

PreManipulation

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(From the forthcoming book)

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Chapter 16

Perception and Priming – Bizarre Reasons They say NO to YOU!

What to do instead...

Research continues to prove that **Priming** is one of the most important concepts in influence.

If I ask you, “Where do you find the number 7”?

You might answer: in the prices of products or on slot machines in Las Vegas. (Notice that I’m already “pre-primed” to think in terms of Las Vegas and books, not Bangkok and sets of screwdrivers.)

If I ask you, “Where do you find the numbers 7 and 10?”

You might answer: in the titles of books. I know I did.

If I ask, “Where do you find the numbers 7, 10, 12?”

You might answer: in a math book. First thing that came to my mind.

If I ask you, “Where do you find the numbers 7, 10, 12 and 666?”

You, like the vast majority of people, will answer: in The Bible.

Finally, if I ask you, “Where do you find the numbers 7, 10, 12 and 616?”

You probably wouldn’t answer, “the oldest manuscripts of the Bible”, but if you did, you’d almost certainly be right, as the Oxyrhynchus papyri does indeed give us a number indicative of Caligula as being a very bad dude as far as Christians and Jews were concerned, back in the day. What was that number? **616**. Who knew?

[The Oxyrhynchus papyri is a group of ancient manuscripts dated from the 1st to the 6th century AD found during the late 19th and early 20th centuries including Greek and Latin documents, letters, and literary works, including books of the Old and New Testament.]

Was 616 the “real 666?”

It probably was, and that's a fascinating discussion, but here's the thing. Look at these two numbers:

666

616

You want your client, partner or spouse to respond well to your proposal. You need them to say "yes" to whatever it is you sell or need them to do.

Would you rather have 666 or 616 appear at the top of a proposal?

Right.

616.

No one has a bad feeling about 616, except maybe Bible scholars.

It has nothing to do with what is correct or incorrect.

It's all about how a cue, a numeric cue in this case, influences your client, partner or spouse.

The fact remains that you are more like to get rejected if you have a 666 up there at the top of the page, on your license plate, as part of your phone number, or in your street address.

Point made?

Now remember, you can tell them that the real bad guy number was 616 and probably not 666, but it isn't going to matter a lick. What matters is how those numbers make you FEEL and what behavior or action they might trigger. I've seen people exhibit great fear in wanting to get away from talking or thinking about 666. There is quite a bit of superstition surrounding the number 666.

Second point made.

The simple visual cue of a number CAN and DOES trigger improved performance, decreased performance, FEELINGS and ACTIONS.

How do you maximize the full impact of Priming?

Today I want to show you how priming (the use of a cue of which the other person is not aware that it is a behavioral cue) affects their performance and behavior.

20 years ago, a mega-encyclopedia of psychology said that priming had only a tiny effect on behavior.

I wrote about priming for the first time in 2004 and suggested that they were wrong.

And they were.

Priming means that a person's behavior or performance is *changed* from what it otherwise would have been, because of a cue. That cue could be something as simple as a pretty girl sitting over

there. The individual sipping on a cup of coffee vs. an iced tea will almost certainly change how that person feels about you. Want to know which YOU want them to be drinking? (I'll tell you that in a few minutes as well.)

Priming means being unaware of, but easily able to see, hear, smell or feel something and at the nonconscious level be influenced by that cue. It can be as simple as a page number on a powerpoint or piece of paper. Priming can also be something someone considers irrelevant in the moment when it unwittingly actually plays a big role in their nonconscious mind. For example, a letter indicating success or failure (A vs. F).

Imagine that someone sees a news article or post on Instagram that 3M is going down or that McDonalds is going up.

Regardless of what happens, people are now more likely to buy the stock.

People don't remember news, they remember things related to the news like, "you can own McDonalds, people invest in 3M."

I confess it does at first seem hard to grasp that a person could be triggered to make a donation (or not), love their spouse (or not), report an accident (or not), buy a product (or not), vote for a candidate (or not) all because a letter, number, photo, person or similar is somewhere visible to the individual.

But that's what happens in the real world.

For YOU, knowing that these influential cues exist and are predictably useful in changing or shifting behavior, particularly in the moment, though because of the domino effect, can also have long-term impact in many cases.

To Prime or Not to Prime

More importantly, the array of cues can be manipulated for your own success, and for the success of others. **And even more importantly, lack of manipulating cues in the environment will have a larger impact on your failure or the failure of others. Lack of changing environmental cues is a key cause of hearing "no," when you need "yes."**

Additionally, these cues will increase or decrease the probability of someone liking you or buying your product. And of course, they influence your probability of liking someone or buying *their* product.

My first trip to a non-English speaking country was worth its weight in Gold Lessons for me. I learned that what influences in the US or UK can have the OPPOSITE EFFECT in a different country.

For example, people tend to buy products when influenced by numbers (for example) that they feel good or secure around. While considering numbers in general, certain numbers feel good or are positively experienced when contrasted with other numbers that are not. Importantly what

has a positive influence in one culture does the opposite in the other. “What works,” changes from country to country.

This, of course, can also be different for any one person or family, but in general, what follows are some useful takeaways for influencing.

Priming with Numbers

In the United States, that number 7 is a number most people “feel good” about. It influences in a positive fashion.

In China, the number 7 is unlucky.

In Germany, 4 is generally considered a “feel good” or “lucky” number.

In Korea, the number 4 resonates with death.

In China, 4 sounds like death, when spoken.

4 doesn’t work well in Japan, either ...

In Norway, 9 is generally that “feel good” or “lucky” number.

In Japan 9 is a “feel bad” number. It sounds like “torture” when spoken out loud.

In the United States, if you give the girl you love a dozen roses, she’ll probably know you care. Do the same in Russia and you are sending a message associated with death or funerals. (In fact, **even** numbers in general don’t play well in Russia.)

In both Japan and China, the number 8 is a very lucky number. It sounds like “prosper” when spoken out loud in Chinese.

But in India, 8 is a very unlucky number.

Go to Italy? 13 is perceived as a lucky number, particularly among many older people.

In the United States, the United Kingdom and a bunch of other countries, 13 is generally perceived as an unlucky number. Some hotels and high rise buildings in Germany and the U.S. don’t even have a 13th floor!

The number 3 is a “feel good” number in Sweden, but in China it is connected with death.

And of course priming with numbers is just one of hundreds of tools you have at your disposal.

You and I already know that people almost universally, positively identify with the letters in their name. We also know the number indicating the year, month and date of our birth, mean quite a bit to us. It’s not just your BIRTH day it’s your LIFE day.

The two digits of the year you were a senior in high school often carry positive feelings as well. (It was the year you escaped after all ...)

Using a number that has that “feel bad” attached to it triggers performance to falter in testing.

Priming for Success

For example, in Switzerland, the number 6 indicates you did well in school. 1 in Switzerland means you did poorly, like the United States “F.” In Germany, 1 means you did well. 6 in Germany indicates you failed. Same as “F” in the U.S.

When researchers gave test subjects a booklet to take a test, the participants did better on the test itself when they were told basically that, “the number on the cover of your booklet is the test number, make sure to write it on each page of the book, the computer isn’t scanning properly.”

So in Switzerland, people who had a 6 vs. a 1 on the cover, did dramatically better on the test itself. In Germany those who had a 1 vs. a 6 on the cover did significantly better as well.

That’s COOL!

But ...

Here’s something even more fascinating ... :

Keep in Mind International Priming Cues and Cultural Differences

Every experiment needs a “control group.”

A logical number to have selected for a control group in this research would have been to put the number 8 (a neutral number) on the cover of the test booklets.

But, for some reason, the experimenters chose the number 7 as a “neutral” number. But, remember, we know that 7 in Europe is generally a “feel good” number.

In both countries, those assigned a test booklet with a 7, meaningless in grading/evaluation purposes, but meaningful as far as larger contexts, participants **did almost as well** as numbers that evaluated excellence on a test. (6 for Switzerland, 1 for Germany)

I believe when the test is replicated in Europe or English speaking countries, and a different control number (such as 8) is selected, the prime will get more neutral results.

The point, of course, is simple. No one recognized that the local equivalent of “A” or “F” being copied onto each page was anything more than a test number, but the context, the situation of being evaluated – triggered nonconscious improvement or more failure depending on the number assigned.

It should also be noted that priming with negative cues like 666 does a much better job at reducing performance than priming with positive cues like 7 does at improving performance.

Don’t Lose Out

For people in relationships, personal, sales and business, it's critical to note that **more is lost by YOUR being UNAWARE of priming** that is occurring naturally in the environment, than can be made better by YOUR INTENTIONALLY priming positively.

Both matter.

It's just easier to screw something up by not knowing that the sign in the corner of the room has a 666 (or something almost as bad) on it than you can make up for by having a 7 gently placed at the top of the page.

Priming Feelings

Sheldon Cooper, a man who has trouble fitting in socially on *The Big Bang Theory*, has learned a little about emotion over the last 7 seasons. He knows that it is a social convention to offer someone a hot beverage when they are feeling sad or dejected.

Sheldon learned well.

People given a warm beverage vs. people drinking a cool beverage, importantly, feel warmer feelings toward YOU.

You can imagine moments when a warm beverage might be less appreciated (think about a sizzling hot summer day), but indoors, in environmentally controlled settings (AC/Heat) you can predict that a cup of coffee or tea will do better than an ice cold beer when it comes to people LIKING YOU.

Obviously on your lunch date whether personal or business, is going to be influenced by whether they have a warm or cool drink.

Priming Choices

When subjects in a consumer study were given a therapeutic pad to hold, they found it to be either hot or cold. Those who held a pad *chose between giving themselves something or giving something to someone else.*

What happened?

People who held a cold pad were 3:1 more likely to take a refreshment for themselves than give a small gift certificate to others.

People who held a hot pad were split almost 50:50.

Bonus Tip

Giving someone something warm to hold also increases their level of **trust** in a significant, dramatic way.

Priming: Simple cues from the environment that shift behavior in remarkable ways

Perception Changes Reality of Whether They Want You

WHY they like you or choose you, or not.

John's a sharp guy. A few years ago he had just started reading *Coffee with Kevin Hogan* and just found out that **people perceive wine to taste better if the name on the label of the bottle has a cool name.**

He read a little further and found out that **where the winery was located is actually a trigger for a girl to want to continue dating him or not.** (California, France, Italy, Australia, Washington were all good but North Dakota didn't work in the girl's mind. **A North Dakota wine label triggered the "not with you again" reaction.**

Not only did the girl drinking the North Dakota Wine eat less food than one drinking a California wine, **she didn't want to come back to the restaurant with the guy that brought her here!**

Wow!

And then he found the most complex piece of information yet... Even world class experts can't reliably predict the difference between expensive wine and everyday wine.

John realized he had a problem that he didn't have before he started reading *Coffee with Kevin Hogan*.

He had just learned that people make choices and big decisions like whether she might go out with him again or not, based on something as goofy as the wine that was chosen at dinner! His future literally could hinge on what wine a restaurant has in stock.

What does "reality" mean anyway?

Everyone seems to know the sentence, "perception shapes reality," but what does THAT mean and how could it be useful in a real life sense?

Consider someone aims a gun at a target, shoots, hits the bullseye, but the shooter has been taking hallucinogens.

Gun, bullet, target, all same as they were before drugs as after even if the shooters perceptions changed, actual reality isn't altered

So In that context the reality doesn't change. Bullseye.

Sometimes you have more of an opportunity or set of choices of which all might be mediocre or poor but not a problem.

This is where having a good grasp of reality AND the ability to CHANGE perceptions becomes valuable.

There is no quick fix for this without simply having big problems. But if you take a few minutes and understand perception, you'll understand you, and why they think what they do about you.

Here are five facts you'll touch on today.

1. Perception (quite often) Changes Reality

2. **Mood** Changes Perception

3. **Music** Changes Perception

4. Music Changes Mood

5. **Context** Changes Perception

But wait... even though ALL of those are facts in all kinds of different situations... it feels ridiculous to think that reality TRULY is altered by perception. After all isn't the phone, the phone and isn't your wife, your wife. Aren't your kids your kids and your job your job. Your car must be your car.

If you close your eyes when you're upset with your spouse does she disappear from reality?

I mean come on...the stars are in the same place they've been in the sky for as long as recorded history has been around. So if I say, "That star is Polaris, we call it the North Star," everyone has to be pretty much on that page.

So maybe sometimes perception doesn't change reality. Polaris really IS Polaris.

BUT...

Here's where the secrets begin...

What do you see here?

I've played this game with people a number of times. Once I recorded the responses. Here are samples of the responses I got.

"It's a bunch of matches. One is burned up."

"They are matches. One has been used."

"The black one is how I feel when (I don't fit in)."

STOP.

One person IDENTIFIED with a BURNED UP MATCH.

Remember that forever. It will change your life.

People perceive STUFF to have meaning and they see themselves IN STUFF and they then develop LIKING or DIS-liking about that stuff.

This is how the brain works.

Then I ask, "Should we throw the black match away?"

“Sure.”

“It’s been used.”

“No, I’ll take it.”

Of course she will! It represents HER!

IDENTIFICATION IS PERCEPTION.

Simple enough.

Imagine now that YOU are the person who cleans out someone else’s closet or car... How do they feel when they see you doing that?

Imagine you suggest to replace that old beat up piece of furniture...

How do they feel inside and how does that cause them to feel about YOU?!

Now let me ask YOU another question.

Do people “think” when they are asked to decide on something?

You need their compliance.

Most people never think about capturing agreement with what we will call Identity Magnitude.

Do people “think” when asked a question by you? Quite often they do...and quite often they don’t.

It’s much easier to cause people to choose because of their identity than it is based on their ability to compute a rational and well thought out decision.

If someone identifies with you, they will likely go jump in the lake because you suggest it. If they don’t, they won’t.

When people are acting from their core identity, they don’t typically think when they are asked to comply with a request.

And their *opinions about coronavirus and elections come from their identification with a group, not (necessarily) about reality.*

They simply say “yes” if they identify based on internal triggers, or “no” if they don’t.

They will say “yes” or “no” based upon the product/service/yourself as being part of their identity or not.

Imagine if you will....

Are you a coffee drinker or a tea drinker?

Behavioral traits of both people are different...often very different. The traits are part of very different identities. Traits branch from identity.

People recognize you as being part of their (group) identity when the most important traits of the in-group connection are the same.

Identification Magnitude typically over-rides people's requirement to think.

Sometimes that identification/connection is summed up in ONE SPECIFIC "BEHAVIOR."

I reported two years ago in *Coffee with Kevin Hogan* on a research project that was absolutely profound as it relates to perception, identity and perhaps the ultimate question in all of influence. Here's a refresher on just how powerful self perception can be...

Drinking beer or more specifically, *saying that one likes the taste of beer*, is a specific experience that connects people in a strikingly unusual fashion.

Do you like the taste of beer?

Remember, the massive research project (250,000 people in the database) by a dating match website revealed dozens of startling facts about men and women and their behavior across a broad spectrum of dating issues.

One finding will capture the attention of everyone you tell this about this week.

It was discovered that there is a significant difference between the **willingness of women to have sex on a first time encounter if they report liking the taste of beer** vs. the rest of the population of women.

How significant?

Among all women in the study, not just those who like beer, 40% said they would be willing to have sex after just meeting someone. (Not everyone, but someone.) Over 100,000 women. 40% would be willing...with someone.

Among those saying **they like the taste of beer?**

70% said they would be OK with having sex with someone they just met.

That's...impressive.

Mothers teach your daughters to drink wine.

Clearly there is a strong identity connection between the two experiences. It's unlikely that the taste of beer or the shape of the bottle or the context of the bar itself are singularly responsible for this most interesting behavioral distinction. In fact, **no other factor** was discovered that might give you all but a guarantee of having a chance that someone would be open to having sex upon first "hello."

Not wine, food, hard liquor, shoe size, height, weight...

Take home? Always remember that specific SYMBOLS, EXPERIENCES and TASTES can predict behavior or bias.

When I'm asked if I'd like a drink and it's obvious that coffee, tea or Diet Coke are not the socially viable choice...I'll have a glass of Merlot or Cabernet. There's almost no chance I'll

have a second as part of my identity is being a light drinker. (That and I get far too uninhibited by the last sip of a glass of wine.)

Now...imagine...this because things become muddled in the minds of perception very quickly.

You are out to dinner on a date with a woman.

There are two different bottles of wine in front of you. A glass is poured from each bottle.

Which wine will taste best?

You can know the answer and thus easily control outcomes...before the wine is even opened. Which will taste best?

Maybe you were thinking that you wouldn't know until after you tasted them.

And you can now make a bet with someone else to break even!

The fact is that on average (actually... almost always) the **wine will taste good or bad based upon your perception of the label on the wine....even if the actual wine has been switched!**

That is rather profound.

The **label**, the **words** and **attractiveness** of the label determine how much you will like the wine.

And it doesn't just happen with wine. It happens with most things in life where a perception can change the interpretation of facts.

Identity Magnitude Replaces Actual Thinking

Recent research reported that **children report that all food that comes at McDonald's or in McDonald's, tastes better than those exact same foods served up at home.**

That includes carrots and asparagus!

And this effect isn't just limited to wine drinkers and kids. It's a broad spectrum...and even affects smart people like you and me!

Did you know that in blind taste tests, where Coca Cola is pitted against Pepsi Cola, that Pepsi is chosen as the better tasting brand about 60% of the time?

Here's what's more interesting...

...When the labels are visible, Coca Cola consistently is selected as the tastier choice!

That's a powerful "brand." But no thought went into thinking which one would taste better, the brain simply knows it is Coca Cola. Your instinct. Your gut reaction. It is 100% automatic.

So how do you take advantage of this strange effect?

The lesson is to transform **your Self** into a Coca Cola, McDonald's, or the superior appearing wine.

People will like the wine that tastes best based upon the label.

I'll explain this in just a moment. For the moment, know that women who drink beer identify with a set of behaviors and expectations (self and other) that cause them to behave significantly different from women who don't like beer.

The same concept is true for other identities that woman lives...

Recent Coffee Challenge

Every year there are a number of blind coffee challenges. Generally, the purpose is to either find who has the best coffee out there.

Culvers, Chick Fila and McDonald's all came out on top the last few years in various challenges.

Every now and then Pike Place (Starbucks) comes out on top.

Sometimes the winners depend on where the challenge is taking place.

What happens most of the time is that cheap deli coffee costing about a buck comes out as better than the fancier brands like Starbucks and Dunkin'.

When my grandfather was still around, he would talk to me about the "power of perception." He wanted me to write a book with that title with him. I probably will still do just that. It was that Dr. Hogan (Colonel Ret. USA and Social Psychologist) that introduced me to the psychology of perception as truth.

Key Point: The package it comes in is how you and I first judge the content. Reams of research proves conclusively that the beautiful she is superior in every way to the non-beautiful she...except in reality.

Perception Causes Action

Every day I see how perception causes people to do things that would make them appear foolish if anyone else observed the behavior. If they could see themselves and then evaluate their behavior from the standpoint of reason, they never would say or do the things the person they were watching was doing.

Later, at the very end of this article I want to show you some fascinating research about how **other people's choices and perceptions** change **your** choices!

Basically, the concept is this: Everyone is snobby about something. They drive a certain kind of car, wear a certain brand of jeans, live in a certain neighborhood, have the right church, have the biggest muscles or whatever.

For years these kinds of things identify someone with a group. Sometimes they identify the person as belonging to a very small and perhaps elite group.

And then something interesting happens. People can wear the same clothes for years, but when some other group of people starts to wear the brand of clothes (or whatever) that **your group** wears, you quickly **switch** to another brand!

Use this: You and I do a lot of stuff because it *defines our identity*. As soon as the products we use fail to differentiate us from others, those we do *not* want to be identified with, we *change* our intentional identification choices.

Remember the wine research!

Think about it.

People didn't return to the restaurant because of the contamination from the imaginary North Dakota Winery only seen on the label. The perception of the guy taking his girl to dinner and accepting or tasting North Dakota wine permanently drove them from the restaurant thereby changing their future. It might have changed their future together.

It's very easy to see a picture of the girl going out to Book Club and telling the other girls that her boyfriend took her to a nice restaurant and he made her drink North Dakota wine.

They all scrunch their noses and say, "What was he thinking?"

And of course, now our innocent guy who had nothing to do with the scientific experiment ends up girl-friend-less.

That's how life works in the real world.

Perception triggers expectations and expectations trigger judgments.

A similar study was conducted to replicate the first experiment with 49 MBA students at a wine and cheese reception. Again, **those given wine labeled from California rated the wine as 85% higher and the cheese as 50% higher.**

"Small cues such as origin or a wine or whether the label or name catches your eye often trick even serious Foodies," said co-author Dr. Collin Payne. "He (Wansink) has even conducted demonstrations of this at Le Cordon Bleu in Paris and Apicius Culinary Institute in Florence."

For restaurants and wineries, it's important to keep a keen eye on the possible halo or shadow of wine labels. Diners, on the other hand, should be careful to not overpay for a pretty bottle.

The study, published in *Physiology & Behavior*, is one of the few to have investigated the chain-effect of sensory expectations.

Scary?

Now, here is a piece of research about personal identification which I believe you will find incredibly useful...

The Identity Magnitude shifts The Power to Perceive Reality

How intense is the magnitude of identity? Write these down and keep them by your computer ...forever.

- Consumers often *abandon products when other social groups adopt them.*

- Teens want to **distinguish themselves** from their parents.
- Jocks want to **separate themselves** from geeks.
- Rich Brits **stopped buying** Burberry once it became the brand of choice for soccer hooligans.
- Shanghai urbanites **avoid** the Volkswagen model that is preferred by the suburban nouveau riche.

Yet, the same teens who wouldn't be caught dead wearing the same jeans as their parents have no problem using the same brand of detergent!

People make a statement with their choices but generally the statements are made when someone else can observe or experience the actual choice.

The other time people tend to choose something in-group when no one is watching, is when the person identifies with the choice as being an in-group “thing to do.” ...sometimes.

A new study by Stanford researchers explores why some products are used by people to differentiate themselves from certain social groups.

“Prior work on individual drives for differentiation tells us a lot about who is more likely to prefer unique products or when people might be more likely to prefer them,” write Jonah Berger and Chip Heath (Stanford University) in the August issue of the Journal of Consumer Research. “But these approaches have less to say about where people diverge, or why people diverge more in certain domains.”

In a series of experiments, the researchers explored the differences between *products that convey identity information* and products that do not tend to be identified with a certain group.

For example, in the pilot study, the researchers had undergraduates choose options in 19 different product areas (e.g., power tools, hairstyles, soap, and favorite CD).

In each product area, the undergrads were told that...

65 percent of other students preferred Option A

25 percent preferred Option B

10 percent preferred Option C.

They were then asked which option they would choose.

Option C establishes the greatest desire for divergence from the majority.

While 67 percent of undergraduates chose Option C for the category of favorite CD, only 6 percent chose it when asked about dish soap!

Perception is shaped by CONTEXT and MEANING.

In a national, web-based survey that expanded on the pilot study (median age 38), the results were similar. A different group of respondents was asked to rate products either on self-expression (“how much it contributes to self-expression”) or identity inference-making (“how much people use it to make inferences about others”).

Thirty-one percent of participants in the national survey chose Option C (preferred by 10 percent of the population) for products that were ranked as highly identity -relevant. For products that were less identity-relevant, only 16 percent of participants chose Option C.

“Consistent with our focus on the social nature of **identity-signaling**, even though our internet sample came from a range of demographic backgrounds, **participants exhibited strong agreement about which domains were identity-relevant**,” the researchers write. “The results underscore the social nature of divergence; *individuals don’t establish difference from majorities in every domain or any random domain — they do so more in domains where others look for signals about their identity.*”

[Article: Jonah Berger and Chip Heath. “Where Consumers Diverge from Others: Identity-Signaling and Product Domains” Journal of Consumer Research.]

OK, NOW you have a ton of information to go forward and **reinvent yourself and your products.**

Chapter 17

Why Politicians Lose What They Thought They’d Win & How “Funnels” Sell Half of What they Could

In just 50 years influence experts, salespeople and marketers turned many of the facets of selling to market selling. From there the next step was to have an almost mind control of steps that now fit into models. One marketing tool whose purpose is of course the “funnel.” Finally we are quickly moving to the title of this book. PreManipulation which is of course about shaping the funnel aspect into a much more fluid concept than funneling people.

As you’ve known for 25 years of reading my works I don’t like simply treating people like people in an old pinball machine or allowing humans no real ability to make decisions with the help of you vs. you decide the only solution in advance for every human you have in your funnel.

As always you don’t want to sell an idea or product you want them to go home and sell it to their spouse and neighborhood.
Is it “smarter” than the funnel?

Remember the funnel is one model with one and only purpose. In this chapter you aspects of models that you can reshuffle and work to the betterment of all.

Example

What spurs people to save the planet? Stories or facts?

Does it depend on whether you are a “Democrat” (liberal for everyone else on the planet) or “Republican?”

Let’s find out and see if it matters how you will influence people’s interest in a couple of large scale concepts.

Consider Johns Hopkins work on this very subject in 2021. Here’ some summations from myself and then clips from the institution:

With climate change looming, **what must people hear to convince them to change their ways to stop harming the environment?** A new Johns Hopkins *University study finds STORIES to be significantly more motivating than scientific facts -- at least for some people.*

After hearing a compelling pollution-related story in which a man died, ***the average person paid more for green products than after having heard scientific facts about water pollution.*** But the average person in the study was a Democrat. *Republicans paid less after hearing the story rather than the simple facts.*

As always it’s not the funnel it’s preparing the message for the specific LISTENER.

Back to John Hopkins researchers:

The findings, published in the journal *One Earth*, suggest **message framing** makes a real difference in people’s actions toward the environment. It also suggests there is no monolithic best way to motivate people and policymakers must work harder to tailor messages for specific audiences.

"Our findings suggest the power of storytelling may be more like preaching to the choir," said co-author Paul J. Ferraro, an evidence-based environmental policy expert and the Bloomberg Distinguished Professor of Human Behavior and Public Policy at Johns Hopkins.

"For those who are not already leaning toward environmental action, stories might actually make things worse."

Back to Kevin Hogan

The John Hopkins research not only is revealing in potential global change but the critical understanding that what persuades one person, causes the other to run away, never to return.

Returning to John Hopkins press release

Scientists have little scientific evidence to guide them on how best to communicate with the public about environmental threats. Increasingly, scientists have been encouraged

to leave their factual comfort zones and tell more stories that connect with people personally and emotionally. But scientists are reluctant to tell such stories because, for example, no one can point to a deadly flood or a forest fire and conclusively say that the deaths were caused by climate change.

The question researchers hoped to answer with this study: Does storytelling really work to change people's behavior? And if so, for whom does it work best?

"We said let's do a horse race between a story and a more typical science-based message and see what actually matters for purchasing behavior," Ferraro said.

Researchers conducted a field experiment involving just over 1,200 people at an agricultural event in Delaware. Everyone surveyed had lawns or gardens and lived in watersheds known to be polluted.

Through a random-price auction, researchers attempted to measure how much participants were willing to pay for products that reduce nutrient pollution. Before people could buy the products, they watched a video with either scientific facts or a story about nutrient pollution.

In the **story group**, participants viewed a true story about a local man's death that had plausible but tenuous connections to nutrient pollution: he died after eating contaminated shellfish. In the scientific **facts group**, participants viewed an evidence-based description of the impacts of nutrient pollution on ecosystems and surrounding communities.

After watching the videos, all participants had a chance to purchase products costing less than \$10 that could reduce stormwater runoff: fertilizer, soil test kits, biochar and soaker hoses.

People who heard the story were on average willing to pay more than those who heard the straight science. But the results skewed greatly when broken down by political party. The story made liberals 17 percent more willing to buy the products, while making conservatives want to spend 14 percent less.

The deep behavioral divide along party lines surprised Ferraro, who typically sees little difference in behavior between Democrats and Republicans when it comes to matters such as energy conservation.

"We hope this study stimulates more work about how to communicate the urgency of climate change and other global environmental challenges," said lead author Hilary Byerly, a postdoctoral associate at the University of Colorado. "Should the messages come from scientists? And what is it about this type of story that provokes environmental action from Democrats but turns off Republicans?"

This research was supported by contributions from the Penn Foundation, the US Department of Agriculture, The Nature Conservancy, and the National Science Foundation

[[Johns Hopkins University](#). Hilary Byerly, Paul J. Ferraro, Tongzhe Li, Kent D. Messer, Collin Weigel. **A story induces greater environmental contributions than scientific information among liberals but not conservatives.** *One Earth*, 2021]

And as you've observed throughout this book where you see studies that have been replicated across culture and environments, an obvious question is raised for YOU.

Imagine YOU are going to be the presenter of a strategy or solution today, say at Duke University and you want that message to be acted on.

Now imagine you decide you are going to do TWO presentations today, one to men and one to women. This is a logical suggestion for all kinds of topics because women across the world lean liberal and men lean conservative.

Simple enough. We hop in the car to offer our solution to a problem but then we see another problem... Watch what happens to you!

As you trek along you decide you'll scan the room and explain that you're going to split the participants into two groups.

Focus on Outliers Creates Flawed Snap Judgments

Our quick scan of a crowd is NOT reliable as we think. Presenters are just like listeners. Until they have a prototype of HOW to split a group into sensible smaller groups that will listen to more well designed messages, teachers, preachers, politicians and persuaders of all kinds of problems not solved by funnels or any other mechanical model of influence.

[From Duke] You enter a room and quickly scan the crowd to gain a sense of who's there -- how many men versus women. ***How reliable is your estimate?***

Not very, according to new research from Duke University.

In an experimental study, researchers found that participants consistently erred in estimating the proportion of men and women in a group. And participants erred in a particular way: ***They overestimated whichever group was in the minority.***

[From Kevin Hogan: Read this correctly participants where you have to be one of the smartest people in the world to get into...can't tell you which group is in the majority. And what group are we speaking of? MEN and WOMEN.

You've got to be thinking. You have just TWELVE people out there. Imagine how hard can it possibly be!?)

[Duke's press release] ***"Our attention is drawn to outliers,"*** said Mel W. Khaw, a postdoctoral research associate at Duke and the study's lead author. ***"We tend to overestimate people who stand out in a crowd."***

For the study, which appears online in the journal *Cognition*, researchers recruited 48 observers ages 18-28. Participants were presented with a grid of 12 faces and were given just one second to glance at the grid. Study participants were then asked to estimate the number of men and women in the grid.

Participants accurately assessed homogenous groups -- groups containing all men or all women. But ***if a group contained fewer women, say, participants overestimated the number of women present.***

The researchers also tracked participants' eye movements. They found that ***participants looked more often at whichever group was in the minority*** -- men or women.

All of this occurred very quickly -- during a glance of just one second, said co-author and Duke psychologist Scott Huettel.

"We should recognize that our visual system is set up to orient ourselves towards some types of information more than others," Huettel said. "People form an initial impression very quickly, and that impression biases where we look next."

Interestingly, the same tendency to focus on the outlier also extended to scanning other kinds of images.

[Kevin Hogan interjects] OK, that's faces. You look down at a board, you're a heterosexual and your brain goes straight to the prettiest girl. The brain clicks in and says, "that's a nice group of one. My readers should know this but they've never been told this, even by myself!"]

[Duke Press Release] In a second experiment, study participants were shown a grid of *nature photos showing a variety of indoor and outdoor scenes*. ***Participants consistently overestimated whatever type of scene appeared less often.***

For instance, if a grid of 12 photos contained two outdoor scenes -- say, a waterfall and a mountain range -- participants reported, on average, that the grid contained three such scenes.

In other words, the same behavior occurred whether people were looking at faces or scenes. That's important, Huettel said.

"That fact that this occurs with indoor and outdoor scenes suggests that this doesn't represent a social bias," Huettel said. "It really has to do with a fundamental feature of human perception."

And that built-in flaw in human perception suggests our *quick judgments should be viewed with caution*.

"Snap judgments are powerful," Huettel said. "But they're not perfect."

Co-author Rachel Kranton, an economist, noted that as the research was coming together, she received an invitation to an economics conference including a photo from a past event.

The photo showed a meeting room full of mostly men, a situation Kranton frequently encounters at economics conferences. Kranton said she found herself scanning the photo for the presence of women -- and smiling in recognition.

"When human beings walk into a social situation, we immediately try to suss out the setting," Kranton said. "We scan to see who's there and how we fit in -- that's a common human experience. It's one I've experienced many times."

Mel W. Khaw, Rachel Kranton, Scott Huettel. **Oversampling of minority categories drives misperceptions of group compositions.** *Cognition*, 2021; 214: 104756

[Back to Kevin Hogan] Ah, so it's not about seeing the attractive man or woman from a grid of 12. It's about seeing what is unusual or rare and the brain locking in on those people or things. You, as an influencer are given a HUGE challenge now.

This must lead us to a strategy that will solve the problem.

It doesn't.

Let's take a flight to the University of California Santa Barbara.

Men take shortcuts, while women follow well-known routes

This study confirms that men and women tend to adopt different navigation strategies and men navigate more efficiently than women.

That means not only will you use different CONTENT for WOMEN, you'll use different STRATEGY and INSTRUCTIONS for women vs. men scenarios in your persuasive messages. Messages, strategies, instructions, content and on and on ...for one SIMPLE division doubles the prep time. Now watch this...

[UC Santa Barbara]

When navigating in a known environment, **men prefer to take shortcuts** to reach their destination more quickly, while **women tend to use routes they know**. This is according to Alexander Boone of UC Santa Barbara in the US who is lead author of a study that investigated the different ways in which men and women navigate. The research is published in Springer's journal *Memory & Cognition*.

Boone and his colleagues set out to measure the navigation styles and strategies used by men and women to reach a specific location in an area that they know. The team conducted two experiments involving students who performed tasks on a computer. In the first experiment, data were analysed from 68 participants who familiarized themselves with the layout of a maze including specific landmarks before having to find their way through it from designated spots.

They also completed questionnaires which provided self-reported information about their sense of direction, the strategies they believe they use to find their way, and whether they often play video games.

The second experiment drew on data from 72 participants who used the same computer software and hardware as in the first experiment. However, this test involved using different versions of the maze: one with distal landmarks such as trees in the background, and one without distal markings. Boone and his team wanted to find out how men and women used these markings when navigating.

"As predicted from previous research, these experiments showed that men were more likely to take shortcuts and on average reached their goal location faster than women. In contrast, female participants were more likely to follow learned routes and wander," explains Boone. "In both experiments, men were significantly more efficient than women, even after controlling for the effects of strategy."

The study also confirmed the large difference in efficiency with which men and women navigate which was measured by looking at the time it took participants to reach the goal locations, and whether they reached it by following a direct route or not. The participating men were better at this task and therefore reached the intended destination more quickly. However, it is important to point out that these are differences in average performance between men and women, and some women were just as efficient as the best male performers.

"Overall, our research indicates that ***the sex difference in navigation efficiency is large, and is partly related to navigation strategy,***" says Boone.

[Kevin Hogan]

When people of different demographics use different strategies to solve problems, those are the strategies ***you use to direct people to solutions.***

[UC Santa Barbara]

According to Boone and his colleagues, when a person wanders it suggests that he or she does not have adequate knowledge about the specific landmarks in a certain area. He says that the finding that *women tend to wander more might reflect a possible inability on their part to learn the layout of an area*, at least with the amount of familiarization they receive in this experiment.

"It is also possible that the sex difference in efficiency is due in part to facility with the interface or navigation in virtual environments, as men tend to spend more time playing video games," speculates Boone.

Therefore the researchers believe that it will be important in future research to examine whether the same results are found when people navigate in real environments, rather than virtual environments.

1. Alexander P. Boone, Xinyi Gong, Mary Hegarty. **Sex differences in navigation strategy and efficiency.** *Memory & Cognition*, 2018

