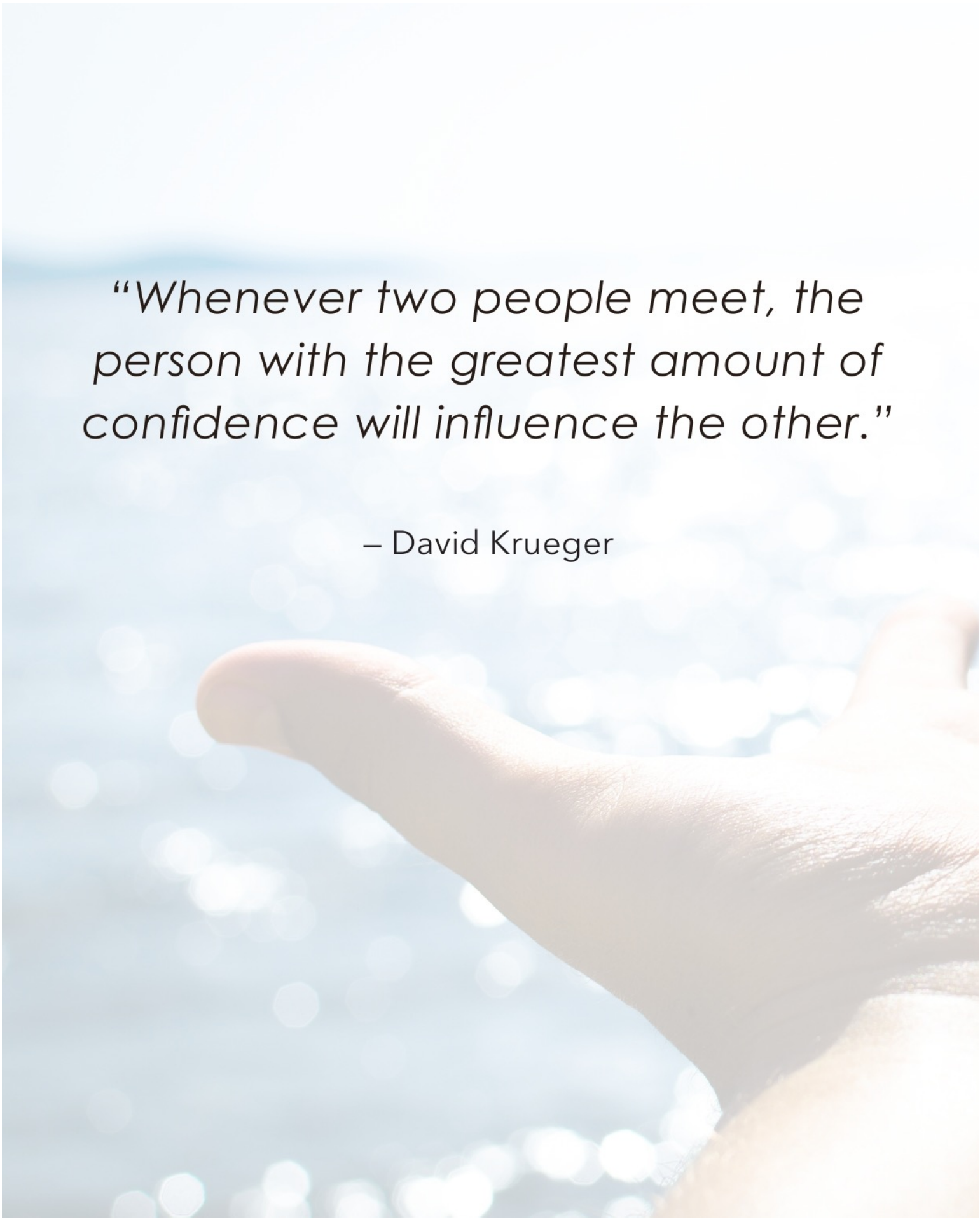


NeuroMarketing

How to Change Your Brain to Build Your Business

BOOK 2: The Neuroscience of Persuasion

David Krueger, MD


"Whenever two people meet, the person with the greatest amount of confidence will influence the other."
– David Krueger

Persuasion Quiz

Ohio State University studied several hundred undergraduates and asked them to rate how much they wanted and liked various pleasurable activities:

- Receiving a paycheck
- Seeing a best friend
- Engaging in sexual activity
- Receiving a compliment or getting a good grade
- Eating a favorite food

Hint: One of these was endorsed as much as the other four combined.

Persuasion: An active process of choice architecture to get a prospect to clearly associate a desired feeling and outcome with your product or service.

The most significant thing that great persuaders understand and communicate: *It's not about you, it's about them.* And remember your primary question: *What is it that you want to accomplish through this?*

When President Abraham Lincoln was a successful lawyer prior to

his presidency, he began presenting a case by establishing a positive frame for him and his clients that created a distinct advantage. He would begin his opening arguments by summing up the *other side's* case. He would point out the positive aspects of their position, how worthy of consideration they were, and established his credibility by demonstrating that he recognized the other side had a legitimate view. When he then presented his client's side, he established that as well, and in detail. People then listened carefully because his credibility was high. The judge and jury both concluded that if he were so willing to give credibility to the viewpoint of the other side, he must be honest and speaking from his heart.

An effective way to positively and gently persuade includes initially pointing out *their side* of the story. Discover and vocalize their point of view to show them you not only understand their point of view, but also you get how it makes sense. This frame of respect and understanding of the other person's point of view establishes a common ground—a connection before presenting your position.

AUDIO: Understand the Other Side



Persuasion Science: The Twin Forces of Pleasure and Pain

Our aversion to loss is hardwired. We learn more quickly from pain than from pleasure because negative stimuli get more attention and response. Avoiding loss has kept us alive. When people are uncertain, the first thing they do is freeze. They are afraid of what they might lose.

Daniel Kahneman won a Nobel Prize by demonstrating that if you try to mobilize people under conditions of uncertainty, notions of loss are psychologically more powerful than notions of gain. He demonstrated we register twice as much pain from losing $100 than the pleasure from gaining $100 (loss aversion). This means that people are more concerned with not making a bad decision than making the best decision.

From psychology and social neuroscience, we know the twin forces of motivation that drive all human behavior:

- Desire to avoid pain
- Desire to seek pleasure

These two organizing principles of brain wiring—to minimize danger or pain, and to maximize reward or pleasure—are overarching. If we associate positive emotions or reward, we approach. If we associate negative emotions or pain, we avoid.

If someone buys, they associate more pleasure to buying than not buying. If someone does not buy, they associate more pain to buying than not buying. And we process the pleasure and pain cues unconsciously within a fifth of a second.

A master formula of persuasion: *To associate buying with getting pleasure and not buying with pain.* Two aspects need clarification. First, what prospects will lose if they fail to act. Secondly, the greater gain if they do act. The persuasion process is to clearly associate the most desired feeling or state with your product or service.

Since people will do more to avoid pain than to seek pleasure, both avoiding pain and inertia (remaining in the status quo) are two innate brain tendencies to be aware of. Short term equals pain. Most people need to think long term to be successful. Fear is the number one reason that stops action. We discuss visualization as a brain rewiring approach to positive action in Book 3, *Mindset Mastery*.

Think about how much of what we do is to prevent pain:

- Paying bills
- Doing taxes
- Exercising
- Maintaining your house and car

Our brains are hard-wired to prioritize survival over improvement, and to prevent pain. This means that our brains are primarily a mechanism for survival, rather than designed for success, fulfillment, and growth.

A Simple Pain/Pleasure Formula

1. Find the challenge/problem—the need or interest that's not fulfilled—what your prospects want but are not getting.

2. Show how to meet the challenge/resolve the problem.

3. Clarify both the emotional and logical reasons to act.

People want emotionally, but justify logically. Focus on *their emotional* reason to buy now. Since people buy for emotional reasons and justify by logic, find emotional motivators:

- To have or be the best
- To have the best relationship
- To be intelligent
- To be confident

Persuasion directs the prospect to focus to value and benefits, as well as avoiding pain. If you focus on price or cost, they will likely not buy, because this adds to their pain rather than alleviating it.

We keep things to avoid the regret we would experience in giving them up. Participants in a research study were given a lottery ticket, and then asked if they would trade their ticket for a different one with an equal chance of winning. Less than half of the participants agreed, even when bribed by chocolate. When

the experiment was repeated with pens instead of lottery tickets, 90% of participants agreed to trade. Pens are tangible and real. Lottery tickets are hope—people hang onto lottery tickets to avoid the regret they would experience if they had switched and their original ticket won.

From a marketing perspective, giving someone $100 to be applied toward a future purpose is a greater incentive than a $100 discount.

Consumer psychology tells us that people will gravitate toward purchasing decisions that:

- Reduce the fear of making a mistake
- Make them feel more in control
- Simplify the decision process
- Offer simple, clear, immediate emotional benefits
- Eliminate any obstacles

AUDIO: Pain & Pleasure



Six Principles of Persuasion

Persuasion appeals to deeply rooted human responses of mind and brain. Strategies that simply inform people about information and reasons to make changes have a high likelihood of failure.

Over three decades ago, Robert Cialdini published his studies on the fundamental psychological factors that determine decision-making. Since that time, ground-breaking research in neuroscience, neuroeconomics, behavioral economics, and social psychology have added to the body of information of decision science to inform us in very specific ways.

The mind and brain sciences can tremendously inform persuasion to determine decisions and results. How information is communicated can dramatically affect how it is perceived and acted on.

1. Liking

We like people who like us, who are similar to us in some way. We buy from people we like. We prefer to say yes to people we know, like, and trust.

The application: Find something in common. Discover real similarities, genuine connection, and offer authentic comments.

When I was about 8 years old, it was time to buy a new coat for school. I went to the city close to the farm outside the little town where I lived. We looked at coats at 3 stores—Penny's, Sears, and Monkey Wards (don't even ask). Because that's all there was. At one store, I really liked the salesman. He was warm, engaging, funny, and seemed to take a genuine interest in me. The coat I was looking at there was a light blue, soft velour with an elastic bottom—sort of a balloon effect—you pretty much had to be there. He said, "Man, you really look good in that coat." Nobody had *ever* told me I looked good in a coat before. I knew *right then* that was the coat I was going to buy, I just had to convince my Mom. I emphasized to my Mom how much I wanted *that* coat. I didn't particularly like the coat, but I really liked that salesman.

I liked the coat even less when I got home. That salesman had done a splendid job. I couldn't grow out of that coat fast enough. For three years, every time it got cold, I had vague memories of a very nice salesman, while I looked like my head was on top of a light blue marshmallow.

The Magic Johnson Principle. When my son and daughter began playing basketball in grade school, and I was coaching them, we had season tickets for the Houston Rockets. Two seats, and they would each do a draft at the beginning of the season to pick who went to what game with me, and we had dinner before the game. When the Lakers were in town they were each excited about seeing Magic Johnson. Before the game began, I gave them each a quiz. Notice how he plays and see what you can pick up about what his strategy is, especially about how he relates to *everybody* on the court.

After the game I asked each what they noticed. And to not tell the other about the answer. (No trouble with that). They each mentioned how Magic seemed to be great friends with everybody on the court including the opposing team players. *What else*, I asked. And the referees, each added. *Anything else?* I nudged. They each mentioned some aspect of how much he actually fouled, and that he never seemed to be called for the fouls.

Exactly. Everybody on the court likes him, all the players on both sides, and the referees especially liked him. And he genuinely seemed to like them. He was as expert at handling relationships as he was the ball. And they hardly ever called a foul on him. They participate in his success. They would be less likely to feel that they participate in that success if they had to call a foul and disrupt the flow of that state of good energy experience with him. In his entire NBA career, Magic only fouled out of five games.

When people like you and sense that you have something in common, they are more likely to say yes. It's the Law of Attraction in action.

People essentially do business with—and refer business to—those who they like, know, and trust. People commit, not to things, but to people who they believe care about them.



We tend to want to work with, associate with, and purchase things from people who share our sense of what's important—our priorities. So it becomes important to establish commonalities that aren't immediately visible by specifically addressing these values.

What are the factors that cause one person to like another person?

- The "halo effect." A halo effect occurs when one positive characteristic of a person dominates the way that person is viewed by others. Examples are kindness, honesty, intelligence. We're always teaching people how to respond to us.

- Similarity. We like people who are similar to us. Similar backgrounds, interests, age, religion, politics. Roger Dooley, author of *Brainfluence* talked about this when he was the Expert Content Contributor at my MasterMind Group recently, and illustrated it by pointing out how I used something I knew we personally had in common in my introduction of him.

- Compliments. The "greatest car salesman in the world," Joe Girard, said that the secret of success was mutually liking clients. Each month he sent every one of his more than 13,000 former clients a greeting card and personal message, and the message never varied. It read, "I like you." And people who knew him said he authentically meant it.

- Contact and cooperation. Things that are familiar to us are most likely to persuade. By providing people with different backgrounds with more exposure to one another as equals, they come to like each other better. Mr. Rogers carried in his wallet a statement that said, "Frankly, there isn't anyone you couldn't learn to love once you've heard their story."

AUDIO: Being Liked

When narcissism goes shopping, a sense of specialness is appealing. This exclusivity can even create a special bond, such as select items or situations. A private invitation. An exclusive offering.

We are wired to socially connect with others. A study in Edinburgh planted hundreds of wallets on city streets. The wallets contained one of four possible photos: a smiling baby, a cute puppy, a happy family, or an elderly couple. Other wallets had no photo at all. The percent of wallets that were returned:

With the baby photo: 88%
With the puppy photo: 53%
With the family photo: 48%
With an elderly couple: 28%
Those with no photo: 14%



2. Reciprocity

We repay in kind. People return favors. When we help people, they will want to help us. This induces oxytocin, the brain chemical of connection and bonding.

The application: Give what you want to receive. Your income is determined by how many people you serve and how well you serve them.

When we behave in a certain way, such as cooperatively, someone will respond in kind. We try to repay, in kind, what another person has provided us. It provides a sense of connection and closure. We have serious persuasive power immediately after someone thanks us. "Of course, it's what partners do for each other."

In a number of studies, reciprocity is so strong that it overwhelmed other factors. In one study, success in selling raffle tickets was most effective for subjects who received a Coke. The feeling of wanting to reciprocate to the giver resulted in buying twice as many tickets as those who had not been given the prior favor. Think of the address labels you get as a gift with the request for a donation. In one study, shoppers at a candy store made 42% more purchases when they received a gift piece of chocolate.

When reciprocity was *meaningful and unexpected*, the size of the tips that food servers receive was impacted. To diners offered a piece of chocolate at the end of their meals by the waitress, tips increased 3.3%. To diners invited to take two chocolates from the basket, tips increased 14.1%. In another scenario, after offering guests one chocolate from the basket, turning away, and unexpectedly returning to the table to offer a second chocolate, tips increased by 21.3%.

3. Social Proof

We follow the lead of similar others. Especially in ambiguous situations, and when we're uncertain, we do things we see other people doing, even moreso if those people seem similar to us.

The application: Provide a context to guide or demonstrate adaptive behavior.

Social proof is a way we determine what is correct, popular, or acceptable. We find out what other people think about it. We even view behavior as more correct in a given situation as we see others performing it. Like other tools of persuasion, it is a convenient shortcut for determining how to behave. We assume an action is more correct if others do it. When I'm invited to a function that I'm not certain about the dress, I'll call someone I know who's attending and ask, "Are you wearing a tux or suit?" Then I know at least one other person will be dressed like me. Bartenders "salt" tip jars with a few dollar bills at the beginning of the evening to simulate tips left by prior clients, to give the impression that tipping with folding money is proper behavior.

In a study of donations to a street musician in Washington, D.C., researchers set two situations to observe the rate of donation to the musician. Then at another matched time, whenever someone was approaching the musician, one of the members of the study would drop some money in the hat of the street musician so that the approaching subject would see it. Viewing this act increased donation eight times. In follow up, not a single one of the people acknowledged being influenced by seeing the other person donate money on their actions. Instead, they came up with various rational reasons, such as liking the music.

This means that basing influence strategies on what people consciously acknowledge influence them can have a high failure rate, as people are often not aware consciously of what influences them, or what to attribute the influence.

In a study in San Diego, researchers hung four flyers on doorknobs.

1. One told homeowners that they should conserve energy because it helped the environment.

2. One said saving energy was socially responsible.

3. One said that it saved money.

4. The fourth said that the majority of neighbors in the community were doing it.

The researchers found that the houses with the fourth flyer—the majority of neighbors in the community were doing it—showed the most change. Simply urging people—or telling them that it's a good idea to recycle or conserve energy—was the least effective.

Another extensive study showed this contagion effect in everyday life by examining the amount of food eaten in different contexts. At restaurants, on average subjects ate:

- Alone: least amount

- With one other person: 35% more

- In a party of four: 75% more

- In a party of seven or more: 96% more

For an event that you want to influence attendance, first invite the people who are most likely to attend anyway. Then to the next group of people, emphasize how the first group has responded. Social proof appeals can also be influenced by findings gleaned from studies. Add specificity. A study in Great Britain that had remarkable success of getting people to pay delinquent taxes indicated the specific number of their fellow citizens living in their zip code who were doing so.

Focus on behaviors that are frequently adopted and that are desirable. An example is to indicate on an invoice that most customers pay on or before the time the invoice is due. Likewise, clinics that publish the number of no shows of patients for appointments experienced an increase in the number of no shows the following month. It works both directions.

Social proof, as well as all other influence factors, has to be both authentic and ethical.





4. Commitment and Consistency

We have a deeply held motivation to behave consistently with commitments we have made. Especially those commitments that are made public to others.

The application: Write down *and* publicly declare a commitment. We're then more likely to follow through.

What can persuade someone to keep an initial appointment with you?

A series of experiments were conducted at three busy doctors' offices where patients, immediately after being provided with a date and time in a standard appointment making call, were asked to read back out loud those appointment details before hanging up the phone. This verbal commitment resulted in a significant increase in follow through. A variation had an even greater effect. It was for the receptionist to simply ask *the patient* to write down

the time and date of the next appointment on the card. The result was an 18% reduction in no-shows in that group.

The best chance a commitment will be fulfilled is when there is ownership of it. There is less commitment when someone else writes out the plan, including something as simple as the appointment time.

In instances where it is not reasonable for the client to actively participate in this way, it is more productive to get a response such as an email to simply check *yes* to confirm an agreement. This enhances commitment rates.

These are all ways to help people take ownership of their own stories.

We each have a basic desire to be and appear consistent with what we have already done. Once we make a choice, we justify and rationalize that choice, gather data to confirm it (confirmation bias), and selectively omit data that may refute it (inattentional blindness). These internal and external pressures will cause us to respond in ways that justify our earlier decision.

We make our beliefs and perceptions consistent with what we have already decided. This *principle of consistency* is powerful enough to direct both our *perception* and our *action*. A desire for consistency is strong enough to be a central motivator and organizer of our behavior.

This principle is also fundamental in our motivation to maintain the status quo, the default mode. Both mind and brain incline toward the continuity of no change. A body at rest tends to stay at rest, while a body in motion tends to stay in motion. We simply find ways for this principle to benefit our clients and us.

Three main factors are at play in maintaining a status quo:

1. When we consistently repeat a behavior, the brain establishes neuronal networks and neural pathways to make the pattern a default one to save energy. Disrupting the pattern to so something different results in discomfort.

2. Automatic response to the brain's default mode offers a shortcut through the confusion and enormity of information of daily life. Predictability and repetition can masquerade as effectiveness. We simply don't have to expend the mental energy to weigh the pros and cons, or make tough decisions, but resort to the default consistency.

3. We avoid the work of initiating a new action by continuing the same one.

Continuity programs utilize this characteristic. You give your credit card number to sign up for three free months of a subscription. You are charged beginning the fourth month *unless you unsubscribe*. 82% of people do not initiate the action of unsubscribing, but maintain the consistency of the subscription. It is estimated that as many as 62% of these remaining subscriptions are not read, but yet have not unsubscribed, as that takes a separate initiative. Automatic consistency and maintenance of the status quo functions as a shield against further thought and deliberation.

How can you make positive use of this consistency principle in your own business?

- To obtain a large purchase, start with a small one as an introduction to the benefits you can offer. Findings show that almost any small sale will do (like an eBook for a couple of bucks), because

the purpose of the initial small transaction is not profit but commitment—to introduce yourself to begin a relationship. Further purchases, including progressively larger ones, flow naturally from the commitment. This small purchase initiates a relationship with a prospect.

- Make a single, good decision to set up an automatic transfer of a specific amount of money from your checking to your retirement account the first day of each month.

5. Authority

We defer to experts and those in authority. The authority principle is an application of the halo effect.

The application: Expose your expertise; don't assume it's self-evident.

When you need someone to advance your case, product, or service, having an agent or advocate can be very helpful. You're perceived as being more prestigious if someone is advocating for you. This is the idea behind book blurbs or endorsements from respected authorities.

When you negotiate with an organization, first develop an *internal champion* within the organization who advocates and provides information.



6. Scarcity

We want more of what we can have less of. People value things more when they perceive them to be scarce. Opportunities and objects seem more valuable to us when their availability is limited.

The application: Highlight unique benefits and exclusive information.

The way to love anything is to realize that it might be lost. GK Chesterton

Caitlin, my granddaughter who was four at the time, was playing with a stuffed bear in her pre-kindergarten class. Sarah, her little buddy, suddenly decided that she wanted to play with that bear as well. There were many other toys around—no bear deficit—but Sarah was no longer satisfied until she had Caitlin's stuffed bear.

Caitlin's mother, my daughter Lauren, a clinical psychologist, was rendered as helpless as Caitlin's absent Granddad Dave in orchestrating her mastery to maintain possession of the coveted bear, or to work out a compromise for all-or-nothing four-year-old possession-oriented minds.

Caitlin will later learn how her own desires will be influenced by neuromarketing techniques based on celebrity induction, social valuation, and popular trending stuffed bears. Even the induced shortage of specific stuffed bears. But for now, she has only impromptu strategies to wrest her bear from the evil clutches of Sarah's immediate, inspired desire.

Both girls were in the grips of the scarcity principle: when something becomes rare or scarce, it becomes more valuable, enhancing desire. When increasing scarcity interferes with our access to something, we react by wanting to possess it even more. Later in their lives, Caitlin and Sarah will contend with marketing messages that are adult versions of the bear story: "Limited number." "Only two left." "One day remaining." "We're not making any more."

Mimetic desire—one person's desire mimicking that of another—is not limited to children, but plays a significant role in product adoption of best-selling goods. Our neural system contributes to this contagion of desire. The more valued the person, the more attention we pay to that mirroring process.

The scarcity principle involves a secondary source of persuasion. As opportunities become less available, we lose freedom and choice, and we desire to preserve our established priorities. We need to couple not just what would be gained by acting or purchasing, but also what would be lost or foregone if someone does not act or purchase. When increasing scarcity interferes with our access to something, we will react by trying to possess the item more than ever before.



AUDIO: Scarcity

A related tendency is to want what has been banned and to presume that it is more worthwhile when it is limited. The scarcity principle works for messages, communications, and knowledge, in that we value limited or exclusive information. Louis Nizer said, "Some people will believe anything if you whisper it to them."

After I completed my subspecialty training in psychoanalysis, I was invited to join the faculty of the Psychoanalytic Institute. I was even more excited when I was also invited to offer a Continuing Education course in the evening for the professional community on any subject I chose. I was warned not to be disappointed if the enrollment was low, because the highest subscription for any course that had been offered to date was 7 people, the average was 4-5, and occasionally courses had to be dropped because there was not enough registration or no registration.

The first thing I did when announcing the course was to stipulate, in order to ensure optimum discussion, a maximum of 12 seats available. I was an optimist, and didn't know consciously at that time about the scarcity principle. In the first two days, 14 people signed up, and the waiting list grew.



These universal principles of persuasion apply the mind and brain principles in the following ways:

- Reciprocity and liking highlight connectedness with others to generate positive association.
- Social proof and authority both reduce uncertainty.

- Consistency and scarcity both motivate action.
- Shared similarity—being together and acting together—creates a sense of unity, which activates the hormone of connection, oxytocin.

The most important thing in knowing and applying these persuasion principles is to be authentic—to genuinely have your clients' best interests at heart. Remember that all influence factors have to be genuine, trustworthy, and ethical.



The Four Primary Tools of Persuasion

1. Relatedness/Connection

For a long-term impact, you must care about people and find a way to communicate that feeling of caring and of connection.

Empathy is a listening perspective of resonating with someone else's experience, including feelings, perspective, and ways of constructing meaning. That person's subjective reality. Our ability to influence and persuade depends not only on our ability to empathically understand another person, but also to *communicate* that understanding. This is always a first step: to empathically resonate with someone to build a common ground of understanding. *Everything else follows.*

If you are not exactly right, the other person appreciates that you have attempted to understand, and will correct you. When you listen empathically and communicate that understanding, the other person feels truly heard. This is the essence of effectiveness—to be understood.

The experience of connecting with another person releases oxytocin in the brain of both parties, further enhancing affiliation and trust. The more people trust one another, the greater the collaboration and shared information.

The answer to the Persuasion Quiz done at Ohio State University is the option that is the *generator* of self-esteem—the other 4 are *markers*: *The students valued boosts to their self esteem* such as receiving good grades or compliments *more than* the other 4 combined.

People who have more meaningful experiences of effectiveness and mastery have been found to be interested in doing things for others rather than themselves. The essence of *meaningful* has to do with a sense of purpose and impact, of living into an ideal of involvement in something bigger than the self.

Both meaning and connection motivate us because they extend beyond ourselves and resonate with identity.

We know that we can enhance motivation of others by acknowledging their efforts. Acknowledgement is a catalyst, a connection that translates into a more motivated and meaningful outcome.



2. Autonomy

Having control over our environment and the choices we make generates the experience of significance: to feel important, unique, and effective.

When you understand what people believe and how they make decisions, you can then show them how buying your product or service is consistent with their beliefs. This is the essence of selling.

- Find their challenges
- Discover their beliefs and motivations
- Show you care to induce rapport and reciprocation
- Determine focus and state by questions

3. Certainty

The need to be certain that we can avoid pain and achieve pleasure is a basic human need. The brain is a pattern-recognition machine that constantly tries to predict the near future. The act of creating a sense of certainty is rewarding. Think about how we repeat patterns, listen to the same music, go back to places we've been, order the same food.

Change generates uncertainty. Even a small amount of uncertainty cues the brain's error detection mechanism, contributing to our resistance of change.

We can increase certainty by making concepts tangible, such as how long a meeting will run, and explicit, such as the objectives. Much of the field of management addresses increasing a sense of certainty at times of change and transition.

A tool of persuasion comes from feeling certain about what you're saying. *The person who feels most certain is the greatest influencer. Whenever two people meet, the person with the greatest amount of confidence will influence the other.*

Confidence is a state of mind, and is contagious.

These first three primary tools of persuasion comprise three of the basic six human needs: connection, autonomy, and certainty.

4. State Management

Manage your emotions and states of mind.

Focus is one of the two most powerful ways we regulate state of mind. We determine someone's focus by the questions we ask. Asking questions is our most powerful tool to persuade someone. And the way we ask the question frames the answer. We'll explore this considerably in Book 3.



Persuasion Framing

The context in which persuasion unfolds can become an important consideration.

Are there physiological factors that affect decision-making?

A study of the decision-making characteristics of eight parole judges in Israel was reported in the *National Academy of Sciences*. Their average parole rate was 35%. After a mid-morning and mid-afternoon snack, as well as lunch, their parole rate was 65%. At the time when their blood glucose was lowest, just before lunch and just before the day ended, the parole rate was almost 0%.

Emotional states can activate unconscious biases. A study of 16 years of case files of judges with bachelor's degrees from Louisiana State University found that the judges gave significantly harsher sentences after LSU lost a football game it was expected to win.

Other factors that influence decision-making in addition to implicit biases include fatigue, alcohol, and having too many choices.

Two studies by Drs. Tommassai and Marzoli in Italy, showed that when someone speaks into a recipient's right ear, the positive response rate is 75% more successful than speaking into the person's left ear. (Who knew: I've been talking into my wife's left ear all these years).

We remember incomplete and interrupted tasks better. This is why questions to begin a presentation or a segment of a conversation can be more effective. This accounts for why unsolved problems are alluring, mysteries intriguing, and suspense sustains interest. The hardwired expectation of the brain is: What happens next?

To persuade others, should you focus on potential or reality?

The order in which a combination of advantages is presented becomes persuasive. Most effective are messages that first focus a client's attention on *potential future benefits* that your proposal offers, followed by *examples of what your offer has previously delivered*.

Persuasion scientists find that a focus on potential seems more compelling to decision makers than actual performance or achievements already accomplished at the very same thing. The brain science reason is that the anticipation of an experience creates a dopamine release, not the experience itself. Emphasis on possibilities far out-persuades focus on even outstanding facts and accomplishments. Potential has an arousing quality. Anticipation triggers the pleasure center. Validating and supportive information following emphasis on potential generates the best response in order to provide conscious, cognitive reasons.

This suggests that to follow an initial focus on potential, supporting information such as a testimonial from a trusted source, or some other persuasive message, enhances the likelihood of a favorable attitude and action. The persuasive pull of potential over reality holds true in a number of arenas: recruitment, social media, and other decision triggers.



How can this be framed from the prospect's point of view?

Three initial questions to consider from the point of view of the prospect:

1. What's in it for me?
2. What is it?
3. Can you prove it?

Also consider from the point of view of the prospect these follow-up questions:

1. Will it give me what I want and need?
2. Will it be worth it?
3. Will I be able to justify it?
4. Do I need it now?

The Art and Science of Explanation

A natural inclination is to point to all the available information and a rationale for why people should pay attention to it. Yet when a medical doctor prescribes a medication. over 50% of all prescriptions are not filled; of those that are filled, just over 50% are not taken as prescribed.

Strategies that attempt to inform people into a desirable change have a high likelihood of failure. It is not information per se that leads people to make decisions.

We all to some degree have to overcome the curse of knowledge—the difficulty we have in imagining what it's like to not know what we know. The killer pairing is wanting to share all of what we know. One of the most profound challenges is to simplify. Although valuable, the knowledge we bring to the table, especially if we get into a teaching mode, will interfere with our ability to engage in conversation and communicate in a simple, clear, succinct way.

Strategies that simply inform people about making a change have a high likelihood of failure. It is not information per se that leads people to make decisions.

If information would change behavior:

- We'd all be thin
- We'd work out every day
- We'd eat mostly vegetables
- We'd have significant money saved
- And a bunch of librarians would be billionaires

These following principles of explanations for heightened impact and retention are distilled from a number of neuroscience studies:

Don't Bury the Lead

State in your first sentence what problem you address. Then the benefits you bring. If it's a presentation, state your intentions early. This frames listening to prepare an audience for an explanation.

Listen Carefully

People give clues throughout a conversation that we can miss if we're thinking about what we'll say next.

Knowledge speaks; wisdom listens.

Keep it Short

When you speak to others, they will only be able to fully process and recall about 10-12 words before their retention begins to slip. The principle of brevity is hard to adhere to, because we usually think we have to explain everything if the other person is to understand us. So we usually speak too fast, and use too many words, which eclipses the understanding and retention of the other person. This

is too much for the other person's brain to process and recall. And, we need to ask if the other person understands what we just said.

To speak more briefly, with power, clarity, and persuasiveness, consider the 10-10 principle. A collaborator of mine, Mark Waldman, Loyola Marymount Executive MBA Faculty, did research using the 10-10 principle. Hold both fists in front of you. Raise one finger every time you speak a word. When you run out of fingers, you stop speaking. This will quickly train your brain to use 10 words in order to speak with clarity, brevity, and simplicity.

His research showed that charged situations such as divorce, mediation, negotiation, and arbitration resolved faster averaging 20% to 25% of the usual time, and reached more satisfying and complete conclusions. He describes this and related aspects in his book, *Words Can Change Your Brain*.

- Reduce noise. Include only what is simple and relevant, the essence of what you want to say. For example, if you ask a question, make it clear, specific, succinct. Then pause. Don't elaborate, explain, or stack on another question.

- Use visuals. Many people are visual learners. Visuals can captivate an audience in a way that words cannot. Match the medium and the message: For example, a cooking show on the radio is a mismatch.

- Embrace imperfection. Be more concerned about substance and understanding than polished design and perfection.

- Slow down.

- Be accessible.

- Have fun. States of mind are contagious. My favorite Grandmother said, *If you're not having fun, you're not doing it right*.

Another Persuasive Factor: Your Unique Position

Consider these questions from *your* point of view:

- What do you do uniquely well, better than anyone else?
- What skills do you have that people find interesting and ask you about?
- When people refer business to you, what do they tell others about you? (If you're not sure, ask them—you may be surprised)
- Why do your clients continually return to you, to your products or services?
- What are the specific needs of your clients that your product or services will fill?

Accentuate and boldly proclaim your distinctness to a specific audience. You have to stand out. When you narrow your focus, you increase your appeal.

Your Niche

A final application for our discussion of persuasion: What is your niche? Who specifically do you want to persuade? Niche is not specialization or expertise, but about marketing focus—to direct

energy and to inform a specific conversation to a target market.

Avatars: ideal collaborators/clients.
Avatars may be defined by demographics:

- Profession or business
- Transition stage, like retirees, career change, or military to civilian life
- Special interests or needs (You can never get too specific in your niche):
  - » Reentry into work force after parenting
  - » Women breast cancer survivors
  - » Specific entrepreneurs: e.g., women small business owners
  - » Parents of adolescent ADD kids

Ecosystems: the broad networks of Avatar affiliations.

Ecosystems can be defined as the specific areas, businesses, or markets, as well as the products or websites used.

- Nature of the organization, such as a nonprofit to mentor underprivileged adolescents
- Type of business, such as Professional Coaches
- Group affiliations, such as specific healthcare professionals

Watering Holes: The *specific locations* where a large number of Avatars hang out.

Where you cross paths literally or figuratively with potential clients.

Go to the watering holes and listen carefully to how they describe their challenges and problems. Then address the challenges by your services or products, using their language, not yours. Become an expert about your clients' experiences, needs, challenges.

Watering holes include:

- Blogs
- Conferences
- Events
- Webinars
- LinkedIn, Facebook
- Special interest groups of organizations

A basic consideration in developing a niche is a practical concept: Consider your lowest hanging fruit. That is, the people—the relationships—you already have. People who know you, will refer to you, and will become your clients. Referrals primarily come through relationships. Your existing contacts, referral sources, gatekeepers

To leverage your impact, think of gatekeepers. Gatekeepers determine access and control to a portal of potentially qualified individuals. For example, many years ago when I completed my Residency in Psychiatry and joined the Faculty of Baylor College of Medicine, I was one of 7 new faculty, and we each wanted to develop a limited private practice alongside the faculty position. When I got my first referral, it was from the secretary of the Department Chairman. I thought, of course. That's where people would go if they were new in town or embarrassed to ask their family doc to recommend a Psychiatrist—to the Chairman of the most prestigious medical school in the region. So I personally went down to thank her. Next referral, same thing. Each referral—a personal follow up. Christmas, a gift.

When our new faculty group of 7 met in the spring, each of them mentioned a disappointment in getting referrals—they had from zero to two patients. At that time I had eight. The nurturing of referral sources, especially gatekeepers.



Avatars, Ecosystems, and W

- Schedule an appointment with yourself to brainstorm all the people you know—business, organizations, clubs, church, professionals
- Define the specific challenges to an Avatar (the ideal client). And your connection to them. And the gatekeepers.
- Identify the Ecosystem—the setting where your ideal Avatar is.

atering Holes: A Summary

- Determine the Watering Holes where your ideal connections hang out.

Remember this principle of commitment to yourself and to consistency:

Practice the basics daily, especially after you're successful. True masters never stop practicing the basics.

The Answer to Quiz #2



The students valued boosts to their self esteem such as receiving good grades or compliments more than the other 4 combined.

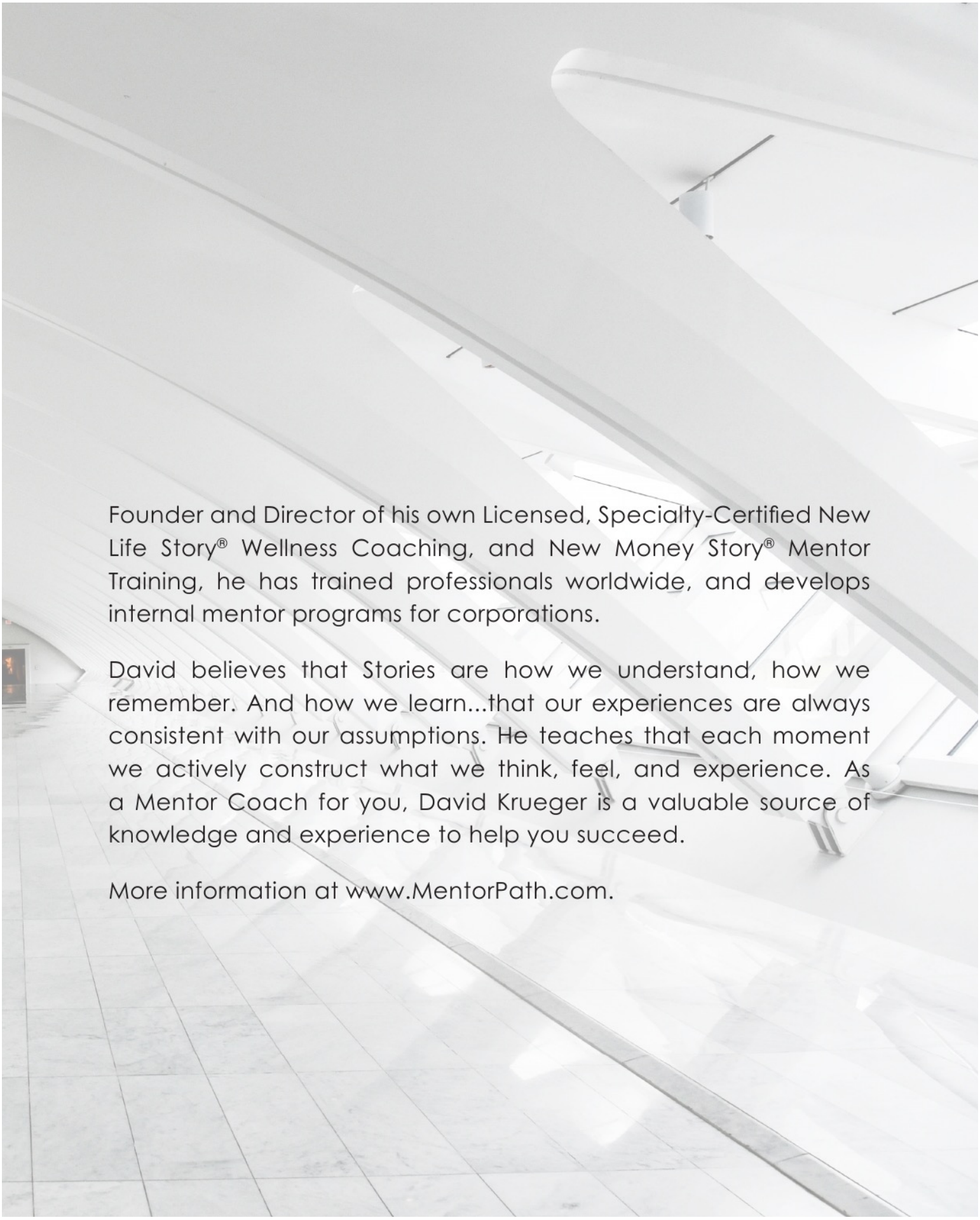
Explanation: This answer is considered a generator of self-esteem—the other 4 are markers.

About the Author

David Krueger, M.D. is an Executive Mentor Coach, and CEO of MentorPath®, an executive coaching, training, publishing, and wellness firm. His work integrates psychology and neuroscience with strategic coaching to help executives and professionals write the next chapter of their life or business stories.

Author of 20 trade and professional books on success, wellness, money, and self-development, and 75 scientific papers, his latest book, The Secret Language of Money (McGraw Hill) is a Business Bestseller translated into 10 languages.





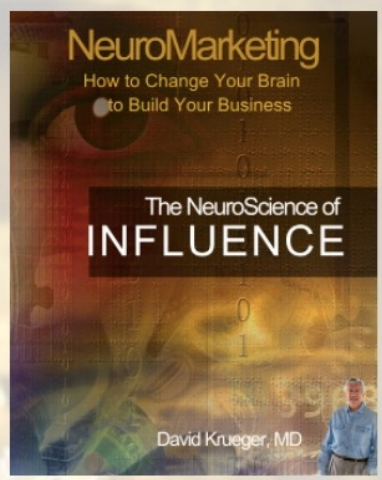
Founder and Director of his own Licensed, Specialty-Certified New Life Story® Wellness Coaching, and New Money Story® Mentor Training, he has trained professionals worldwide, and develops internal mentor programs for corporations.

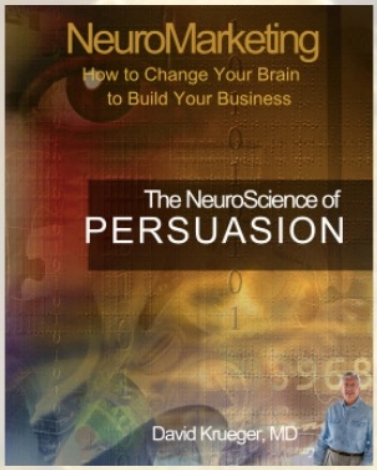
David believes that Stories are how we understand, how we remember. And how we learn...that our experiences are always consistent with our assumptions. He teaches that each moment we actively construct what we think, feel, and experience. As a Mentor Coach for you, David Krueger is a valuable source of knowledge and experience to help you succeed.

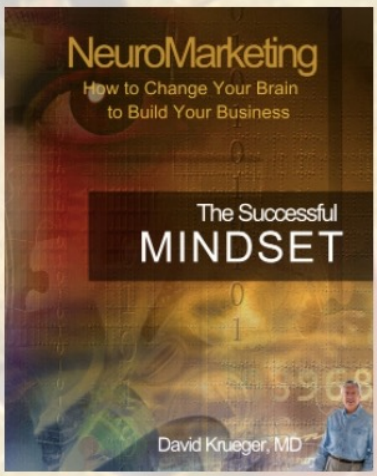
More information at www.MentorPath.com.

MiniBookClub
VanBurenPublishing

GET THE SERIES







"The goal is not to sell to people who need what you have, but to connect with people who believe what you believe. Storytelling is the best way to plant ideas into someone's mind."

–David Krueger, MD

VanBurenPublishing.com/series-neuromarketing/