



Joe Polish's Tempe, Arizona office – headquarters for Piranha Marketing – is often referred to by marketing insiders as “action central” for much of the entrepreneurial world. Though he made his fortune in an almost invisible niche by telling carpet cleaners how to crush the competition and turn their small local businesses into money-churning machines, he is now among the most well-known, respected, “complete marketing geniuses” in the world.

Consulting clients from many different countries each happily pay up to \$20,000 a day just to hear his advise. His “boot camps” attract convention-sized audiences full of famous entrepreneurs and many of the “superstars” of marketing and advertising.

In a business environment bristling with false prophets and bad advice, Joe's unique mix of real-world experience and stunning financial success has earned him a spot among the most trusted experts alive. His one-of-a-kind recorded interview series, “The Genius Network” is a “Who's Who” of super-savvy marketing and advertising brilliance.

No one refuses an interview with Joe. He has the gift of gab and the insight of a business veteran who's earned his success. The “best in the biz” seek him out. He knows the good, the bad, and the ugly of what's working – and what's not working – on the Web, in infomercials, in direct response ads and direct mail, in niche marketing, in personal coaching and in every critical area of the entrepreneurial landscape.

The business world is moving faster than ever before. Staying close to the action means paying attention to Joe Polish and Piranha Marketing.



Joe: Hello, friends and subscribers, this is Joe Polish. Welcome to another edition of my Genius Network Interview Series. Today, I've got a fantastic interview that I've been looking forward to doing for a long time. I'm sitting across the table in the Tempe, Arizona ASU, Arizona State University Psychology Department with Dr. Robert Cialdini. He is the author of *Influence: Science and Practice*.

Let me say a couple of words about Dr. Cialdini before we get started with the interview here. I first heard about the book *Influence* back in 1993, when I was sitting in a seminar room with about 600 people. And there were all kinds of marketers that were guest speakers at this particular information super-conference. And one of the guest speakers was a guy by the name of Robert Allen, who some of you may have heard of. He wrote a book in the 80's called *Nothing Down*, and he's written several best-selling books.

During his presentation, he talked about some of the techniques that he had used to sell literally tens of millions of dollars worth of information. He talked about a book called *Influence*, which was the book that was written by Robert Cialdini that we're going to talk about today. And he said that if there's any book that has made him more money than any other book, it would definitely be the book *Influence*. He said that that book was personally responsible for putting at least a million dollars in his pocket because of some of the techniques that he had learned.

So of course, me being the curious person that I am, I immediately went and got the book and read it. It is truly an amazing book. I've recommended it to hundreds of people since I first heard about it. And many of you that are listening to this tape, I know have read it as a result of hearing me recommend it. I always talk about it during my full-day seminars because so many of the strategies that I teach are directly related to what Dr. Robert Cialdini has written about in this book.

So with that said, I finally have been able to arrange an interview with him, and he's here today. So how are you doing today, Bob?

Robert: Very well, Joe.

Joe: Excellent. Well, thanks for taking the time to do this interview. What I want is



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to get launched right into it and let the listeners hear, right from your mouth, what is your definition of influence.

Robert: Well, to me, influence means change – creating change in some way. Now, that change can be in an attitude, in a perception, or a behavior. But in all instances, we can't lay claim to influence until we can demonstrate that we've changed someone.

Joe: Excellent. Okay, well, who has influence?

Robert: Well, you know, we all have the potential to be influential, although some of us make more use of it than others.

Joe: Okay. Well, how do we get it? Can we get it?

Robert: Definitely. The ability to influence is not simply inborn. We can learn to become dramatically more successful at it. Recently, I've recognized that for centuries, the ability to be influential and persuasive has been thought of as an art. And that's true. But there's also a science to it. And if it's scientific, it means it can be taught. It can be learned. So we all have the potential to become more influential as a consequence.

Joe: Okay. Now let me talk about this. Are there any ethical concerns surrounding the use of influence to get people to say yes?

Robert: That's a good question, Joe. Because the principles of influence can be so powerful in causing change in others, we have to consider our ethical responsibilities in the process. Fortunately, the way to be ethical in the use of these principles is the same way to be profitable in using them. Always be sure to influence another in a way that ensures that you haven't damaged your ability to influence this person again in the future. In other words, the other person must benefit from the change you've created.



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Joe: Could you elaborate a little bit? How, specifically, do we do it?

Robert: We do it by harnessing one or another of the 6 universal principles of influence. They are, first, *reciprocation*. People give back to you the kind of treatment that they have received from you.

Second is *scarcity*. People will try to seize the opportunities that you offer them, that are rare or dwindling in availability.

Third, *authority*. People will be most persuaded by you when they see you as having knowledge and credibility on the topic.

Fourth, *commitment*. People will feel a need to comply with your request if it is consistent with what they have publicly committed themselves to in your presence.

Fifth, *liking*. People prefer to say yes to your request to the degree that they know and like you. No surprise there.

And finally is *consensus*. People will be likely to say yes to your request if you give them evidence that people just like them have been saying yes to it.

Now, just because there are 6 optimal approaches to influence doesn't mean that everyone uses them optimally. In fact, in my own research, I was able to detect 3 kinds of influence practitioners. There are bunglers of influence, there are smugglers of influence, and then there are sleuths of influence, detectives of influence.

Bunglers are the people who fumble away their chances to use the principles in a beneficial way, either because they don't know what the principles are or because they don't know how to engage them properly. These people are always dropping the ball when it comes to the influence process.

Smugglers, on the other hand, do know, quite well, what the principles are and how they work. But they import these principles into situations where they don't naturally exist. An example would be a salesperson who pretended to be an authority on a particular computer system in order to get a customer to buy it. Although the smuggler's approach often works in the short run, it's deadly in the long run. Because only one person the smuggler wins. The customer, who gets fooled into buying the wrong system, will be unhappy with it and will be unlikely to ever return to that salesperson or dealer for future business.



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Finally, there are the sleuths of influence, who are more knowledgeable than bunglers, more ethical than smugglers, and overall more successful than either. They approach each influence opportunity as a detective, looking to uncover and use only those principles that are truly part of the situation, and that, therefore, will steer people correctly when to say yes.

So, for instance, if our computer salesperson genuinely was an expert on a particular type of system that a customer was interested in, it would be foolish not to share this information with the customer right at the outset. And if the salesperson had been good enough as a detective to find out that one particular system had a unique feature that no other system had, he or she would be a bungler not to say so and make use of this scarcity principle that was a natural part of that situation.

In all, then, it's not sufficient to know what the most powerful principles of influence are. We have to train ourselves to search every influence situation for the principles that reside there naturally, and to use only those principles. That way, we assure an exchange in which both parties profit.

Joe: Yes, which is excellent. You covered an enormous amount of material there in a really brief time. So let's focus on getting what you ask for. Like what's the most important thing in making a request?

Robert: Oddly enough, often the most important thing in making a request is not in the request itself, it's in what you do before you make that request. This is a little secret that's understood very well by the most accomplished, influenced professionals, the people who I call "the influence aces." In my observation, I've found that those who were most successful at getting what they asked for work very hard at first arranging a favorable psychological environment for their request. After all, even if you've got a perfectly wonderful idea to offer, many people won't bother so much as to listen to your offer, unless you've first done something to make them like you or to see you as an authority on the topic, or to feel a commitment to your idea.

So by first establishing an environment of liking or authority or commitment or obligation, or scarcity, or consensus, you give your request the



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benefit of falling on fertile, rather than stony, ground.

Joe: Right. Excellent. Excellent. Okay, so to summarize what you just said, please give an example of how to apply one of these principles of influence in a way that is effective, ethical and enduring.

Robert: Alright, let's take the first principle I listed, reciprocation. The one that states that people want to give back to you the kind of treatment that they've received from you. For a manager, this rule is simply a goldmine. We all know the value of having positive attitudes and personal relationships in the workplace. Now think of the advantages to a manager of understanding the rule of reciprocation in the achievement of those goals. Because people give back what they've received, it means that you can increase the level of whatever you want from your coworkers and employees by giving it first. If you want more information, you provide it to them. If you want to create a feeling of trust, you offer it first. If you want to foster a cooperative attitude, you show it first. By acting first, you get to set the tone for the type of workplace relationships you want.

Now, let's take information sharing as an example. It's undeniably true that in any business, a manager will be able to plan, execute and complete tasks more successfully to the degree that he or she has access to the necessary information.

Well, by providing to others the amount, the level and the quality of information that he or she wants, the manager will get the amount, the level and the quality of desired information in return. And it will flow naturally. No need for any arm-twisting or surveillance. Because as the research clearly shows, disclosure is a reciprocal thing. And, of course, when the necessary information is being sent and received in an office, everybody wins. Particularly the manager who's job success benefits as a result.

Joe: Yes, that's excellent. Since we're on the subject of reciprocation and reciprocity, let me actually give a couple of examples of how I've actually used it as a result of learning this principle from reading your book.

When I first started in my business as a carpet cleaner, prior to actually



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teaching literally thousands of people in the industry how to use the principles, the marketing strategies that I use, I needed a very compelling, irresistible offer in order for people to want to do business with me, and differentiate myself from all the people that were advertising price. And now this principle applies to anybody in any business. I'm going to give the example in the use of carpet cleaning, because I think it illustrates a good point. And I've proven it through literally thousands and thousands of jobs all over the world, of other cleaners who have taken this exact principle of reciprocity and used it to make lots of money.

What's real popular in the carpet cleaning world is people advertise very low prices. There's a real huge problem with bait-n-switch advertisers in the cleaning industry. It's literally such a big problem that I even went on 20/20 television to do an undercover sting operation on this particular subject. But that attracts a lot of consumers. And the reason that it does is because it's an irresistible offer. So what I wanted to do was create an irresistible offer, but at the same time I wanted to employ the reciprocity principle, so I could make a great offer but it would be ethical and it would be honest.

So what I did was I started offering a free room of carpet cleaning. And where I came up with that was the story that you talk about with the Hare Krishna's, which I'd actually like you to talk about, if you could. And basically, what we do is we make an offer for a free room of carpet cleaning, without cost or obligation of any kind, just to let people see the level and the quality of service. And if they're happy, then they'll naturally want to get additional cleaning done. And if they're not, they're never put into a position if it's done the way that I teach it in order to pressure the people in order to buy more, which is the complete opposite of what a lot of price-discounters do in all different forms of industry where they use bait-n-switch or they'll use some sort of bait in order to get the consumer into the door or to have a service person come out to the home. And then once the people are there, they'll use various different forms of pressure in order to influence the people.

And I will tell you this. Giving away free rooms of carpet cleaning has made myself, and all the people that actually take my advice on that subject, more money than they ever have price-discounting their services, using some unethical means like a bait-n-switch process or advertising a price that they have



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no intention whatsoever of honoring.

So it is a very good principle. That's one way we've actually used it in the carpet cleaning world.

Another example is with my client, Bill Phillips, Muscle Media Magazine and the founder of EAS Sport Supplements, when he actually came out with the video "Body of Work," he needed a way to distribute this particular video to lots of people. Because like what you were mentioning, giving out information, what he wanted to do was share information to all his readers of his magazine and all people that were interested in physique transformation and fitness and exercise and supplementation and nutrition. And he had this excellent video that he had produced. Spent over a million dollars making this video, and it was a documentary of people that had entered a contest. The information was so good, he just wanted to share it with so many people. But just like me, he knew that in certain ways, if you don't get people to invest something, then they won't place value on it. So he wanted to distribute it for free, but he also wanted people to place as much value as humanly possible.

I had used the Children's Hospital here in Phoenix to raise a few thousand dollars offering a tape, where they had to give a donation. So I suggested to Bill that he donate the money to a children's charity, either the Make-A-Wish Foundation or the Children's Hospital. He chose the Make-A-Wish Foundation, and started distributing this video all over the world to people. And if they liked it, all he asked was that they send a \$15 donation to the Make-A-Wish Foundation. Well, as of today, they've raised over \$1.8-million dollars for the Make-A-Wish Foundation as a result of starting with the Body of Work video. And it was solely based on reciprocity. They would get the video, they would watch it, they would say, "Yeah, this is great. I'm inspired." And in turn, they would send money to a charity.

In other circumstances, these people never would have donated that money. But it was that one key of influence, and I really believe that I actually learned that from your book, linked with all the direct response marketing strategies that I've learned. And I combined them together, and so far it's really generated literally millions of dollars for myself and for my clients. It's a very powerful principle.



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So with that long explanation that I just gave, maybe you could talk briefly about the research that you did on the Hare Krishnas, because I think it's so interesting.

Robert: Yeah. Well, those are compelling stories, Joe, illustrating the power of this principle. Here's a story that I tell about some research that I did in the airports of our country, to see how one particular organization, the Hare Krishnas, use this principle to get people to give them money when they don't know anything about this organization, don't especially like this organization. What could you do? I mean, people don't like these guys. They walk around in long robes with leg wrappings and bells and beads, they chant. Why would you give money to support this strange organization?

Well, they had hit upon a strategy that worked remarkably well. Before they ask you for a contribution, they give you something. It can be a book, it can be a flower. In the most cost-effective version, they walk up and they hand you a flower or they pin a flower on your lapel, and you say, "I didn't ask for that. Here, take this flower back." And they say, "Oh no, no, no. That's our gift to you. However, if you'd like to give a few dollars for the good works of this society, that would be greatly appreciated."

Well, I saw them work for an entire day in the O'Hare Airport. And what I saw was a remarkable testimony to the power of this rule, that people feel that if they have received, they can't just walk away without giving something in return. It goes against all our upbringing. Remember our teachers told us, our parents told us, "You must not take without giving in return. You must not take without giving in return." We have very nasty names for people who take without giving in return. We call them "moochers" or "takers," or as somebody at a conference where I was speaking said, "or teenagers."

Well, nobody wants to be thought of as immature or a moocher or a taker. So when they have received, they feel a strong pressure to give back. So what the Krishnas learned was that if they could get somebody to accept something, then that person would feel an obligation to give something back. So I saw them force these flowers on people who didn't want them, who didn't ask for them. Not everyone, of course, but a large number of people felt like they now couldn't quite leave, that they couldn't give the flower back the Krishna solicitor



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wouldn't take it they had to give some money, a donation to the society. And then they walked away.

Joe:

Right. And what is so powerful about that, what you discovered, and the way that I translated it after I read that, is if you can get people to give you money or give you something in exchange for a gift that they didn't even want in the first place and it's easier for people in a confrontational environment, where someone offers them something or goes and pins a flower on their collar that they didn't even want, where it's easier for them to step back and pull a dollar out of their pocket and hand it to the person as opposed to say, "Hey, I didn't want this thing in the first place," and throw it at them, in an environment like that, the gift actually gets people to give them money, imagine using the same principle in an environment where it's ethical, where people actually do want the service or the product or whatever it is that you're using, and they are interested in it. And if you do it in that environment, think about the power of that principle.

That's exactly what I discovered using it in marketing. Because this actually works in the worst circumstances. And using it in a more favorable circumstance, it's a very powerful tool that I think everybody should really look at all the various ways that they can use it.

Robert:

It's a key distinction that you just made between the ethical and unethical use of the influence process here. What the Krishnas are doing is giving people something that they don't want, it has no value for them, in exchange for something that does have value. Their money. And that has created an immediate success for the Krishnas and a long-term disaster. Did you know that 2 years ago, they declared bankruptcy in the United States?

Because once people have encountered this kind of ploy, this exploitation of the influence principles, they don't want to deal with this person again. But if, instead, for example in your instance of giving a free room of cleaning, where they've received something of value, now they feel that you're entitled to get something in return. You've established a relationship with them. A relationship that leads to referrals, leads to repeat business, good word-of-mouth advertising and so on. And that relationship is a very positive lever for future profit.



Is the whole subject of manipulating somebody a bad thing?

Joe:

Absolutely. Absolutely. Because the whole key behind it is building very good rapport and approaching people in the most non-threatening, risk-free way humanly possible. Because the way that we actually promote it and the way that I teach it, is that you literally say in your advertising copy that there's no cost or obligation of any kind. We're going to come and perform the service. And if you do decide to buy additional services from us, it's covered with 100% money-back guarantee. So it's complete risk-free in the minds of the prospect.

When you do that, you build an enormous amount of rapport with people. And if you deliver what it is that you say you're going to deliver, most people respond to it favorably, and they always want to do additional business with you. And even if they don't on the spot, 6 months or a year later, they normally will. And those people are also the easiest to get referrals and word-of-mouth marketing from, because you've just provided a gift to them.

Now, on the flip side, when people use it in an unethical manner, they can never build any lifetime value to a client because everyone that they interact with feels like they got scammed. So eventually, they either have to change their name or they get busted by the Attorney General, or they have to go out of business because they spend their whole business careers really ripping people off. The same amount of money, in many cases, exchanges hands. But the difference is in one case you have a bunch of happy clients and people you've done business with, and in the other case you have a bunch of irritated people. You may get the same amount of money, but it's a whole different methodology in how you acquired it. So it's really important.

I've been really thinking about this for many years, about the subject of manipulation. I think you'd be the perfect person to talk to about this. People associate the word "manipulation" as a negative thing. And to me, manipulation is really a form of influence and persuasion. I believe that there's bad ways to manipulate people and good ways to manipulate people. And what I mean by that is if you're trying to influence somebody (instead of, let's say, manipulate them, whatever word you'd like to use) into a direction that they don't really want and isn't good for them, versus you're trying to influence somebody in a direction that will help them and is good for them. Is the whole subject of manipulating somebody a bad thing?



Education is a form of manipulation, if you think about it...

Robert: Well, I would agree that depending on how you define that term, it can be good or bad. I think you're right, that most people say, "Oh, you're manipulating," when they mean something negative about that. They mean that you're taking them in a direction that is not in their best interests.

Joe: Right.

Robert: That's different than education. Education is a form of manipulation, if you think about it. That is, you're manipulating people's knowledge of the situation or their understanding, and so on. And that seems to be fine. So I think what we want to do is think about it more in terms of educating people as to what is properly there in the situation that leads them to a right choice, versus something that is really deceptive and dishonest. And that would be what I would call the unfortunate side of manipulation.

Joe: You even have a great tape program, which is called "Instant Influence: How To Get What You Want In Any Business Situation." I believe that you probably titled it that and named it that because these techniques, you call them "weapons of influence." I look at it like having a gun. You can use it to knock down a liquor store or you can use it for legitimate self-defense. It all is depending on how it's used and the character of the person that's using it.

Robert: Sure.

Joe: And when people start hearing about influence and persuasion and all these things, they can sometimes associate that with, "Uh-oh, you're going to teach me how to get people to do what we want," which in my opinion, that's exactly what we want. We want people to do what it is that we want. The only thing is it depends on why we want them to do it. Do we do it because we're one of the 3 subjects, the bunglers, the smugglers and the sleuths. What would be your elaboration on ethical influence?

Robert: Well, I think the ethical approach to influence is to find like a detective the sleuth's



Tell them what it is that they can't get anyplace else.

approach again, to find one or another of these 6 principles that we talked about in the situation, and then raise it to the surface. “Do you want a free room of cleaning? Is that something that would be of value to you? I’m willing to give it to you.” So find something that people would value, you give it to them, and they will want to give you something of value in return. They will want to return that business. If they’ve seen that you’ve done a good job, then they will want to have a relationship with you, a continuing relationship.

If you see genuine scarcity, something that you can offer that nobody else can provide to them, something unique, a unique benefit that you can offer, find it. Identify what it is about what you can offer that your competitors can’t give them. Now, it may not be any one single thing. It may be a bundle of opportunities or benefits or services that you can provide, especially maybe customer service, those kinds of things that you can provide and you’ll make a commitment that you can provide. Tell them what it is that they can’t get anyplace else.

And then, if you can find that and show that to them, they’ll want to move in that direction because that will be beneficial to them.

Joe: Exactly.

Robert: So always look for those things that are already there in the situation. You put your Sherlock Holmes hat on, and you are a detective. Find one or another of these things that’s in the situation. Are you truly an expert? If so, you need to bring that to the surface and tell these people about it before you ask them to move in your direction. They don’t have a crystal ball. They don’t know that you’re an expert, that you have so much experience in it, so many diplomas or credentials and so on, and background and seminars that they’ve taken about how to do their job well. They don’t know that until you make that part of the situation before. Remember what I said about the aces of the influence process? It’s always what they did first, before they made the request.

Joe: Right.



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That opened the door. It was the key. It unlocked the door to influence.

Joe: You know, you made such a very powerful point there, is what happens before. Because so much of the marketing that I teach is really like good marketing makes selling, in many cases, unnecessary. Because what I always explain to people is that the difference between selling and marketing is selling is what you do when you're on the phone or face-to-face with somebody, and marketing is what you do in order to get somebody on the phone or face-to-face with you.

And if you do the marketing right, using education-based marketing, and you educate people in advance and you let them know about your company using free recorded messages and consumer awareness guides and testimonials which involve social proof and other things that we'll talk about, when you do all of that stuff, then you will have delivered to you, on a regular basis, people that are predisposed and pre-qualified to do business with you and to want to do business with you, because you've done all this prerequisite stuff in advance. And that's the best way to position them.

And all of those things that I teach are all based on influence principles of which you've talked about, of which your whole book and your whole study is about. And what you just identified is all people really have these available to them, if they learn how to use them.

Robert: If they learn how to use them.

Joe: It's not like people need to go out and buy scarcity or they need to go out and buy social proof, they need to go out and buy education or reciprocity. They're doing things everyday. It's just a matter of packaging them and using them in a way and properly communicating to the people that you intend to influence.

Robert: Let me give you one quick example that should finish our discussion of reciprocity. Something that we've already alluded to, that people feel indebted to those who give to them. And information is one of those things you can give to people.

Now, let's say one of your listeners has a customer who owns a trucking



“I have to be interested in improving his business.”

business or a dry cleaning store. And there’s an article in the newspaper or in a magazine while one of your listeners is traveling, let’s say to another city, back home to Cleveland. And there’s an article in there about how the trucking industry is working or the dry cleaning industry is working in Cleveland. They need to cut that out. Even though it’s not relevant to their own business, it’s relevant to their customer’s business. If you’re on an airplane and there are these in-flight magazines, and there are articles about various business things, you need to mind that, cut that out, and send it to your past customers. And that’s a way of saying, “Here, I thought you’d be interested in it. Here’s some information for you.”

Now, they’re going to know 2 things about that, and about you as a consequence. This person cares about me. This person is thinking about me, and this person is interested in improving my business. So what does the rule of reciprocity say? I have to be interested in improving his business.

Joe: Yes. Exactly.

Robert: So there are things just lying all around us. We just need to know how to bring them to the surface and make them part of the way we do business.

Joe: That’s such a great example, and it’s so simple. And there’s not a person listening to this that cannot use that to benefit not only themselves, but the people that they associate with and do business with. That’s very good. Thank you.

Let me move on to another question. What are some ways to recognize and construct elusive moments of influence during which people are particularly receptive to requests? How do you create the environment to influence? Is there a way?

Robert: Yeah. And again, I think it’s what you do first. So for example, there is a moment of power that you are afforded immediately after someone has said, “Thank you” to you. Right in that moment, you need to fill the moment with a request for a testimonial or a referral, or some sort of written commitment that



“The difference between lettuce and garbage is timing.”

doesn't allow that honest recognition of your good work to evaporate into the air. You deserve it.

Joe: Yes.

Robert: You got a thank you. You did a good job for somebody. And in that moment, before that window closes, you need to fill that moment with some kind of request for a commitment, so that people will then be willing to refer you, ask for you to come back in the future, and so on.

So I always like, in that moment, to say, “Well, I really appreciate that. If I have other customers in your situation who have the same kind of housing floor plan or same kind of situation, I would love to be able to demonstrate to them that we do a good job in these kinds of situations. Would you mind writing me a note to that effect or sending me an e-mail? Or would you be willing to receive a phone call from a customer who is kind of wondering, and tell them what you think?”

And at that moment after they've said, “Thank you,” they just can't say, “No.” They've just said, “You've done a wonderful job.”

Joe: Exactly. It's so funny that you say that, too, because that's exactly what I teach my guys in terms of getting testimonials and referrals. I actually have referral forms and testimonial forms. And we tell them the time to do it. Let's say Mrs. Jones happens to be the name of the customer or the client. As soon as you've performed a service or you've sold them something that they're very happy with, that's when they have the most euphoric happy gas running through their brain, where they're most satisfied, and they've just seen a demonstration of creating value for them. And when are they most likely to want to reciprocate and most likely to respond and give you either a testimonial or want, most likely, to help you build your business is at that moment.

Dan Kennedy has a real funny line that he talks about, where he says the difference between lettuce and garbage is timing. In this particular case, it's all about timing. So that is a perfect example of how to actually use it.



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down.

Robert: It's more than just recognizing that moment. It's getting a commitment to that thank you. There's something that you need that's more than a verbal acknowledgement that you've done well. You need it in writing. People live up to what they have written down. And that's the key. That's the key to leveraging that thank you into the future, getting a commitment to it.

Joe: Yes, which is so true. In my coaching program that I have, what I have found is a way to increase people's commitment to their own goal setting and to their goals is actually now I require people that are part of our coaching program to fill out a 28-page questionnaire, sign it, and send it back to us, stating the goals that they have, what they want to accomplish in their business. And it actually makes them obligate themselves to follow through with what it is that they say they're going to do. So in a lot of cases, it looks like a lot of work that I'm putting them through, but in reality, I'm not only getting a commitment from them, but I'm doing the best favor for them also because I'm getting them to acknowledge what it is that they actually want and what they said they wanted.

Robert: Exactly. And the more public that commitment is, the better. There was a study done on college students, as freshman, were having trouble in their first year with their study habits. They weren't doing very well in their classes. And they went into a particular program that was scheduled to help their study habits.

One group of them made a commitment to study regularly and specific times, in a systematic way every night. And they kept that commitment in their heads.

Another group wrote it down and kept it private.

Another group wrote it down, and showed it to everybody else in the room. "Here's what I promise that I'm going to do."

The first 2 groups didn't improve at all on their next test. But that group that showed their public commitment to everybody else in the room, 86 percent of them got one full grade better and moved from a C to a B or a D to a C on the next exam. 86 percent versus virtually nothing from the other groups, because they made those commitments public. And that's one of the advantages of written commitments. They are not only active, they are public.



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to be
consistent...

Joe: Right. Interesting. Very interesting.

Robert: And that you can put them up on a board so other people can see your commitments to your own goals, and it's going to spur you to be consistent with those.

Joe: Exactly. Because now, you don't need to just prove it to yourself, you have other people that you've informed about it.

Now, I've got to imagine when you teach your students, what are some of the things that you use in order to get the best results for your class or for your students.

Robert: Well, I do. I have them make commitments in small groups, when they have a project, let's say. They each get to choose. Because one of the things that's important in feeling committed to something is having freedom of choice.

So I have the students choose what roles they want to play in the project, choose what to investigate with the project, and then make written commitments to one another about when they will do their particular components of the larger projects, which aspect they will complete at what time. They do that in a public, active, written way, and that increases the number of times that everybody comes through on those commitments.

Joe: That's great. Thank you. Okay, Bob, you've already gone through the 6 principles of influence. Do you think you could actually elaborate on them a little more? Go through what each one is, and then give us some specific examples on how to apply these influence principles to real life situations?

Robert: Okay. We began with the reciprocity rule, the rule of reciprocation, and we've already talked a lot about that. But let me give you a specific example. I know that many of your listeners are entrepreneurs. They have their own businesses, they have people working for them and with them, and they would like to retain their people. Here's a simple way the rule for reciprocity can increase the likelihood that people will stay in your organization, and you won't have to pay



Little things can make just as much of a difference as the big things.

those costs associated with finding new people.

Here's a letter I got from a woman who's an employee of the State of Oregon. She says as follows: "I've been working for the same boss for 6 years now, and I've experienced something very important. He gives me and my sons gifts for Christmas and gives me presents on my birthday. It has been over 2 years since I reached the top of my classification for a salary increase. There is no promotion for the type of job I have. My only choice is to take a test within the State system and to reapply to move to another department, or maybe to find a job at a private company. But I find myself resisting trying to find another job or to move to another department. My boss is reaching retirement age, and I'm thinking that maybe I'll be able to move out after he retires, because for now, I feel obligated to stay since he's been so nice to me."

Now think about this. Think about the language in this letter. She's describing her current employment options, saying that she would be able to move to another job only after her boss retires. It seems that his small kindnesses have created a sense of obligation that's made her feel unable to seek a better-paying position.

There's an obvious lesson here for managers who want to install loyalty in their employees. But there's a larger lesson for all of us as well, and it's that little things are not always little. And when they link to the big rules of life like reciprocity, they become huge.

Joe: Yes, yes. Interesting. Very interesting. And you're right. In your experience - and you would know - have you found that little things can make just as much of a difference as the big, huge things?

Robert: Exactly. Provided they are linked to big motivations in people, big psychological factors that cause people to decide how to behave. Reciprocity is one of those big things. The sense of obligation. If you can find a little thing that hooks to that inside everybody, then you're going to be very well rewarded.

Joe: Yes, I agree. Well, what about some specific examples for the other ones?



The idea of loss is more powerful than the idea of gaining something.

Robert: Okay, let's talk about another one, scarcity. The desire to want something that we don't already have. The idea that what is scarce becomes more valuable because it is rare, because it is unavailable.

Remember the Cabbage Patch Kids craze, and then there was Beanie Babies and Tickle Me Elmo, and now there's Pokemon. And for us bigger kids, there's Harley Davidsons. Right? Because you can't get these things, everybody wants them and their value goes way up. If you look in the newspaper for low-mileage Harley Davidsons, you'll find that they're going for 15 to 20 percent more than a new one at list price, because you can't get a new Harley Davidson for a year or 2.

Joe: And it's purposely done by the company in order to keep that demand high?

Robert: I don't know if that's the case, but it certainly does work in their favor. Now, let me give you a little hint about how to use this principle now. We've already talked about finding unique features of what you can offer, making that part of it. There's another thing you can do. Because the idea of scarcity means that we don't want to lose those things. The idea of loss is more powerful than the idea of gaining something.

So when you describe your services and the benefits associated with what you provide, don't just describe them in terms of the games that will be acquired by choosing you. You need to also describe them in terms of what will be lost if they don't choose you. People are more motivated by the idea of avoiding loss of something valuable than by gaining that very same thing.

Joe: Okay, that is a great motivator that you just talked about. I think this is really important that people are more interested using the pain versus gain type scenario. I remember listening to one of your tapes where you're talking about a study that was done, I believe, with the utility company. If you could maybe talk about that story, because I think it illustrates this principle so well.

Robert: Right. This was done in Santa Cruz, California. Researchers went door-to-door in certain neighborhoods, accompanied by an employee of the local power



Because loss can spiral us down into disaster.

company, the electric company there, who was willing to give each homeowner a free energy audit. That is, to go through their house and check for weather stripping, leaks, energy loss, shortage of insulation and so on. And at the end of that energy audit, gave them a figure of, let's say, 75 cents. For how much money they could save, every day, if they fully insulated their home, they would save 75 cents a day. He said that to half of the people. The other half were told that if they failed to insulate their home fully, they would lose 75 cents a day, every day. And significantly more people bought the insulation when it was described in terms of what they would stand to lose instead of what they would stand to gain.

Joe: How many more?

Robert: Significantly more. I don't recall exactly, but it was a research study, so the statistics were done. It was statistically significantly more.

Joe: Okay. Why do you think that is?

Robert: Because we hate the idea of losing something. Think about it. If we're at a certain level and we're surviving, we're surviving.

Joe: Right.

Robert: If we gain something, that's better. But if we lose something, we might not survive.

Joe: Got you.

Robert: And that's the thing to really protect against, is protect ourselves against loss. Because loss can spiral us down into disaster.

Joe: Yes. You know what? I think what you just said and what we're talking about here is such an important part of human nature for people to understand. It is such an enormous motivator. And when you communicate and talk with people,



*She was
using the
authority
principle...*

if they don't buy your product or service or take you up on your offer, or whatever it is, and they truly will lose something, I think it's to your benefit in order to articulate what that loss is as best as humanly possible in your communications with them, because you will increase your sales, you'll increase everything. It's such a powerful motivator.

Robert: And they want to know what they stand to lose. There's a reason why people are more motivated to avoid loss; because loss is important to them. So we are doing a favor. We're educating people to honestly tell them what they stand to lose, and then let them make that decision based on that honest information that we provided.

Joe: Great. Is there any more you would say about scarcity?

Robert: Well, here's an example of something that I thought was interesting. There's a magazine called "Selling Power." I get it, and every month they have a contest where they ask people to send in hints as to ways to be successful in sales. And they have contests. Here's one that was the first-prize winner in the April issue this year.

A woman who was asked, "What's the most important sales lesson you've ever learned?" And here's what she said. "The most valuable sales lesson for me would be using my people resources by taking upper management on joint sales calls. Our president, Doug Savage, was interested in visiting my largest account. While he was there, he asked one simple question and presented a brand new product line, still in the works, which has now generated thousands and thousands of dollars in sales and margin dollars from this account."

So that was her choice. It was bring along your president. Bring along a top manager. In other words, she was using the authority principle that we're going to get to later. But she forgot something here. She forgot what her president said that made people jump. Let me read it again. She got one thing, but she missed the scarcity aspect. Here's what she said: "Our president was interested in visiting our largest account. While there, he asked one simple



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question, and presented a brand new product line, still in the works.”

Joe: Got you.

Robert: Which has now generated thousands and thousands of dollars in sales.” It was what people couldn't get. It was what was new. It was what was novel. It was unavailable to them, until that moment that he describes something that they couldn't get before, that now they would be able to get. It was still in the works, and they got new information about it. That made them jump.

Joe: Yes. People really want that which they can't have. And as soon as there is the prospect of it leaving, or limited supply, or a sense of urgency or whatever, then it makes people jump. And of course, we always create expiration dates on offers, we always have deadlines. And things like that are very effective. Very good.

Let's move on to some other principles.

Robert: By the way, on that line, there's evidence that there are 2 kinds of appeals that include scarcity. One is limited time, and the other is limited number offers. “We only have a certain number of these that we will give, so the first several people who choose it will get it, and then no longer.” Others say, “Only until April 1st, and then after that you can't get it.” You know what's more effective? Limited number offers, because they include competition for those scarce resources.

Joe: Right. Right. Exactly.

Robert: So when you make one of those offers, don't make it limited time, make it limited number.

Joe: Excellent. Or a combination of both.

Robert: Or both.



That means besides being knowledgeable, you have to be trustworthy.

Joe: Excellent. Very powerful. Good. Let's talk about the other principles.

Robert: Okay. Another principle we've talked about is authority. People want to follow the lead of genuine experts, people who are knowledgeable about an arena or an area of information. Of course, that's true. But they also want to follow an authority who is credible. And that means besides being knowledgeable, you also have to be trustworthy. You also have to be seen as honest in their favor. And I'm going to suggest something that looks like it goes against all of the rules that people usually employ to sell their products or services. And it is if you don't know these people, if they don't know that you are an honest individual, how do you get that across to them?

My answer is to take a cue from the advertising industry, which is forced into the situation all the time where they are introducing new products into markets that don't have any experience with the product. What do they do in those circumstances? The most successful ads in those circumstances do the following thing: before they make their strongest case, their most powerful arguments in their own favor, they mention a weakness or a drawback in their case. "We're not the largest," or "Our competitors also do a good job." They mention something that seems to be against their own interests, and that confers both the perception, "Oh, this person is both knowledgeable about it, he knows the pros and cons and is honest, is willing to say something in favor of a competitor or mention a small weakness in his or her own case."

And then, now that you've established yourself as both knowledgeable about your industry and honest, when you speak in your favor, the information comes in the context of credibility. And that, research around the world has shown, is the single most effective communication you can ever deliver. A credible communication. Research in Japan, in Sweden, in the United Kingdom, in the United States has all shown the same thing. Someone who is seen as both knowledgeable and honest is the single most effective communicator that social science has ever uncovered.

Joe: Yes, you're absolutely right. That is very good. Dan Kennedy, in copywriting, calls it a "damaging admission," fatal flaw. What it does is it lets people know



What do
we like?
Whom do
we trust?

that you're human. You're not totally perfect. And by saying that, you can take all your strong points and communicate them, and build yourself up and make yourself look as credible as you can be. And at the same time, you come across as so honest, so legitimate.

I have a client named Jim Wolverton, who's advertising copy and promotions are filled with damaging admissions and admittance to where he's not everything to all people. But in these areas, he really excels and his promotions work so effectively just because of that. So that's very good.

Robert: In modern life, people are looking for those they can trust.

Joe: Yes.

Robert: There's so much information that's bombarding us every day, that we're overwhelmed by it. So we frequently revert to other kinds of decision-making rules than just information. Who do we like? Who do we trust? Those are the choices that we frequently make to decide who to give our business to.

Joe: Let's talk about liking.

Robert: Yeah. Okay. Liking, as we suggested earlier, it's no surprise that we prefer to say yes to those we know and like. But the question is if you don't know somebody, how do you get them to like you and to want to cooperate with you? And one of the most effective things you can do, and it's underused, is to find genuine similarities that exist between you and your prospect before you ever try to influence that person.

You notice I'm always saying "before." It's always what you do first. Before you ever try to influence that person, you have a sociable interaction with that person. You just discuss things. "Where are you from? Where did you grow up? What hobbies," and so on, and you learn about that person and where there are commonalities, where you both like to ski, where you both grew up in the south, whatever. You raise those to the surface, and now, suddenly, there's a bond.



...we like
the people
who are
similar to
us...

Joe: Yes.

Robert: A genuine bond between people. And the thing that I like about it is when you do this genuinely, rather than just like a smuggler inventing some similarity, “Oh, really? My wife was born in Michigan. Really? You too?” So instead of making some sort of phony commonality, inventing one, you find a genuine one. Because we like the people who are similar to us, not only will that person come to like you, you will come to like that person. And that’s the real secret of liking. People don’t buy from because they like you, as much as they buy from you because they perceive that you like them. And there’s safety there, Joe. If I know that you like me, I know you’re going to give me a good deal. You’re not going to exploit my interests. You’re not going to take me. If you genuinely like me, I can exhale. I can listen to what you have to tell me with confidence.

Joe: That’s great.

Robert: So here’s the implication. Instead of trying to find a way to get your clients to like you, you find a way to come to like your clients, and show them that you like them. That’s your secret.

Joe: Very good.

Robert: Similarity is one way. Genuine similarities. Phony similarities don’t do it, because if it’s a phony similarity, not something you genuinely share, you won’t like that person any. But if you do, you find a genuine similarity, you come to like that person. As soon as they see that, you’ve got 2 people who like one another doing business, you can’t get any better than that.

Joe: You’re right. You’re absolutely right. That actually reminds me kind of a rhyme my friend, Dan Sullivan, at Strategic Coach says. He says, “People don’t necessarily do business with you because they understand what you do. People do business with you because they feel understood.” And really, what that means is they just really have a rapport with you.



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There was a great advertising copywriter by the name of Robert Collier, who wrote a book called *The Robert Collier Letter Book* in the '50s. He had a great line that says, "When you're creating advertising copy, you want to enter a conversation that is already existing in your prospect's mind. And the more you understand the mindset of your client, the more you can get them to like you, the more you can understand them, and the more that you can appreciate their problems which really, as a businessperson, your job is to solve problems. And the more that you understand the mindset of the person that you're trying to help, the more rapport you're going to have with those people." So that's excellent.

Let's go on to the next one.

Robert: Okay. How about what we've been calling "commitment and consistency," the idea that once people have taken a stand on an issue, once they have publicly taken a position, they're much more likely to be consistent with it.

So for example, here's a story that I just read about in the New York Times. There was a restaurant owner in Chicago named Gordon Sinclair, and he was having a big problem with something that all restaurant owners have a problem with, and that is no-shows - people who make reservations and then don't honor them, don't show up for their appointment. The table goes empty and everybody loses.

So what he did was to have his receptionist change 2 words in what she said when people called in to make a reservation at the restaurant. Previously, she had said, "Thank you for calling Gordon's Restaurant. If you have to change or cancel your reservation, please call us." You've all heard that, right?

Joe: Right.

Robert: Okay. Now she says, "Thank you for calling Gordon's Restaurant. If you have to change or cancel your reservation, will you please call us?" And then she pauses and waits for people to say, "Yes, I will." In other words, to make a public commitment to their action. No-shows have dropped from 30 percent to 10 percent immediately. Two words. Another example of how little things can hook to big changes.



Little
hinges
swing
big
doors.

Joe: Yeah, little hinges swing big doors.

Robert: Right.

Joe: That is a principle, and that actual line that you just said that they used on the phone, is something that everyone listening to this tape can immediately start using in their business. I can see a ton of applications for that. Very powerful. Very powerful.

Well, what's the next one?

Robert: I think we're down to what we call "consensus of social proof." The idea that one way people decide what is appropriate behavior for themselves in a situation is to look around them at what other people like them are doing there. And they decide to move based on the fact that many other people in their circumstance have moved profitably in that direction.

Here's an example. Here's a woman named Colleen Zot, who is the most successful infomercial writer in that industry. She has been responsible for writing scripts for several of the most successful infomercials of all time. For example, she wrote a Nordic Track program. Remember Nordic Track?

Joe: Oh yeah.

Robert: That moved 360,000 units in one month. She wrote another script for a product called "Little Tony's Gazelle Glider," another exercise, that broke all-time records for sales at the QVC Network. That one produced \$50,000 for every minute that it was aired.

What's her secret? She claims that she's learned that changing little things can have a big impact. For instance, she told the story of having amazing success. Now for her, amazing success must really be something big, because she's the queen of infomercial writers. She's had amazing success by changing one small aspect of the call to action line in her programs.

Before, the call to action line went as follows: "Please go to your phone. Our operators are waiting." You've heard that.



Testimonials
are
enormous
leverage...

Joe: Yes.

Robert: “Please go to your phone now. Our operators are waiting.” And then, “Please call now.” That was changed to the following: “Please go to your phone. If our operators are busy, please call again.” And that created a wave of calls. Why? Because she said, “If your operators are busy,” in other words she was telling them, “A lot of people just like you are going to be calling in.” She also included scarcity in there, which means, “You better get in now, because our lines are going to be gagged with all of these people.”

Joe: Exactly.

Robert: This produced a tidal wave of calls. Changing 3 little words, but they hooked to, in this case, “What is everybody else doing? I should do it to.” That’s why we need those testimonials. That’s why we need to have a whole range of these available to show people who will take their lead from what others like them have done.

Joe: Yes, exactly why it’s so important for anybody that has anything to sell to collect testimonials and use those, because they’re enormous leverage. You can go out into the world and tell people how great you are all day long. But when you’ve got other people to do it for you, it’s infinitely more believable. And social proof works. I believe all of these principles that we’ve discussed and everything in your book, even some I’ve been using before I even knew I was using them. Some people get it and some people don’t. You’ve been able to communicate all these very powerful weapons of influence in such a way that people can understand them and see how they’re using them. If people have not read your book, I highly recommend they pick up a copy and read it, because it will completely elaborate on all of these principles.

I don’t know how much time you have left, but let’s talk about any final words that you may have for the listeners and anything that you’d like to leave everybody with.



The key is not to invent them where they don't exist.

Robert: Well, I think final words, by way of recapping what we've been talking about, a couple of important things of a general sort. One is if you know what the universal principles of influence are, you can look for them in any given situation and you can find one or another that's really there. The key is not to invent them where they don't exist, but to uncover them like a detective, raise them to the surface, make them more visible for people, because they steer people correctly when they are truly in the situation. If you truly are an expert, if you truly have a lot of testimonials, if you truly have existing similarities, if there truly are things that people stand to lose, and so on, raise those to the surface. And you need to do those first. You do those before you ask for the business, and you set the climate for business that's receptive, where people are receptive to your requests.

Joe: Right. What you said is, "Setting a climate." I think that's a great thing for people to think about and to leave everybody with. Because if you do that, you have just made the whole process of doing business with all of your clients and prospects so much easier for them and so much easier for you. Because what you've done is you're dealing with people that want to deal with you. Going back to using marketing language, if you're selling yourself, you're no longer perceived as the annoying pest, you're perceived as the welcomed guest.

Robert: You're a partner.

Joe: Exactly. Exactly. And if you do those things, you make more money, you have happier clients, you have long-term value with the clients, and just all the way around it's a more enjoyable way to run a business and to live.

What I want to do, again, Bob, thank you very much for taking the time to do this interview. This was excellent. I want to give the listeners an opportunity to further educate themselves on this subject. I think it's so important. I think it's so valuable for everybody to understand everything that you're talking about. So if they would like to get more information about this, about how to get a hold of your book, any of your tapes, your website, whatever, if you could give out some contact information and some recommendations for those listeners that would like to further their study on the subject of these



Eat
Your
Competition
Alive!

principles.

Robert: Okay. Well, a couple of things. One is that my book, *Influence: Science and Practice*, is just about to come out, so there's a new version of it. There was an existing edition, but there's a new edition. They can get that at bookstores. Again, the name is *Influence: Science and Practice*, Robert Cialdini. That's spelled C-I-A-L-D-I-N-I.

If they're interested in tapes, they can get my tape, "Instant Influence," by calling the following number: 480-967-6070. They can provide you with a tape. And if they have access to the Internet, they can do both by contacting our website, and that is www.InfluenceAtWork.com.

Joe: Excellent. Excellent. So I would highly encourage the listeners, if you have not yet read the book *Influence*, read the book *Influence*, and get anything that Dr. Robert Cialdini has to offer, because it's very powerful and it could make you a lot of money. And also, all the principles that I teach through Piranha Marketing use all aspects of these weapons of influence, and they are very powerful. So again, I'm glad that we actually live in the same town, beautiful Tempe, Arizona. Believe it or not, all these years we've been right down the street from each other, but we've never really actually did an interview until today.

Robert: Well, I'm glad we had the chance.

Joe: Yes, exactly. And you're getting ready to go on a big traveling spree, so that's great. So to all my listeners, give me your feedback. What did you think of this interview? Fill out the comment forms that come with the transcripts of this interview and send them here. And I'll share your comments with Dr. Cialdini, and I'm sure he'll be interested to see what you have to say. And if you want further interviews on this subject, let me know. Until then, go out and make lots of money and do great things for your clients, and I'll speak with you next time. Take care

