Charisma

Pygmalion, Jean-Baptiste Regnault, 1786 musée national du château et des Trianons

Pygmalion was a sculptor on the Greek island of Cyprus. He had just crafted the most dazzling statue of ivory, a woman so beautiful that he fell in love with her. On the sacred festival day of Venus, Pygmalion went to the temple to offer a sacrifice to the goddess of love and a prayer to grant his deepest wish. When he returned home, he kissed the lips of his statue, and the ivory warmed as the beautiful mouth came to life. He kissed the lips again, and as he touched the ivory breasts, they softened, and everywhere he touched transformed his statue into a living, breathing woman.

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The goddess had granted Pygmalion his wish. Pygmalion and *Galatea* ("she that is milk-white") were soon married and went on to build a family that would achieve great things.

Ovid's 2000-year-old myth has become a metaphor for the *Pygmalion effect* – where expectation of the good in others brings out their positive qualities. The Pygmalion effect means the greater your expectations are for others, the better they perform to live up to your expectations.

This is one type of *self-fulfilling prophecy*, where positive – or negative – judgment of others leads them to fulfill your expectations. You've already seen the deep power of the placebo effect, so you know how powerful your expectations can be upon *yourself*, but your expectations also deeply affect how you interpret everything, particularly other people, and they pro-foundly shape how others will respond to and interact with you.

Negative expectations are at the heart of racism, sexism, ageism, homo-phobia and other destructive stereotypes. Positive expectations – and an assumption of trustworthiness – encourage, uplift and motivate.

What Is Beauty?

Since the dawn of time there have been men and women whose natural fea-tures grant them a special, effortless power to attract and influence. The timeless beauty of Cleopatra, Marilyn Monroe and Angelina Jolie has captured millions of hearts and captivated generations. But what qualities do they share? From where does this mysterious power to make pulses race and thoughts wander derive?

To fully answer that question, we need to look to behavioral psychology.

Living creatures evolve in ways that best equip themselves and their progeny to survive. Human beings are no different, and the three strongest adaptive features we have evolved are *opposable thumbs* (thumbs opposite our fingers, allowing our hands to grasp and precisely manipulate objects), *bipedalism* (walking on two legs, for hunting, fighting, energy conservation and escaping predators), and, most importantly, a massive, complex brain.

The human brain evolved into a powerful tool for instantly evaluating threats and rewards. Because of this, impressions and future expectations can be formed within milliseconds of meeting someone. In other words, first impressions have tremendous importance, because they set the stage for every interaction to follow.

In stark terms of species survival, the most vital ability of that brain is *pattern recognition* – so we can, for example, instantly discern the shape of a tiger lurking in the jungle, or recognize that a piece of food is safe to eat.

Among the skills pattern recognition confers upon us are the abilities to process colors, recognize and classify shapes, words, numbers, and, lastly, faces.
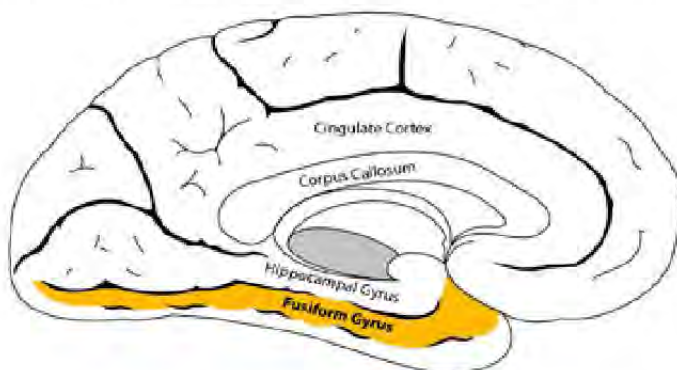
Fusiform, public domain image from Gray's Anatomy, 1858

A region of your temporal lobe called the *fusiform gyrus* seems at the center of controlling your ability to instantly and instinctively recognize faces in particular. In close conjunction with your occipital lobe and limbic system, the region allows you to instantly sense if a person is, for example:

- a stranger or acquaintance

- happy, sad, hostile, or in any other overall emotional state

- young or old

- fit or out of shape

In addition to helping you recognize people, the fusiform also participates in your instant assessment of whether or not a stranger is *a suitable gene donor* – the primary basis of "attractiveness".

A Dissenting View: Currently, the fusiform face area (FFA) is a hotly-debated issue in neuroscience. The FFA is a small section of the fusiform gyrus thought to be dedicated to face perception. It was first discovered by MIT's Dr. Nancy Kanwisher, in 1997, and is believed to handle the detection and recognition of individual faces. Becauses facial recognization is critical to survival, it's been theorized that the FFA evolved as a module specifically for dealing with faces.

Using fMRI or PET scans to see which areas activate as subjects attempt to recognize faces, scientists determined the FFA is central to face processing, but recognition appears to derive from a larger network, with many steps and subprocesses, beginning in the retina, and including the occipital face area (OFA), and the right anterior inferotemporal cortex (aIT).

Research has shown when the fusiform is severely damaged, you can no longer recognize friends, family members, or even someone you've just met. Additionally, you lose the ability to judge what is "beautiful" and what's not. So what, precisely, does this brain region use to judge a person as beautiful (i.e. a suitable mate)?

The latest research has nailed those principles down to an exact science – so exact that computers can now turn a facial image from "ho-hum" into "wow!" with a few simple button clicks.

Photographs manipulated by TAU's "Beauty Machine." Top: originals; Bottom: manipulated photographs. Images courtesy of Akira Gomi and AR face database; output images courtesy of ACM SIGGRAPH.

In a 2008 study at Tel Aviv University, Professor Cohen-Or and colleagues created a database correlating to 250 different measurements and facial features, such as ratios of the nose, chin and distance from ears to eyes, and created a program that instantly applies the changes to a fresh image. A video of the presentation can be seen online: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lVbrUuwK-8g&feature=player_embedded

Says Prof. Cohen-Or:

Beauty can be quantified by mathematical measurements and ratios. It can be defined as average distances between features, which a majority of people agree are the most beautiful. I don't claim to know much about beauty. For us, every picture in this research project is just a collection of numbers."

I. Symmetry

The ancient Greek mathematician Pythagoras first suggested 3000 years ago that the secret of beauty lay in "harmony" or "balance" that was pleasing to the eye. He came up with a formula for the *Golden Mean* or *phi*, which dictated that if the length and the height of an object are in harmony (a mathematical ratio of 1 to 1.618), it creates a perfect sense of balance in art or design. Since that day, engineers, artists and architects have used the formula worldwide to make timeless masterpieces from the Parthenon to Leonardo da Vinci's Madonna and Child.
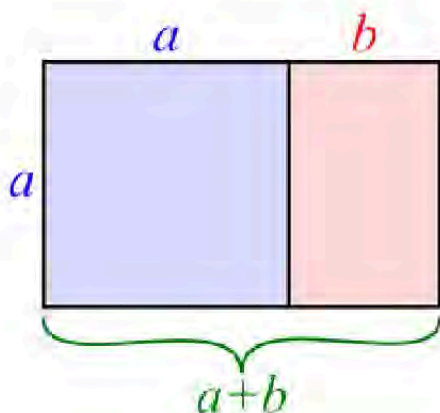
Phi - the golden ratio or Divine Proportion - divides a line segment into two parts - a smaller portion measured against the entire length - at 1 to 1.618. This ratio has been deliberately used to create the most enduring works of art in history, including the Parthenon, Mona Lisa, Taj Mahal, Last Supper and more. It's used in modern design, and the faces of classic beauties such as Marilyn Monroe conform to it.

This formula is still a standard by which objects of beauty are created, but for human beings, a simpler standard is one of the major determinants of beauty: evenness on both sides of the face and body. That is, the more the left half of a person's face and body resembles the right half, the more attractive he or she is. This "mirror image" effect of left and right is called *symmetry*. An excellent example of someone with high symmetry in her facial features is Angelina Jolie.

Through experimentation, scientists have found that even babies prefer to look at symmetrical faces, so it's an innate, unconscious preference; it's also the same in every culture on the planet – men and women find facial features that match on the left and right to be attractive in every culture. Studies show this also affects sexual arousal and general physical attraction. What's more, this also holds true even in the animal and insect kingdoms.

The reason appears to be that living creatures naturally grow symmetrically – unless their symmetry has been misshapened by trauma such as damage from disease, or from losing a battle with a competitor. Thus, a creature that has reached adulthood with no deformative scars or signs of disease registers in our instinctive minds as a mate with high survival skills, and we are drawn to them for reproductive reasons – our subconscious mind says mating with such outwardly healthy people will give us strong, healthy babies.

II. Waist-to-Hip Ratio

From the jungles of Borneo to the boulevards of Paris, men and women find partners with a very specific *waist-to-hip ratio* to be the most attractive. When the size of the waist is compared to the size of the hips, .7 is the magic number. This means that the woman's waistline is 70% the size of her hips. Her waist and hips may both be large or small, but if they're in this ratio, we automatically find her body to be attractive.

Again, this comes down to evolutionary biology: people subconsciously choose mates with the best chance of helping them make healthy babies, and scientists have found that, all other factors being equal, a woman whose *WHR* (waist to hip ratio) is exactly .7 has up to a 1000% better chance of becoming pregnant than a woman with a less favorable ratio. Disease, injury and weight gain, all of which change WHR, impair a woman's ability to give birth. (To find your own waist to hip ratio, divide your waist size by your hip size using a calculator.)

III. Average Features

By showing computer composites of facial features to human subjects, researchers have also discovered that the more typical ("average") in proportions a face is, the more beautiful people tend to think it is.
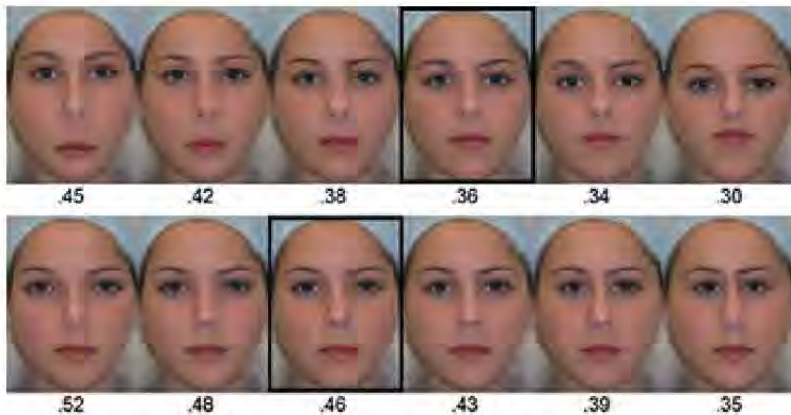
Dr. Kang Lee, University of Toronto, 2009. Used with permission

Joint research at UC San Diego and the University of Toronto has revealed the universally "ideal" arrangement of facial features for women, the mathematically optimal relation between the eyes, mouth and the edge of the face. By manipulating eye-to-mouth and eye-to-eye ratios in a series of photographs, the researchers discovered that women's faces were consistently judged more attractive by subjects when the vertical space between their eyes and mouth was approximately 36 percent of the face's length, and the horizontal space between their eyes was approximately 46 percent of the face's width.

According to Dr. Kang Lee:

> *We already know that different facial features make a female face attractive – large eyes, for example, or full lips. Our study conclusively proves that the structure of faces – the relation between our face contour and the eyes, mouth and nose – also contributes to our perception of facial attractiveness. Our finding also explains why sometimes an attractive person looks unattractive or vice versa after a haircut, because hairdos change the ratios.*

Adds colleague Dr. Pallett:

> *People have tried and failed to find these ratios since antiquity. The ancient Greeks found what they believed was a 'golden ratio' – also known as 'phi' or the 'divine proportion' – and used it in their architecture and art. Some even suggest that Leonardo Da Vinci used the golden ratio when painting his 'Mona Lisa.' But there was never any proof that the golden ratio was special. As it turns out, it isn't. Instead*

of phi, we showed that average distances between the eyes, mouth and face contour form the true golden ratios.

The team believes that in addition to symmetry, humans use a mental "averaging process" for an ideal facial width and length ratio that constitutes beauty. We are evolutionarily inclined to find such average faces beautiful.

It's their joint conclusion that, as with symmetry, we have evolved to find average facial features the most attractive. Researchers suggest this may be because it's easiest for the fusiform to quickly process average features. Aside from these three major aspects of beauty, people have always found youth, healthy vigor, and smooth, clear skin to be attractive.

Dr. Stephen Marquardt, founder of Marquardt Beauty Analysis in Huntington Beach, California is a former oral and facial surgeon at UCLA with a similar finding. He's constructed a proportional template of the ideal face used as a guide for plastic surgeons and software. His "beauty mask" template can be superimposed over pictures of people to determine how closely they conform to these ideal mathematical proportions.

Dr. Marquardt believes that each of us carries a subconscious image of what the ideal human face is supposed to look like, and the more someone's face conforms to this ideal, the greater its attractiveness:

Plato (427-347 BCE) discussed his "Forms", postulating that all objects have an "ideal" "form" or structure. In particular, he taught that these "Forms" were pure or perfect objects of mathematical or other conceptual knowledge. He felt that these "pure" forms existed only in the realm of knowledge and never in the reality of human everyday existence. Individual things in the realm of appearance are beautiful only insofar as they participate in, correlate with, or approach in structure these universal "Forms" of Beauty.

Karl Jung (1875-1961) took the concept of Plato's "Forms" further and presented his own Theory of Archetypes. In Jungian Psychology an Archetype is "an unconscious idea, pattern of thought, image, etc., inherited from the ancestors of the race and universally present in individual psyches". In simpler terms we could basically refer to an archetype as an "instinct".

We now believe that the image of the "ideal" human face is indeed an "Archetype"; a subconscious image which we are born with and carry throughout our lives. This archetype has evolved in order to help us identify members of our own species and further sort members of our species according to their relative health and ability to successfully reproduce and to provide other resources to us and those who are close to us.

However, while Martquardt says his phi mask is unisex and multiracial, his detractors say it's only an ideal for Caucasian features.

Scientists do agree, however, that most men prefer women with tiny jaws and noses, large eyes and pronounced cheekbones – what is typically described as a "baby face". Conversely, woman with "mature" features, such as a large nose and small eyes, tend to receive greater respect from men. What's fascinating is that researchers have also found that women find different male facial features beautiful based on their menstrual cycles. That is, women tend to prefer heart-shaped, small-chinned, mature faces with full lips (feminine facial characteristics), but when they are having their periods, the same women prefer men with more masculine facial characteristics, such as square features, a strong brow, high forehead and broad jaw.

It's been theorized that a clandestine romp with a physically strong and aggressive man at the height of a woman's fertility would allow her to become impregnated with the sperm that carries DNA for children with the greatest chance of survival. Then bonding with a more sensitive, responsible (feminine) mate would assure protection during her vulnerable periods of pregnancy, childbirth and child rearing.

Confidence, physical strength, and a "powerful bearing" are also perceived as attractive qualities in men, with tallness universally conferring status. Research indicates women are most attracted to men at least 10% taller than themselves, with broad shoulders and a slim waist – a "v-shaped" upper body. John Barban and Brad Pilon, authors of the 2008 diet and exercise program *The Adonis Effect,* take it a step further, claiming the ideal waist to shoulder ratio is 1:1.6, citing the Golden Mean and a 1998 *Archives of Sexual Behavior* study.

Studies have also found that people are overwhelmingly more attracted to those who are friendly than to those who act cold or arrogant – an exciting, warm-hearted, open personality significantly raises perceived attractiveness.

Additional personality traits such as intelligence, honesty, amiability, leadership, kindness and mental stability also raise perceived attractiveness.

Meanwhile, your individual interpretation of what is attractive appears to evolve over your lifetime. Superficial beauty is generally most important to young men, and even more so to young women, while positive personality traits become more important as we mature. Additionally, researchers have noted people are generally attracted to mates with facial features resembling their parents', and that the features of couples often tend to be similar.

A symmetrical face, smooth skin, small chin, large eyes, full lips – traits of feminine beauty universally and instinctively recognized. Model: Yumi Takano; Photographer: Christopher Jue; copyright 2010, Polyglot Studios

The Advantages Of Beauty

Researchers have found that attractive people earn higher salaries, receive better grades in school, are favored by parents, receive lighter punishments in court, reach higher military ranks and job status, achieve more successes, have more sex, make more friends, enjoy better service and are treated better than those who are plain. Moreover, psychologists have discovered a *halo effect*: when people meet someone attractive, they often instantly assume many good things about them before a word is spoken – often automatically believing attractive people are honest, intelligent, hardworking, kind, etc. Re-

search also shows that how you feel about your own physical attractiveness can influence the opinion of others to a great degree – confidence (and self-talk) pays real dividends.

The Disadvantages

Natural beauty is something that usually doesn't have to be earned, and some of those deemed unattractive in society can be resentful of what they see as "unfairness in life". Additionally, plain people are often worried that more beautiful people may steal their mates or have unfair advantages in the workplace. Finally, the mentally ill may project their own fantasies onto attractive people, putting them at risk of stalking or worse.

If you are lucky enough to be born naturally beautiful, think of Angelina Jolie, Brad Pitt, George Clooney and Leonardo DiCaprio as examples of standards of kindness and behavior to emulate. Being selfish or reckless (like certain notorious celebrities we all know) can sink your reputation, but if you're kind and generous, you will be regarded highly.

Why And How Cosmetics Work

Take a look at the following picture. Which of the two faces is male, and which one is female?

Reprinted with permission from Professor Richard Russell, Gettysburg College, 2009

It may surprise you to know that they're exactly the same image, with contrast heightened on the left to create what we perceive as more "feminine" features. According to Gettysburg College Psychology Professor Dr. Richard Russell, no matter what the race, women's skin is lighter than men's, though eyes and lips tend to be the same. This contrast in features is what

our brains use to help determine facial gender recognition. Cosmetics enhance a woman's facial contrast, heightening perceived femininity and attractiveness. According to Dr. Russell:

> Though people are not consciously aware of the sex difference in contrast, they... use the amount of contrast in a face to judge how masculine or feminine the face is, which is related to how attractive we think it is. Cosmetics are typically used in precisely the correct way to exaggerate this difference, Making the eyes and lips darker without changing the surrounding skin increases the facial contrast. Femininity and attractiveness are highly correlated, so making a face more feminine also makes it more attractive. The findings offer some clues to help unravel 'the mysteries of mateship rituals'.

Social Status

In 2011, the National Institute of Mental Health published studies showing your social status influences your responses to others. Those of high socioeconomic status have a greater amount of brain activity in response to other high-status people, while people with lower status respond more to others of low status. The differences register in the *ventral striatum*, a region central to processing the value of rewards.

How you interact and behave around others is largely determined by their social status in relation to your own, so information related to social status is important, according to Dr. Caroline F. Zink of the National Institute of Mental Health. And the value people assign to another's status seems dependent upon their own.

While fMRI machines scanned their ventral striata, volunteers of varying social status viewed information about people of relatively higher status versus people of relatively lower status. Their striata consistently responded more vigorously when there was a match in relative status.

Humans, like other social species, decide appropriate behavior based upon such assessments of relative social status. When determining appropriate responses, we evaluate our immediate social environment, and the reward-predicting ventral striatum seems to be the center of activity during this evaluation. This is thought to be because people view social interactions in terms of potential rewards (or punishments).

Interestingly, a 2010 study by Dr. Martinez and his team at Columbia University discovered that the density of dopamine receptors in the striata correlates with social status and perceived social support. After determining the social status

of healthy volunteers, Dr. Martinez and his team ran PET scans to measure their dopamine type 2 receptors. The findings indicate people of higher social status have a greater capacity to enjoy life, finding it more stimulating and rewarding, due to increased dopamine receptors within their striata.

According to Dr. John Krystal, Editor of *Biological Psychiatry*, this partly helps explain the human drive to achieve social status. People with more D2 receptors are more strongly motivated and engaged by social situations, driven by their mesolimbic reward pathways to become high achievers and have higher social support levels.

On the other hand, low levels of dopamine receptors correlate with lower social status and social support from friends, family, or partners. And the work of Dr. Nora Volkow, Director of the National Institute on Drug Abuse, implies that those of lower social status (and theoretically D2 receptor-deficient) are more vulnerable to their reduced status and network of social support, and these social factors heighten their risk of alcohol and substance abuse.

Developing Charisma

We all know someone who can walk into the room and immediately "own" it. So what special magnetic characteristic do they possess granting them this air of effortless persuasion?

One need not be born with the magnetism of Angelina Jolie or George Clooney; psychologists have discovered effective ways to refine one's image and personality to increase attractiveness and credibility. Here are some pointers:

Polish your Exterior - Always pay attention to what you wear, to your posture, grooming and overall appearance.

Get an Outside Opinion - Learn how others perceive you through the advice of trusted friends, photographs and videotapes of yourself. Keep a list of what you like about your appearance and gradually fix what you don't.

Speak with Conviction - knowing what's important to you in life, lets you convey it powerfully: when you're passionate about an issue, you're more per-suasive, articulate, and attractive.

The Power Of A Smile

Health Tap and Wellsphere CEO Ron Gutman has long conducted research into helping people live healthier, happier lives. In The Untapped Power of Smiling, he describes some amazing facts about smiling:

A 2000 study of 30-year-old yearbook pictures found women's smiles to be a predictor of their well-being and success throughout their lives; measuring smile width, scientists could predict how long-lasting and happy their marriages were, their scores on tests measuring happiness and well-being, and how much they could inspire others later in life. Those who smiled widest were consistently in the highest ranks for all categories.

In a similar 2010 study at Wayne State University, Professors Ernest L. Abel and Michael L. Kruger used smiles of famous athletes on baseball cards to predict how long they would live:

> *Emotions affect personalities and life outcomes by influencing how people think, behave, and interact with others. People with positive emotions are happier and have more stable personalities, more stable marriages, and better cognitive and interpersonal skills than those with negative emotions, throughout the life span.*

Their startling finding was that players with the biggest smiles outlived their peers by an average of seven years.

Says Gutman, smiling is a basic fundamental instinct common to humans around the globe and throughout history. In fact, smiling is such a fundamental, natural expression, 3D ultrasound shows babies do it while in the womb, and almost continuously throughout infancy.

Apparently, we're not only hard-wired to smile, but also to respond to smiles from others; studies at Sweden's Uppsala University have proven that seeing a smile suppresses normal control over facial muscles – compelling you to break into a smile in response. It's also naturally difficult to frown in response to someone else's smile. Gutman suggests that (presumably via mirror neurons), your automatic reflex to mimic a smile allows you to physically experience the emotions of the smiler you're watching, and helps you in interpreting the emotional meaning and authenticity of the smile.

In research performed at the University of Clermont-Ferrand in France, subjects were asked to interpret real vs. fake smiles, while holding a pencil in their mouths to repress the muscles that help us smile. Without the pencils in their mouths, subjects were excellent judges, but with the pencils – *when they could not mimic the smiles they saw* – their judgment was impaired.

A 2009 study at Echnische University in Munich used Botox – weakened botulism toxin – to temporarily paralyze the smiling muscles of test subjects, and scanned their brain activity before and after. They discovered that mimicking facial expressions alters limbic system activity, showing how

emotions are transferred from person to person via facial expressions – smiles or other expressions.

Smiling has also been correlated with a significant reduction in stress hormones such as cortisol and adrenaline, lower blood pressure, and an increase in health- and mood-improving endorphins. Seeing the smile of someone you love or admire smile has particularly amazing physiological effects: a 2005 study led by Dr. David Lewis, author of *The Secret Language of Success,* involved fMRI scans and heart-rate monitors, used to measure the effects of a number of pleasure-inducing stimuli.

109 test subjects were, in turn, given chocolate, money, and shown photos of smiling friends, family and loved ones. In comparing the health effects of each reward, a child's smile triggered positive stimulation equivalent to 2,000 chocolate bars or over $21,000, while the smile of a loved one triggered positive activity equivalent to 600 chocolate bars or over $11,000, and a friend's smile elicited 200 bars of chocolate or $200 worth of positivity.

Smiling also enhances your attractiveness; a 2007 study conducted at the University of Aberdeen in Scotland, found that a direct gaze with a smile enhanced both likeability and sexual attractiveness.

Quantum-Level Charisma

If you want to persuade or otherwise influence others, psychologists have outlined the most powerful techniques, based upon fundamental human motivation.

It's well-understood that sentient creatures avoid negative stimuli such as pain or discomfort, and approach positive stimuli, such as pleasant physical sensations, or emotions.

While humans, with our advanced cortices, have the capacity for much more complex experiences and motivations than insects, reptiles or other less mentally-evolved creatures, we still share the same fundamental basis of motivation, as well as common behavioral traits that have been well-studied and, within the last decade, understood quite deeply.

Said by many to be the greatest book on persuasion ever written, Professor Robert B. Cialdini's *Influence: The Psychology of Persuasion* describes what motivates people, and how this can be turned to your advantage in virtually any situation. He lists six *Weapons of Influence* used by the most effective marketers, salespeople, and canny negotiators throughout everyday life.

Dr. Cialdini followed up his "must-read" international bestseller with a joint 2004 study entitled *Social Influence: Compliance and Conformity*. In the paper, Dr. Cialdini and co-author Dr. Noah J. Goldstein gathered and summarized the most important research on influence, compliance and conformity between 1997 and 2002.

They found all humans share three goals "fundamental to rewarding function":

Affiliation - the desire to be an accepted member of one or more social circles

Accuracy - the desire to learn and use the "best" (most practical and beneficial) techniques for managing life issues and relationships

Maintaining a Positive Self-Concept - the need to identify and act consistent with an inner identity and to maintain a consistent worldview

Affiliation boils down to the simple human desire to be liked. Research has shown that positive human touch and social interaction cause the brain to release mood-enhancing endorphins, raise self-esteem and elevate mood. Conversely, rejection feels terrible, releases the potentially unhealthy stress hormone cortisol, lowers the hormone testosterone, makes self-esteem drop, and worsens mood.

Because we want to be liked and socially accepted, we act in ways we think will be please people whose approval we desire. And because it's the simplest, safest way to receive approval from a large number of people, people like to become part of a group (making people with low self-esteem vulnerable to leaders who may not always act in their followers' best interests).

Accuracy is our constant desire to do things in the best, most efficient and/or rewarding way possible. We want to know the "best way to get along with others" or the optimal route to and from work, or "easy time-savers for the kitchen". We also tend to look to others around us to assess whether or not we're doing things "correctly".

Maintaining a Positive Self-Concept is our need to preserve ideas about ourselves and what kind of people we are, as well as our personal worldviews.

Out of necessity, human beings evolved to behave consistently, generally through habit formation. This means if you think of yourself as a "people person", you're going to act in ways which fit that label.

If a friend wanted to manipulate you into going to a party you were reluctant to attend, they could trigger this subconscious goal by saying something like, "you mean you're not going? You always go! Come on, you *love* mingling!"

A secondary part of this unconscious drive to maintain consistency is the need to maintain long-held worldviews. If you believe people are basically good at heart, you're likely to listen to messages that bolster that worldview, and tune out conflicting ones.

Six Weapons Of Influence

Professor Robert Cialdini's *Weapons of Influence* shows how successful persuaders – be they politicians, salesmen, middle managers or even spouses – capitalize upon certain human needs. You can be certain that virtually every modern advertisement you see or political speech that you hear has been written by someone who studied Professor Caldini's work – it's been updated as a university textbook, translated into 25 languages, and sold 2 million copies since its first publication in 2001. The six weapons of influence are:

1. ***Reciprocity*** – When you receive something nice from another person, you feel like you owe them something in return. A free coffee sample in the shopping mall or even a compliment on how someone is dressed are "favors" salesmen use to you feel you owe someone a kindness in return. As the Japanese proverb says, "The most expensive things are those that are offered for free".

2. ***Commitment and Consistency*** – The cliché "sticking to your guns" comes close to describing how this persuasion technique works. Once a person's made a decision or acted in a certain way, they will probably do it again and continue to do so, to maintain their idea of who they are and justify that their actions are "correct".

   Advertisers exploit this in building brand loyalty with ads suggesting you're a "Marlboro Man" or clothing that says you're "Juicy". Interestingly, a new study has found that brand identities have even come to heighten people's perceptions of themselves, so that carrying Victoria's Secret bags made mall shoppers regard themselves as better-looking, more glamorous and feminine than shoppers with non-branded bags, and using a pen with the MIT logo made people believe themselves to be more intelligent, and have greater leadership qualities.

3. ***Social Proof*** – Otherwise known as the principle of "monkey see, monkey do" – if you see others taking a certain course of action,

you subconsciously accept this as proof of its logic. You can have fun with this one: stop in the middle of the sidewalk and stare up into the sky for quick proof of how powerful this effect is.

Even just hearing "everybody's got one!" is enough to trigger an inner "Well I want one too!" impulse. My favourite personal example of this principle at work is found in *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer,* in chapter two, free for downloading online here: http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/toc/modeng/public/Twa2Tom.html

Dr. Cialdini cites the use of laugh tracks in comedy as an example of media exploitation of this principle – subconsciously we believe that if others are laughing, what we're watching must be funny….

4. *Liking* – This principle is pretty obvious – if you like someone, you'll value his or her opinion, and you're thus more open to persuasion. Particularly attractive people have an advantage here, which is why models and movie stars are used to endorse products. Finding similarities is another powerful way to build rapport quickly – we like people who we believe are similar to us.

5. *Authority* – If somebody has a title, we often automatically obey them, sometimes even against our better judgment, as in the infamous "shock experiments" conducted by Yale University psychologist Stanley Milgram.

6. *Scarcity* – Ads that shout, "Buy now! Time is running out!" illustrate this principle in action. In short, we want what we can't have. If it seems there's a limited supply of something, our impulse is to grab our own fair share. This ties in neatly with the principle of *social proof* – subconsciously we're compelled to believe "If everyone else is buying that, it *must* be good!"

It would be irresponsible to end our discussion on persuasion here. While it's certainly possible to use these techniques in selfish, manipulative ways, it's far better for many reasons to use this knowledge ethically, looking for ways to benefit others as well as oneself, the classic "win-win" stance.

Social Bulldozers

Authority figures share certain behaviours. They tend to smile less often, interrupt others more frequently, and speak in louder voices, according to 2011 studies conducted at the University of Amsterdam. By breaking proper rules of social decorum, they convey the impression of power and status.

Because people with a lot of money and influence have fewer rules constraining them, and greater access to resources, knowledge and support, they experience a much different reality than most people. Conversely, powerless people are limited in their behavior, and compelled to follow rules by threat of punishment. These rules of social behavior are called *norms*, and experiments show that those who break them appear more powerful.

Norm violators are seen as having the freedom to do whatever they like, so acting in this manner among strangers makes you appear powerful, according to Dr. Gerben Van Kleef, who led the study.

Volunteers in his study were asked to evaluate a visitor who violated norms, taking employee coffee without asking, or posing as a bookkeeper that broke accounting rules. The volunteers consistently found these rule breakers to be more "in control" and "powerful" compared with people who didn't steal coffee or break bookkeeping rules. One caveat is that this may vary by culture; such violations of unspoken rules would likely be seen as much more serious in Japan than in America, for example.

Like rule-breaking, acting rudely also conveys an air of power. Volunteers watched videos of a man in a sidewalk café acting rudely or politely and gave their impressions. When the actor put his feet up on a chair, tossed cigarette ashes on the ground and brusquely ordered his food, volunteers were much more likely to describe him as a "decision-maker", with the ability to get people to listen to him than the same actor being polite.

In a related study, Dr. Van Kleef and his team brought volunteers into the lab with actors who assumed the roles of rule breakers or rule followers. The polite actor acted normal and considerate, while the rule breaker came late, threw his bag onto a table and put his feet up. Volunteers reported that the rule breaker was more powerful and able to compel others to do what he wanted.

Seven Types Of Personal Power

Karen Burns, author of *The Amazing Adventures of Working Girl: Real-Life Career Advice You Can Actually Use* says influence comes from several different sources, and knowing about them increases your effectiveness. Consider how you can increase your personal influence in each of the following ways:

1. ***Authority*** – This is the most overt form of influence, bestowed with the title of "president" or "department head", etc. However, the title alone isn't enough – to ensure your influence continues, you must

have at least one of the other forms of power, or you will quickly find your influence fading.

2. **Wealth** – When you have or control access to money or material goods that someone else wants, you have significant influence. However, this is not based upon who you are – when you no longer possess or have access to them, your influence will completely dissipate. An excellent story that illustrates this kind of power and its subsequent loss is the novel *The Bonfire of the Vanities* by Tom Wolfe.

3. **Connections** – Knowing who to introduce to whom, and where to go for information makes you a "mover and a shaker" that others want to know. An excellent example of someone who exploited this influence was Enoch L. Johnson, the Prohibition-era statesman and gangster fictionalized as "Nucky" Thompson in the HBO television series *Boardwalk Empire*.

4. **Knowledge** – Being an expert at a given skill puts you in a unique place of power – people will come to you to help sort out their problems and offer them guidance. Think of Hugh Laurie's character in the television series House.

5. **Love** – Some people are born with charisma, a natural attractiveness that draws people to them and makes them feel affection. Charisma can certainly be developed (through the techniques here), but for some people, a natural charm is effortless.

   Unfortunately, this power can often lead to vanity or a sense of unearned entitlement. If you are one of the lucky ones born with strong charisma, take care to never let it blind you to the fundamental equality of people. Examples that immediately spring to mind are Marilyn Monroe, Cary Grant, Brad Pitt or Elizabeth Taylor.

6. **Respect** – Being known as reliable, ethical, honest, dependable, of upstanding character, and having a solid work ethic brings respect over time. Examples could include Eleanor Roosevelt or Mother Teresa.

7. **Fear** – If you have the ability to physically, socially, emotionally or financially punish others, it will give you influence over them. However, using this kind of power can breed deep resentment and hatred, so it's best when never used, but only implied. Of course, Adolph Hitler and Joseph Stalin are examples of this kind of power.

Ms. Burns cautions that power can become addictive and easily abused, but abuse of power is an obvious sign of insecurity and weakness. Take care to

use your own influence in life to spread happiness and growth, instead of just misery and discord.

Online: Virtual Charisma

In a rapidly modernizing society, face-to-face first meetings are being replaced with online introductions through social networking sites. If you're interested in creating a powerful first impression online, dating site *OKCupid.com* has some excellent advice for you. Out of over 500,000 first contact messages, OKCupid found only 32% receive one or more responses, but some people get consistently better reply rates. By looking at keywords and phrases and how they affected reply rates, the company devised a set of guidelines for online introductions. In order of importance, they suggest the following:

1. ***Sound Intelligent*** – Grammar and spelling mistakes as well as slang and "netspeak" were deal-breakers. Examples of what they deemed "huge turn-offs" included "ur", "u", "wat", "wont", etc. The exceptions were expressions of amusement like "haha" and "lol".

2. ***Dial Back the Hornies*** – Don't compliment someone's appearance during initial contact (men or women). It suggests desperation and hints the sender is unattractive. General compliments, however, seem to elicit favorable responses. The keywords "awesome", "fascinating" and "pretty good" worked well, as did messages showing interest in what the other had to say, with "you mention" ranking at the top.

3. ***Novelty is Powerful*** – Saying "hi" and "hello" doesn't fare well, but jumping right into what you want to say is the best approach, followed by informal, casual greetings like "how's it going?", "what's up?", and "howdy".

4. ***Individuality is Attractive*** – bringing up specific individual preferences in music, social activities and/or other tastes are an apparently effective way to make a connection.

5. ***Humility is a Virtue (for men)*** – Although confidence is king in the real world, online, being a little more humble has a much more beneficial impact. The words "kinda", "sorry", "apologize" and "probably" all made for much more successful interactions. The one exception was the word "please", which, the authors note, may smack of desperation.

6. *Avoid Religion* – Self-proclaimed atheists received the highest response rate at 56%.

7. *Brevity Attracts* – The ideal length of a first message is 200 characters from men, and only 50 characters from women.

Be More Photogenic

OKCupid.com next studied 7,000 profile photos from their database, comparing how many contacts each picture yielded. They analyzed three parameters:

- *Expression and Pose* – smiling, looking straight ahead, pursing the lips flirtatiously, etc.

- *Context* – environment, alone or among friends, activity, with a pet, car, etc.

- *Revelation* – showing cleavage for women or muscles for men, face, etc.

An interesting initial finding was that profiles which didn't show the subject's face were just as successful in getting responses as those which showed the face – as long as the pictures showed "...something unusual, sexy, or mysterious enough to make people want to talk to you." So what *were* the best ways to take a profile picture?

For Women – Holding the camera overhead and tilting the head down ("the MySpace shot") while making eye contact and pouting at the camera was by far the single most effective photo type for women (cleavage or no cleavage).

Women got the worst response when seeming to flirt off-camera (presumably with someone else?).

The Cleavage Shot was also very successful, drawing 49% more contacts per month than average. As women's ages went up, they tended to get fewer responses, BUT, when they were older AND showed cleavage, their responses went up. Additionally, doing something interesting (such as playing an instrument), or posing with an animal generated a lot of contacts. Travel pictures ranked a distant third.

For Men – For men, smiling was NOT an effective approach. In fact, the most responses were generated by pictures where the man looked away from the camera with disinterest (not smiling) – the effect was about a 50% increase in responses. Presumably a shot from below would be even more effective, as we'll see shortly. Appearing to flirt away from the camera was likewise the worst thing men could do. Guys also fared poorly in formal clothes – casual clothes seemed to be more effective.

Among other types of pictures that generated interest were posing with an animal, showing off muscles (only for men aged 19 to 31, and the effect decreased significantly with age), being engaged in a fun or interesting activity, or having fun with friends – presumably because they make someone look "more normally adjusted and well balanced".

Pro kickboxer Arthur Sorsor demonstrates an optimal profile pose. Photo used with permission, photographer anonymous

Research has also shown women consistently look for cues on a man's desirability based on how other women seem to judge him. A group of women smiling at the man in the picture seems to boost judgments of his attractiveness considerably.

Use Good Equipment

In another survey of over 11 million online subscribers, OKCupid also found the more complex the camera, the more attractive pictures will be – a digital Single Lens Reflex (where you can adjust and change the lenses) gives the best results. Automatic cameras give generally baseline results, and pictures taken with phone cameras fared the worst.

Additionally, blurring out the background and sharply focusing in on just the main subject with a shallow depth of field enhances pictures tremendously, according to their findings. This is achieved by using a *wide aperture* setting – like the iris in your eye, the aperture changes the amount of light allowed to enter the camera.

The best times to take have your picture taken, they've found, were between 1 pm to 4 pm and 2 am to 7 am; 7 am to noon and 6 pm to 10 pm were the worst. Using direct flash adds seven years to your appearance, so the flash should be softened by bouncing it off of walls.

OKCupid also recently debuted a new service that allows you to upload pictures and get detailed feedback on which are your best, what category of people like them and where they're located. The service is called "MyBestFace", and can be found here: http://www.okcupid.com/mybestface

> *Capitalize on Your Flaws* Another OKCupid study examined the profiles of 11 million men and women and found the surprising fact that emphasizing one's unusual features draws more positive responses.

What's Your Angle?

According to the latest research, people appear more attractive to the opposite sex by changing the angle of their faces. Dr. Darren Burke, a senior psychology lecturer at the University of Newcastle, Australia, and his wife, Dr. Danielle Sulikowski, conducted the study as a team, using computer-generated 3D male and female faces.

As the computer images were tilted up and down among five different positions, participants rated each face for attractiveness, masculinity and femininity. Said Dr. Burke, women are more alluring when tilting their heads downwards and looking up, while men look more masculine when tilting their heads backwards and looking slightly downward.

In other words, an upwardly tilted face is judged to be more masculine and less feminine, and a downwardly tilted face is judged to be more feminine and less masculine. Drs. Burke and Sulikowski believe this mimics ideal height differences between men and women – when a woman tilts her head forward, with her chin downwards, she is recreating the way a taller man would see her.

According to Dr. Burke, "For women, a slight downward tilt of the head simulates the view from above and that is most feminine and most attractive; for men, a slight backward tilt of the head is judged as most masculine, which can make the man more attractive."

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