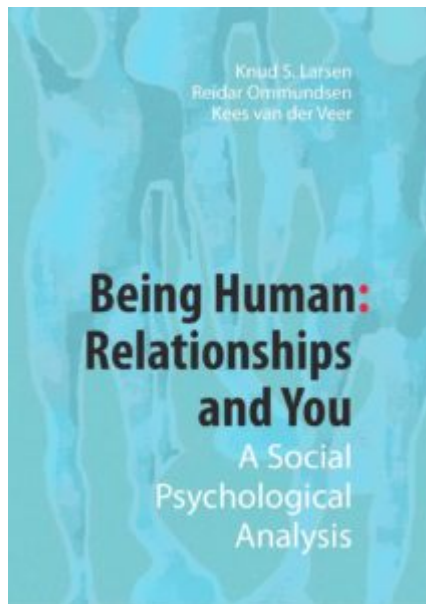


Being Human. Chapter 8: Persuasion



Nearly all human interactions involve some form of persuasion. Parents urge their children to study hard, children will ask parents for favors. Medical doctors recommend life styles that prolong life and your dentist tells you that brushing your teeth may prevent tooth decay. Turn on your television and you are bombarded with persuasive messages from a variety of companies that want you to buy their products. Everywhere we are pestered with persuasive messages trying to convince us of the value of the product and company. You see ads in the newspapers, hear them on television and the radio,

and see posters in a variety of locations. Some companies operate in more subtle ways by sponsoring educational television, or having their logo displayed at sporting events.

Sometimes there are public service announcements urging people to stop smoking to avoid cancer. Other efforts at persuasion seek to stop the use of illegal drugs among the young. Some of these public persuasion efforts in the United States have achieved measured success and produced a considerable reduction in numbers of college students who use marijuana (from 50% to 21 %). Other education efforts helped reduce smoking in the US, which plunged dramatically since 1954 from 45 percent to 28 percent (Gallup, 1989). In recent years moreover we have been made aware of the destruction of our environment as a consequence of global warming and many are personally motivated to improve energy efficiency.

In the evening news, government officials make appearances and try to convince citizens that they are pursuing wise policies. During elections people are persuaded to vote certain ways, often in brief messages that extol the virtues of the candidate. In the US, political communications also denigrate the opponent in stereotypical ways by associating the candidate with negative images.

If we examine history we can also observe the persuasive efforts of political and social movements. Hitler thought persuasion important enough to have a cabinet post for a minister of propaganda. The Nazi's had little respect for the average person's ability to utilize factual evidence, and therefore made emotional appeals in a variety of ways. Goebbels, the propaganda minister, controlled all the media and produced vivid persuasive displays of national and party solidarity that depicted marches and other pageantry. Movies produced in the Nazi era extolled the German people and denigrated those considered subhumans. Many other propagandists were at work persuading the German people about the correctness of Nazi ideology, and judging from the historical events, these efforts were successful. When the outcome sought involves the manipulation of people in pursuit of one-sided and bigoted political goals, we describe these efforts as propaganda.

We live in a world of constant persuasion, no wonder that social psychologists undertook systematic studies of persuasion early in the historical development of our discipline. Persuasion may be either positive or negative depending on whether it is aimed at empowering and educating people, or is being used to manipulate for bigoted and destructive goals. The so-called Yale School of Communication completed the first systematic social psychological study on persuasion (Hovland, Janis, & Kelley, 1953). These researchers conducted many experiments that sought to understand what conditions were most likely to produce persuasion. The researchers in the Yale school sought to study communication in a paradigm where the influence examined is exerted by someone (who) that is communicating a message (what) to a target audience (whom).

1. The source of the communication: Who is the communicator?

Some people are more effective in persuading, and for various reasons we are more likely to believe and trust their message. We have all listened to teachers who despite our best effort put us to sleep. Other teachers have a personal charisma that keeps us motivated and encouraging us to come back for more information. Some people are just more intuitively likable; perhaps they have a sense of humor that is disarming, or possess some degree of authority that gives a favorable impression. When we like someone, we are also more likely to modify our attitudes in the direction of the communicator's message.

1.1 Credibility

Credibility is an important communicator variable in persuasion (Hovland & Weiss, 1952). Communications attributed to sources high in credibility are more likely to persuade. Credible communicators possess both expertise and trustworthiness. Do you see the persuader as an expert in the field and does he know what he is talking about? In one early study (Aronson, Turner, & Carlsmith, 1963) participants were led to believe they were participating in an experiment on aesthetic. They were asked to rate poetic passages. Afterwards they were told of someone else's positive evaluation of passages that they disliked. In one group of participants, the opposing evaluation was attributed to a student at a not highly rated college. In another group, the opposing evaluation supposedly came from T.S. Eliot, a famous poet. Not surprisingly more people changed their opinions as a result of being exposed to the high credibility source when compared to the fellow student (See also previous discussion of expert social influence in chapter 7).

Trust is conducive to credibility. Do you trust the person? Is he truthful and able to separate self-interest and the content of the message? Trustworthiness is essentially an issue of deciding if the person has integrity and can therefore argue even when against his own self-interest. When people do not have anything to gain, are seen as disinterested, we tend to see them as more trustworthy. In one study (Walster, Aronson, Abrahams, & Rottman, 1966) a criminal who argued in favor of stronger law enforcement was very persuadable. Of course, it helps if others repeat the same message, especially if the communicators are independent. If a number of people convey the message that tobacco is harmful, if you hear this from family, friends, government, and scientists, you are more likely to be persuaded (Harkins, & Petty, 1981; Walster, Aronson, Abrahams, & Rottman, 1966; Ziegler, Diehl, & Ruther, 2002; Jain & Posovac, 2000). Credible speakers tend to be direct in conveying their messages. When they communicate, they display little hesitation, are not afraid to show emotion that expresses sincerity, they display eye contact with the audience, and avoid any hints of nervousness (Mehrabian & Williams, 1969; Riggio & Friedman, 1983).

However, credibility is a two way street. If the messenger is seen as credible, we are more likely to believe the message. And, if we like the message, if it corresponds with our strong beliefs, we are also more likely to believe it came from a credible source (Fragale, & Heath, 2004). Advertisers know what makes a message credible. Note that the promoters of a certain medicine on television

often employ spokespersons dressed like doctors. These spokespersons are actors and know nothing or little about medicine, but by dressing them in white medical coats the promoters try to create a belief that this is an expert speaking with disinterest. The advertisers present spokespersons that are believed to convey credibility, and are considered experts who can be trusted to speak for the interest of patients.

Are these advertisements successful? Some must believe they are effective since huge amounts of money are spent on promotion. Superficial attempts at establishing credibility can persuade others when the topic is not central to a person's concern. Most consumer products fall into that category, as it is a matter of indifference to the consumer whether he buys brand A or B. It is not a matter of life or death which tooth paste you buy, and one brand of aspirin may be as good as another. When the recipient has low motivation about the message, the recipient relies on the communicator's attributed credibility. Under conditions of low motivation, people pay little attention to the content of the message and focus more on the credibility of the communicator (Rhine & Severance, 1970).

If communicators are not credible can they still persuade? Some research suggests that if the recipient can separate the message from the communicator, then over time the message may be persuadable. This is called the " sleeper effect ". Even those we distrust initially may have an effect over time as people forget who said what. Consequently the message may endure at some level of consciousness, and people may eventually be persuaded by the message when we no longer remember the messenger (Pratkanis, Greenwald, Leippe, & Baumgardner, 1988)

1.2 Attractiveness of communicator

Beliefs and other cognition tend to be consistent with those we like. Chaiken (1979) showed that students who were seen as physically attractive were also more persuadable. Attractiveness can be a physical attribute like beauty, which is why advertisers often use lovely women to sell a variety of products. Some people may also have attractive personality traits that is effective help in persuasion (Petty & Chaiken, 1986; Petty, Wegener, & Fabrigar, 1997). Attractive communicators seem especially persuadable when the message is not immediately salient. Also, if people have little knowledge on the topic they are more likely to be impressed by the more superficial elements of communication like attractiveness of the communicator (Chaiken, 1980; Wood & Kallgren, 1988).

We like those who are similar to us in some important way, and find them attractive.

1.3 The groups to which we belong

Most people belong to groups, and these groups have norms and beliefs central to our identity. In social psychology such groups are commonly described as reference groups (see chapter 6). In one study on attitudes toward military balance some participants were told that 82 percent of their peers favored US military involvement in the Western Hemisphere. Another sample of participants were told that 82 percent of their peers opposed intervention. Both groups were then presented with speeches of equal strength covering both sides of the issue. Results showed that popularity matters as participants moved toward the side endorsed by most of their peers (Mackie, 1987). Because we like the groups to which we belong (otherwise we would not belong), we find group opinions persuadable. Even accepting that we have individual positions we lean toward the views of those of our reference groups (Terry & Hogg, 1996). Perhaps reference groups are influential because we process information differently depending on whether it comes from the in-group or the out-group (Mackie, Worth, & Ansuncion, 1990). We take the information from reference groups more seriously as it reflects our values. However, our previous discussion on majority influence also might invite superficial attitude change.

1.4 Audio and visual versus written messages

The communicator characteristics discussed above are important in audio and visual communications found in speeches or television adds. In visual and auditory persuasion efforts, the recipient is able to pay attention to traits in the communicator. Is the speaker attractive, does he manifest credibility, is he considered an expert and trustworthy, and does he have a likable personality? If these traits are manifested, the communicator will be persuadable. It stands to reason that such traits are less important when the communicator cannot be seen or heard as in written communications. In written persuasion the recipient must attend more to the message and therefore the content and logic of the message takes on increased importance (Chaiken & Eagly, 1983).

2. Focusing on the communicator

If we have our mind made up and hold to a position with dogmatic steadfastness, no communicator, despite having all the aforementioned favorable traits, is likely to persuade a discrepant point of view. Faced with communications that challenge

our viewpoint we may reduce dissonance by denigrating the communicator. Discrepant communicators are seen as not credible, not reliable, and as generally possessing negative personal traits. Discrepant communication occurs in practically every situation involving disagreement. In political debates the opponent is labeled with negative traits, and is therefore not to be trusted. Opponents in politics are called disingenuous, which is just a polite way of calling them liars.

Attacking the credibility of the communicator reduces the dissonance we might otherwise feel from discrepant messages. In the current Middle East crisis in Gaza and Lebanon where so many civilians have suffered, writers to local paper have often sought to justify the disaster by calling the reports distorted, or the civilian death tolls exaggerated. Those who are pro Israeli accuse those who communicate about civilian suffering of being anti-Semitic. This is an effective dissonance reduction technique in Western societies, since anti-Semitism is such a pejorative term that it cuts off any debate. By denigrating the source in opposing communications, we can effectively remove any dissonance. We do not pay attention to the communicator, but scrutinize the message for unfair discrepancies (Petty, Fleming, & White, 1999).

However, when discrepancy does not elicit our defenses, when we are lazy or do not have the ability to attend to the communication, then we tend to rely on our perceptions of the communicator (Wood & Kallgren, 1988). We are more likely to believe the message if the communicator is likable, and appear to have the right credentials. Lacking the ability or motivation to attend to the message the characteristics of the communicator increases in importance. Many people do not have the energy to understand the subtle differences between brands of consumer products and therefore the apparent credibility of the communicator is the deciding factor in buying the product. When you do not have strong feelings about the brand of toothpaste you buy, a credible communicator may help you decide.

3. The message: what is being communicated

The message communicated is a second important factor studied in the research of the Yale School of Communication. It matters what we say. If we communicate illogical messages in rambling and confusing ways, we will not find many converts. People need to find the message relevant to their concerns. To be persuaded the recipients also need to have some knowledge about the issue, and

feel that the message appeals to our sense of personal responsibility.

3.1 Global warming and a high quality message

Last night the documentary on global warming by former US presidential candidate Al Gore (now Nobel prize winner) was shown in a small theatre in Amsterdam. The film is called "An inconvenient truth", and was a skillful blend of facts, humor, and communicator attractiveness. Few left the theater without great concern for what is happening to our planet as a result of the burning of fossil fuels. The consumption of fossil fuels has lead to what scientists are calling the "green house effect" (as smoke is released into the atmosphere). Global warming has produced drastic increases in Earth temperature producing drought, storms, and potentially severe planetary disruption in the not to distant future. Even if you have not seen with your own eyes the melting of the glaciers in Alaska and South America, the message by Gore is convincing to laymen as it is to nearly all scientists.

The film was what might be called a high quality message as it contained many novel suggestions of actions for increased energy efficiency. Among the positions advocated in the movie is our need to rely more on renewable sources (Burnstein & Vinokur, 1977). High quality messages include suggestions for actions as otherwise the recipient would feel hopeless and defeated. In Cuba the country has replaced energy consuming light and kitchen fixtures with those consuming less energy. The country is now in the process of changing all old refrigerators with new models that are more energy efficient, and the replacement of old televisions are next in line. It would seem Cuba has taken seriously the message on global warming. As Gore points out, we have the possibility of saving our planet, but it will take great effort and political will. The audience who was at the movie was motivated and highly selective. The average person in the US and in Europe would probably rather go and watch escapist films produced by major movie companies. In this highly motivated audience, however, the message from Gore was effective as it appealed to the viewers core values, a basic requirement for high quality persuasive messages (Cacioppo, Petty, & Sidera, 1982).

There was no beating around the "bush" in the movie; the message was explicit (Hovland, Lumsdaine, & Sheffield, 1949). Yet Gore did not push the issue, but rather established fact upon fact, and then allowed the spectators to determine for themselves the nature of the crisis, and what must be done (Stayman & Kardes, 1992). In a very humorous way Gore also poked fun at the ignorance of those who continue to deny the urgency of our environmental crisis, and provided

irrefutable evidence to counteract their arguments. These are all essential elements of high quality communications (Hass & Linder, 1972; Petty and Wegener, 1998).

The film incorporated the best of what we know about persuasion. It has been demonstrated by previous research that vivid presentations as part of a personal narrative are more persuasive than the mere repetition of statistical facts (Hamill, Wilson, & Nisbett, 1980). An "Inconvenient truth" was a vivid presentation in the form of a personal narrative as Gore spoke of his long journey confronting the polluters of our atmosphere. He spoke movingly of his sister's death as a tobacco victim, employed cartoons in a skillful but poignant blending of humor and urgency. If the world is to be convinced of the message of global warming, people must feel this type of personal relevance.

Perhaps all the surviving victims of natural disasters of the past decade are now believers in global warming? If action had been taken earlier, as Gore suggested, many of these victims would not have perished. High quality communications include vivid and personal depictions of the victims (Collins, Taylor, Wood, & Thomson, 1988). Someday, global warming will be very vivid to all of us, and we will all be victims. The United States is currently responsible for more than 30 percent of global warming and therefore has a special responsibility. Still it takes the effort of all nations to remove the crisis from our lives. Do you think people are sufficiently aware of this crisis and will take personal action? It is a very discrepant message for many people who don't want to change their lifestyles, and therefore may be seen as not credible. Yet, the data are overwhelming about the coming catastrophe.

People are more likely to be persuaded if the message does not overtly appear to influence them, when it allows people to come to their own conclusions (Petty, & Cacioppo, 1986). If we want to be successful, we have to be aware of the audience and move at a speed they are comfortable with. Like the message in Gore's presentation it is best to include the opponent's views so to better refute these, two sided communications are more persuadable (Allen, 1991; Lumsdaine, & Janis, 1953).

3.2 Primacy versus recency in communication

Another finding from the Yale school refers to primacy or recency effects. Is the first message or speaker more influential than the last speaker? If one communication immediately follows another with some delay before the audience

makes a decision (like in an election), it is best to be the first presenter? In election debates the first candidate has the advantage since the audience decision is delayed until Election Day. When there is a time interval between presentation and response the material presented first is best remembered (primacy effect) for temporally closely presented messages. However, if a candidate comes to an audience one day, and is followed at a later date by another candidate, then the last communication is more effective, since it is more recent (recency effect) and therefore remembered (Haugtvedt & Wegener, 1994).

The primacy versus recency debate has practical consequences. At trial the prosecution presents both the initial arguments, and also the final summation. Does that mean that the prosecution has all the advantages? The Innocence Project in the US has released many prisoners from death row, who were found after conviction, through DNA tests, to be innocent of the crimes of which they were accused. Perhaps the prosecution has too many advantages in convicting, and the defendant too few in trying to demonstrate innocence. In one study (Miller & Campbell, 1959) students examined an actual transcript of a trial. The arguments of the plaintiff were placed in one document, and those for the defense in another. When the participants returned a week later, most were persuaded by the information they read first, in other words the primacy effect. This effect was furthermore established by another study. The participants found that the defense statement was more compelling when presented before the prosecution's evidence. These results suggest that people pay most attention to the information presented first, and they therefore support the primacy effect. However, Miller and Campbell also found evidence for recency. The participants read either the prosecution or defense testimony, and then a week later returned to read the second. If they were then required to immediately state their opinion after the second message, the information presented last was most influential. Perhaps it is memory loss that produces the recency effect. Other problems of the fair presentation of facts in the judicial system are addressed in chapter 12.

3.3 Fear as a message characteristic

An effective message may include fear. Fear helps arouse emotion, and motivate acceptance of the communication and a willingness to act. On the other hand if the fear becomes too intense, ego defenses may be mobilized, leading the recipient to disregard the message entirely. Extreme fear also allows the person to denigrate the communicator, and indeed the message itself. The expected

catastrophes that will eventually follow global warming produce too much anxiety for the average person to accept. As global warming occurs gradually, it allows us to deny the reality or rationalize our fears. Is global warming an issue for another generation?

The key factor in effective fear messages is to include enough factual information to generate interest and concern, but not so much that the fear will distort the message. In addition, fear messages are most effective when they also include practical advice on how to handle the issue. Yes, AIDS will kill you, and we can marshal all the supporting information for the sexually active. However, in our communications we should also show that there are ways to avoid AIDS through abstinence or safe sex practices including the use of condoms. Providing solutions to counteract the fear is essential in any fear-based messages (Boster & Mongeau, 1984).

In one study that sought to change smoking habits, fear was created in three experimental conditions. In one condition the participants were shown a very vivid film describing the effects of lung cancer, including a video of a surgery showing the blackened lungs of a smoker. In the second situation, participants were given a pamphlet advising on how to quit smoking. Participants in a third group were exposed to both the film and the pamphlet. Results showed that those shown both the scary movie, and receiving the advisory pamphlet changed their smoking habits most. Those who just received the pamphlet were not motivated by fear and reduced their habit less. Those who just saw the film were scared and reduced their habit more than the pamphlet group, but less than the group receiving both movie and pamphlet. The best results were produced by scaring the smoker, and at the same time giving concrete advice on how to respond to the fear. Many studies have found similar results (Becker & Joseph, 1988; Job, 1988; Leventhal, 1970; Robberson & Rogers, 1988).

Other studies have also shown fear to be a potent variable (Muller & Johnson, 1990). Whether dealing with the ill effects of smoking, or other habits, studies generally show that people will respond more intensely the more they are frightened (Leventhal, 1970; Roberson & Rogers, 1988). In studies of Wilson, Purdon, & Wallston (1988) and Wilson, Wallston, & King (1987, 1988) doctors mailed their patients a letter about smoking. In one condition the positive aspects of smoking cessation were emphasized, the patients would live longer if they stopped smoking. In the other (negative) condition they were told they would

likely die an early death if they continued to smoke. The positive approach encouraged 8 percent of the smokers to quit, whereas the fear appeal produced 30 percent cessation rate. However, once again the studies showed that the fear must be coupled with practical steps on how to avoid the threat.

Fear appeals are used with great effectiveness in the manipulation of citizens of practically any country. The Nazi's used the phobia of Jews to create support for the "final solution". The US government used the so-called "domino effect" to create fears that South East Asia would fall to socialism, and hence develop support for the war on Vietnam. Not a day goes by in which those in conflict do not use some form of fear to energize support for political or military action.

3.4 The audience and emotional appeals

Whether fear or other emotional based responses are effective depend on the audience. Those in society who tend to be well educated, and understand logic are more likely to be persuaded by rational fact based appeals (Cacioppo, Petty, & Morris, 1983; Hovland, Lumsdaine, Sheffield, 1949). The less educated are more likely to be influenced by the communicator rather than the message. For socially marginal people liking the communicator is sufficient in the acceptance of the message (Chaiken, 1980). Motivating voters in the United States - and surely in many other countries - is difficult since as a group they tend to be uninformed and unmotivated. Voting preferences are largely based on the liking process. We saw that used shrewdly many years ago in the Eisenhower presidential campaign, the slogan of which was " I like Ike" (Ike being short for Eisenhower). Several years later Ronald Reagan was elected on his apparent likeability qualities, and his ability to make the voters feel happy (Abelson, Kinder, Peters, & Fiske, 1982). For voters in the US and probably elsewhere too, short vivid emotional messages are often sufficient to produce desired behavior.

3.5 Positive moods

If fear can persuade can happiness also convince people? When we create happy moods for the recipients, are they also likely to be persuaded? We have examined the happy mood effect in political campaigns, but even more shallow forms of enjoyment have persuasive consequences. Janis, Kaye, & Kirschner (1965) found that students who were allowed to enjoy peanuts and Pepsi while reading messages, were more likely to be persuaded. In another study (Galizio & Hendrick, 1972), musical lyrics that was accompanied by an enjoyable guitar rendition was more persuasive than the lyrics alone. Every child knows that it is

best to approach parents for favors when the mood is right. Probably bad grades from school are also best presented when the mood is good at home, although that knowledge may change the emotional tone. In general putting people in a good mood enhances persuasion. People in a good mood make more impulsive decisions and rely less on reason and systematic approaches (Schwarz, Bless, & Bohner, 1991). By contrast, unhappy people are more likely to contemplate seriously about the message thinking it perhaps contains possibilities for more unhappiness.

3.6 What about if we don't agree with the message?

How discrepant from our own position are we willing to accept a message? Early research indicated that the more discrepant from the recipient's position the more persuasive the message (Hovland & Pritzker, 1957). Others, however, showed that this is true only up to a point. If the message was too discrepant, it would allow the recipient to doubt the credibility of the communicator (Eagly & Tetaak, 1972). The aforementioned research shows that low or high discrepancy produces little change since more persuasion occurs in the intermediate areas.

For a variety of reasons, the US public, far more than the public in Europe, has accommodated an acceptance of Israel's behavior toward the Palestinians. In the past letters that criticized Israel were not published by the editors in the US press. In recent times this has begun to change. Initially, the critical letters were not too discrepant, but skillfully advocated more moderate positions. Some letters to the editors were however more discrepant, and described the behavior of the State of Israel as criminal. Research would suggest that moderate criticisms would be more effective in changing people's minds on this or any issue.

The situation was similar during the war on Vietnam. Initially, the large majority of US citizens were in favor of US intervention. As the war progressed and casualties mounted, the support waned. The public was not persuaded initially by the "radical" opinion that the US should withdraw. However, when prominent and credible people began to urge this position (like Senator Robert Kennedy), people began to change their minds. This shows another important feature of message acceptance. As was discussed before, when people have credibility, they can argue more discrepant positions, and often people will follow.

In the original Yale communication studies, persuasion research was modeled on psychophysical judgment experiments that showed both assimilation and contrast

effects. If the message was not too discrepant from the recipient, it was more likely to be accepted and change occurred. However, if the message was too discrepant, it crossed the latitude of acceptance, and was rejected. If a message is too extreme, the communicator will look preposterous, and the message rejected (Hovland, Harvey, & Sherif, 1957). Zanna, Klosson and Darley also supported the aforementioned results (1976) in a study on newscasters. People viewed the newscaster as too biased when they felt a large discrepancy in communication from their own position. Highly discrepant points of view also caused the recipients to denigrate the newscaster. Generally, people are open to change, but only within some latitude of acceptance.

Commitment to an issue affects persuasion. The highly motivated have a narrow range of acceptable positions, and if we try to persuade outside their latitude of acceptance, the message will be rejected. Those less committed can be persuaded to a larger extent, since they have a larger range of acceptable communications (Pallak, Mueller, Dollar, & Pallak, 1972; Petty & Cacioppo, 1979).

When using the functional approach it is important to remember that messages too discrepant will be rejected. Highly discrepant messages will cause too much dissonance, and the recipient may distort the message, or simply reject the communication. Either way persuasion is not successful unless we persuade within the recipient's latitude of acceptance.

3.7 The quality of the message

Initially the arguments that demonstrated global warming were weak and not persuasive to the majority of people in the world. This was due to the technical nature of the issue and the gradual development of global warming. Many people felt that this was an issue for the distant future, and global disaster was not imminent. In the aforementioned film by Gore, the arguments were put together in a way that all people could understand. When the reality of global warming found nearly universal support of scientists around the world, the arguments became compelling.

When people are highly involved and motivated, high quality arguments give people pause for reflection and they motivate people to change (Friedrich, Fetherstonhaugh, Casey, & Biller, 1996). We have already noted, however, that many people are not involved in contemporary issues, and therefore do not respond to strong messages. For people who feel peripheral to issues, the sheer number of messages may be more important. Strong arguments are primarily

useful when people are highly motivated and want to learn more (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986).

3.8 Cultural characteristics favoring type of message

In the previous chapters, we have indicated in a number of instances differences between Asian and European/US type cultures. Does culture influence the definition of what is considered an effective message? This is an issue referring to the fundamental values of society. We know that Asian and perhaps other cultures are very community-oriented. In these societies success is seen as part of community progress, or at least from the point of view of advantages to the family. European/American culture on the other hand is more independent, and achievement motivation focuses on the individual, with less reflection on community or family consequences.

Is this basic cultural difference reflected in advertisement? Han & Shavitt (1994) showed that advertisements in American and Korean magazines varied according to this cultural division in values. American ads emphasized appeals centered on individual benefits of a product. "If you use this product your teeth will be more shiny and white". Korean ads, on the other hand, centered on benefits to the larger community such as good dental hygiene produces less offensive breath. They concluded that individual ads were more effective with American audiences, whereas the community based ads had greater impact on Korean audiences.

3.9 Does it help to repeat the message?

Recently there was on US television an ad about topical pain relief. The ad was repeated every few minutes on several channels. For many people, the repetition was extremely annoying, and most people would have to suffer a lot of pain before they would buy that particular product. However, research by Zajonc (1968) showed that repetition actually increases liking. Others (Cacioppo & Petty, 1979) have demonstrated limits to the utility of repetition.

Repetition is felt as negative if it creates boredom or tedium. In many homes people use that wonderful invention called the "mute" button when annoying ads come on. On the other hand, repetition may help in the processing of the message: "this is a pain relief which can be applied directly to the affected area". Therefore if you are in pain (and after all pain sufferers are those whom the advertiser wants to persuade) then the affected individual will pay attention and perhaps buy the product. The answer to both boredom and the need to process information sufficiently is to vary the repeated commercials (Cacioppo & Petty,

1985).

3.10 When we are not motivated to listen

Again, whether a message is persuadable depends on the motivation of the recipients. If the message is not in an area of great interest to the recipient, then repetition and the length of the argument are important. Generally, longer messages are more persuasive among those who are less informed. Is that why Fidel Castro gives such long speeches to the Cuban people, and elsewhere in the world? However, for those who are informed, the strength of the argument is of greater importance in persuading people (Wood, Kallgren, & Priesler, 1985).

3.11 When we are motivated: functions of our attitudes

Remember the functional theory of attitudes by Katz (see chapter 5). He suggested we develop attitudes because they perform certain psychological functions for us. Some attitudes are based on ego defensiveness, the desire to keep unpleasant reality at bay. One conclusion from Katz's theory is that if we want to persuade we should match our message to the function of the underlying attitude. Attitudes that serve emotional functions, like ego defensiveness, are more easily changed by appeals to these emotions (DeSteno, Petty, Ruckrer, Wegener, & Braverman, 2004).

Successful persuasion matches the message to the functions of the attitude. For example some people are motivated to prevent problems or avoid negative states. Other people are more positive in approaching some desired outcome. Persuasion is more effective when communicators match these preferences for regulating issues in life (Cesario, Grant, & Higgins, 2004). Recall the previous study on tobacco prevention. Some tobacco addicts are more motivated to prevent disease. We tell the preventive smoker that if he stops using tobacco, the cessation will prevent the development of lung cancer. Others may be more persuaded by promoting the positive aspects of smoking cessation. We tell these smokers that if they stop smoking they will be more popular with the opposite sex, their breath will smell better, and they will save a great deal of money. Researchers have found similar regulatory orientation in dental health (Mann, Sherman, & Undegraff, 2004).

Some attitudes are primarily cognitively based, and we should try to change these by utilizing rational appeals. Other attitudes are primarily emotional in nature. Research shows that persuasion is most effective when we try to use arguments

appropriate to the attitude. As in the functions proposed by Katz, attitudes also serve primarily emotional or rational needs in the recipient. When attitudes are emotionally based, use appeals that address feelings, when attitudes are more rational try to persuade with good arguments and logic (Shavitt, 1989; Snyder & DeBono, 1989).

3.12 The type of message medium used in persuasion

As we noted in the introduction of this chapter there is a variety of ways in which people attempt to persuade others. Your wife or husband may want you to change some aspect of your behavior. Your doctor wants to discuss your lifestyle choices since your liver cells are showing some abnormalities. Your teacher meets you in his office and is concerned about your grades. In each case there is a face-to-face encounter, where someone is trying to change someone's behavior. In other cases we see persuasive messages on television or educational tapes. Not quite so personal, but the presentation can still be very vivid. At the other end of the media spectrum is the use of the written word. As we have noted, written text can have a persuasive effect when people are motivated to learn, and to seek solutions for problems.

3.13 Messages for passive recipients

In one study, a weeklong campaign sought to change student behavior with respect to littering on a university campus (Paloutzian, 1979). Many efforts to persuade were made by means of posters and slogans placed in mailboxes. Paloutzian wanted to see if these had any effect, so he littered trash near a disposal bin, along a well-used path. The litter was distributed when the campaign began, and when it ended. Did the campaign encourage students to pick up the trash? Results showed that none of the students picked up the litter at the beginning of the campaign. At the end of the campaign only 2 out of 180 passerby's picked up any trash. Hardly a sterling success of written persuasion! The use of speeches in church sermons was not much better at persuasion (Crawford, 1974). Regardless of the type of media, if the audience is not motivated, little persuasion can be established.

3.14 Is personal influence more effective?

Personal contact is persuasive. When the competent family doctor talks to you about your health, most people pay attention, and are persuaded. As difficult as it is, it also takes personal intervention to motivate people politically. In the Eldersveld and Dodge (1954) study, the effect of different media in political issues

was investigated. The election concerned a revision of the city charter in Ann Arbor, Michigan. One group of participants was only exposed to information through the mass media, the second group received four mailings in support of the proposed change, and the third group of participants was visited personally. From those only exposed to mass media 19 percent voted in favor, of those who received the mailings 45 percent voted in favor, but from those visited personally 75 percent voted in favor of the city charter revision. It is a clear-cut result. Visiting a person is more persuasive in eliciting the desired behavior.

Similar results were found in a study to reduce heart disease (Maccoby & Alexander, 1980; Maccoby, 1980). The media used to persuade people was varied in three communities in California. In one community there were no special appeals other than what people might routinely see in normal media. In the second community, the residents were subjected to a multimedia two-year campaign that included radio, television, and newspapers. In the last community, the residents received not only the persuasive messages from the media campaign, but were also visited personally. Using behavior modification, the personal contacts sought to improve the health practices of recipients in a high-risk group. As might be expected, the media campaign had some positive effect in persuading people to improve health practices, but it was the personal contact that produced the most significant change.

Perhaps personal influence is all there is? Maybe those who changed in reaction to the media campaign changed not because of the media, but because a wife or husband saw the relevance of the health campaign to a beloved spouse, and persuaded the change in behavior! This is what the theory of Katz (1957) would suggest. He described communication as moving from the media to opinion leaders who in turn persuade others. It is difficult to study media influences independently, since we cannot know how people are persuaded by significant others. One thing we do know, the closer the media simulates personal communication, the more vivid it is, the more likely it is that persuasion will follow. This means that in the media, vivid communications are most effective, followed by spoken and written words. "A picture tells a thousand words". This is particularly true if the message is simple and easy to comprehend (Chaiken & Eagly, 1983).

4. Characteristics of the audience

In much of the world today, persuasion is a form of political manipulation.

Research into political manipulation tries to understand particular audiences and their core values. A political candidate utilizing such research may give one type of speech in city A, and a contradictory speech in city B, as each location may have different views on the issues of the day. The basic motivation of political manipulation is to get elected or reelected.

The nature of the audience is critical to the effectiveness of a message. Keeping in mind the latitude of acceptance by the audience, effective speeches must operate within this range, or they will be rejected. The audience is significant in a variety of ways. Recipients differ with respect to personality (conservative or liberal minded), with respect to mood, and simple demographics like age and gender. Mood may also depend on changing situational factors. As the price of gas skyrockets in the world, fuel-efficient cars are seen as attractive, and persuasion to buy these enhanced. Likewise as people's fears of the results of global warming are increased they may be persuaded to buy energy efficient home fixtures and lights.

4.1 Cognitive involvement

People differ in their willingness to evaluate and think about issues. Some people seem to be saying, "tell me what to think", or "do the thinking for me, I don't have the time or motivation". Others are presented with an issue, and they personally want to research the problem, and then take some action.

Some people, because of their background, have a need for cognition (Cacioppo, Petty, Feinstein, & Jarvis, 1996). People high in need for cognition like to think about issues, like to evaluate different solutions, and actually gets pleasure from thinking. Thinkers are more likely to be persuaded by strong messages high in quality, which presents arguments well supported by reason and logic. At the same time, they are not so easily motivated by superficial arguments, those that appeal to emotion or mood. The cognitively motivated instead think through an issue, and accept persuasion based on the merit of the arguments (Cacioppo, Petty, & Morris, 1983; Haugtvedt & Petty, 1992).

4.2 Changing mood of recipients

As noted above mood is a factor in persuasion, especially for those motivated by changing emotions. After the attack on New York, September 11, 2001, the people in the US were in a mood of fear and disbelief including many of the US legislators. The administration did not have a difficult job in persuading Congress to pass invasive security laws, or finding support for the war in Afghanistan. The

mood of fear generated by 9/11 also generated support for the war on Iraq, although the latter country had nothing to do with the attacks in New York. So moods can be powerful manipulators of public and government opinions, and their effect lasts a long time. Now most of the people in the US feel that the war in Iraq was a mistake. Sooner or later the public will change its views to a more sober perspective, but only after a great deal of destruction has taken place first, it seems.

Charismatic leaders have a special ability to manipulate their followers. We saw that in Jonestown, Guiana, in the mass suicide of the followers of Reverend Jones. Similar charisma could be observed in the ability of Reagan to manipulate the cold war (he was called "The great communicator"). Communicator charisma was furthermore employed during the Nazi era through Hitler's skillful ability to create mass hysteria during his rallies, and in mobilizing the German people for war.

A receptive mood facilitates persuasion. Some of the early studies showed that people were more likely to be persuaded if they listened to beautiful music (McGuire, 1985). The music put the recipient in a good mood, and was therefore more likely to accept persuasion. As in the previously reported case of matching messages to the functions of attitudes, the best results are obtained by matching mood and message. When people are scared or sad, pessimistic messages may be more effective. For recipients in a happy or optimistic mood, uplifting and optimistic messages yield more persuasion (Bless, Schwarz, & Wieland, 1996; Wegener, Petty, & Smith, 1995). A positive mood gives reassurance to the recipient, and therefore there is little need to evaluate or worry about the message (Albarracin & Kumkale, 2003). Positive mood can even help in persuading people faced with negative information. For example, positive mood led to an acceptance of the negative consequences of too much caffeine consumption among heavy coffee drinkers (Raghunathan & Trope, 2002).

As we have also seen elsewhere, repeated exposure may affect mood. Liking usually follows the familiarity of repeated exposures, a fact utilized greatly by advertisers (Harmon-Jones & Allen, 2001). Others have shown that repeated exposure has enduring effects (Sherman & Kim, 2002). People's moods can be inferred from situational factors like catastrophes, or from long standing personal or social problems like poverty. Messages used to address these moods will find receptive minds and hearts. Those who have suffered most best understand the

appeal for revolution all over the world. As noted by Karl Marx many people from social classes that did not suffer also understood the message by logic and rational arguments and supported the victims of oppression.

4.3 Commitment and involvement

When we are truly committed to an issue, we are less likely to accept discrepant persuasion; which is another way of saying that our latitude or range of acceptable messages is narrow (Rhine & Severance, 1970). If on the other hand a member of the in-group communicates a slightly different position, we will listen. However, those who are committed to an idea or position are willing to suffer great discomfort and dissonance before yielding to contrary persuasion. For example, people who support Israel cannot help but notice the repression of the Palestinians. The dissonance created between the ideals of Zionism and brutal reality can however be resolved by denigrating and demonizing Palestinian organizations.

Commitment to positions in people is obtained by asking them to act on their attitudes. Strengthening the commitment occurs in stating a position to others. In other words public observation of stated positions strengthens that commitment. Addicts who are in rehabilitation are asked to share with the therapeutic group their determination to get healthy, and how past drug related behavior negatively affected their lives. When other people observe them take a stand, they are even more committed, because they want to appear consistent with their views and behavior. In articulating their views, they also understand their own opinions better, and from that understanding feel stronger commitment.

As previously noted some of our attitudes are learned second hand and reflect stereotypes of society. At other times, people have direct experiences that solidify attitudes and commitment. A Black person who experienced segregation first hand is more committed to racial equality than those who just read about it in history textbooks. Also, we are likely to be more committed when our attitudes reflect our personal will, and are not the result of socialization. The Bennington students probably felt that their initial conservative attitudes were those of family or community, but when they experienced the challenges of the university they adopted views which they truly owned and which were based on their own decisions.

Some issues are peripheral to our lives and others have meaning and reflect

central values. We feel more committed when we deal with an issue that might have personal relevance. Whether you drink Coca Cola or Pepsi may not have much relevance to you. However, if your father died from smoking, tobacco use would be of great relevance, and commitment to health that much stronger. When issues are personally relevant we examine these more closely, and pay attention to the arguments. Since we know something about relevant issues we are not likely to be persuaded by superficial arguments. For personally relevant positions it takes strong arguments to be persuaded to a contrary position (Petty & Cacioppo, 1990).

Being involved in an issue does not prevent us from being concerned what others might think. Zimbardo (1970) suggested that in persuasion some people are more concerned with what other people think, whereas those who are involved in the issue are primarily thinking about the arguments. For involved people it is the issue itself that is important. Leippe & Elkin (1987) compared the importance of issue and response involvement in a study on comprehensive examinations. Results showed that only those who had a stake in the outcome (were involved in the issue), and at the same time did not worry about social approval, scrutinized the arguments carefully. To be persuaded a recipient must feel the issue is important, and not be immobilized by fear of what others think.

4.4 Unmotivated audiences

Can recipients who do not feel any personal involvement still be persuaded? Research says yes, but under different circumstances from those who are involved. Recipients who are motivated and analytical will weigh the arguments carefully. If the persuasion effort is within the latitude of acceptance, the motivated recipients may change their position. The unmotivated recipients, however, may be persuaded as a result of more trivial factors. For many people, persuasion is simply a matter of the attractiveness of the communicator, or the mood created by the communication.

Since it matters little to the unmotivated, they are also more likely to make impulsive decisions. The undecided voter is a large segment of the public in many countries who often make last minute impulsive decisions. Many voters go to the voting booth to choose a candidate or party and not knowing what to do make snap decisions with little reflection. The vote comes down to very peripheral considerations like whether the candidate smiled during the last debate, or the dress his wife wore. It is an awesome thought that the most important decisions

of society come down to such impulsive thinking. The future of countries and the world are, at least to a certain extent, dependent on the behavior of the unmotivated.

Some people do not have the background or skill to make a reflective decision. Many voters lack the education necessary in order to answer complex questions about international peace, or local taxation. The manipulators in the political system understand this cognitive deficit. Political manipulators also understand basic ideas of voter like or dislike. Most people do not like to pay more taxes than necessary. Therefore any slogan that gives the impression that the candidate or party will lower taxes has a fair chance to become a winner in the current political system in the US and Western Europe. Political platforms take advantage of similar heuristics, making complex issues simple and manageable, and subject to persuasion (see also chapter 4). In many cases, change in political position comes down to whether the recipient trusts the source of communication, and that in turn can be manipulated in a variety of ways. Why are politicians in the US so fond of kissing babies on camera? Obviously a person who kisses babies must be a good person people think, and we should therefore trust him with our vote.

It is obvious that if we can stimulate thinking we can also persuade using arguments based on facts and social reality. Some experiments have stimulated thinking by asking rhetorical questions, using multiple speakers, by making people feel responsible for passing on communications, or by repeating messages, and removing distractions. All these techniques for stimulating thinking make high quality arguments more persuadable. Research shows that people who think analytically generally reject weak and irrational messages of persuasion. Analytical people will counter argue the premises of the communications (Harkins & Petty, 1987; Leippe & Elkin, 1987).

4.5 Get your message to the recipients while they are young

A great deal of research in social psychology is done with college age participants. For persuasion research, this presents a problem, because age is related to persuasion. Do college age persuasion studies have validity for other age groups? Children and younger people's attitudes are not stable and therefore more persuadable (Sears, 1986). In recent years, a great deal of research has been carried out on eyewitness testimony. These studies examined memory reliability in children and young people. As noted in chapter 12, such eyewitness testimony has sent a significant number of people to jail who were later found to

be innocent. Children and young people are more easily persuaded by powerful authority, and can be manipulated into believing in the reality of events that never actually occurred.

Older people with more stable attitudes are more inflexible and rigid, and therefore less likely to be persuaded (Tyler & Schuller, 1991). It is in youth and early adulthood that we form most of the significant attitudes that we carry with us through life (Krosnick & Alvin, 1989). If we reflect back on our university life, we would see these years as a time of significant experiences affecting our future thinking about people, life and society. Older people remember the significant or traumatic events of youth more than current events.

This age effect was observed in the Bennington college study, where conservative students developed enduring liberal opinions through their college year experiences. It is also during youth that young people take up unhealthy habits like smoking. Peer pressure can be significant, and at young ages the health hazards will not get a hearing. Death as an eventuality will be seen as so far away as being of little or no concern (see discussion on health psychology in chapter 12).

4.6 Personality traits

Some research has focused on personality traits in the audience. It is not surprising that people low in intelligence are more easily persuaded than those of high intelligence. Recipients low in intelligence often lack self-confidence. Since they have erred previously in life, people low in intelligence think it is better to yield to others who are better informed. Self-esteem of the recipient is also a factor in persuasion. People with moderate self-esteem are more likely to be persuaded, than those with high or low self-esteem (Rhodes & Wood, 1992). High self-esteem provides the confidence necessary to resist, and low self-esteem produces skepticism toward all assertions.

Some traits like authoritarianism or dogmatism are thought to be important to persuasion. These traits refer to those who are rigid, intolerant, and show deference to status and power. The authoritarian person defers to those who have authority, and are more easily persuaded on a variety of issues. The quality of the argument does not matter as authoritarians are persuaded equally by strong or weak arguments (DeBono & Klein, 1993). Authoritarians get more confident in making decisions when they perceive they have social support and are not exposed to contradictory information (Davies, 1998). Authoritarians do not

tolerate ambiguity, and have strong needs for closure. Since they want the debate to end, they are more likely persuaded to make impulsive decisions (Kruglanski, Webster, & Klem, 1993).

4.7 Counter arguments

Most of us have come across a point of view with which we did not agree. In response to discrepant messages, we mentally list all the reasons why the message is not sound, and why it should be rejected. Persuasion of disagreeable arguments produces counter arguments. If the source of the message has low credibility, the arguments are easy to rebut (Perloff & Brock, 1980).

We can also protect our loved ones against negative persuasion. The tobacco companies want you to buy cigarettes since to them it is profit that matters. In countries where advertising for tobacco is not yet outlawed the companies are slick in their advertisements, so forewarning your children is a good idea. For example, tobacco makers usually hire young healthy looking models to sell their products. You could counter by saying that these models do not represent reality, as a billion people will die from smoking this century. The tobacco companies may try to sell their product as a cozy and harmless form of social interaction. You can counter that by telling your children that those who smoke will eventually not be present in the picture since they will die. Research has shown that when you forewarn recipients about a message (like promoting smoking), and if you provide all possible counter arguments, persuasion is difficult (Perloff & Brock, 1980).

Again, persuasion depends on the commitment of the recipient. When people are highly committed to a position like good health, and forewarned of the attempt to persuade, the recipient will resist (Chen, Reardon, Rea, & Moore, 1992; Freedman & Sears, 1965). So if we forewarn our children of the tobacco companies' attempts to seduce, children may be able to anticipate the advertisements, and counter argue the message (Petty & Cacioppo, 1977). Children and young people who are the targets of tobacco ads may decide that the tobacco companies are biased and not to be trusted.

On the other hand if the recipient is not committed to good health, there are not many counter arguments available. Then forewarning may make the tobacco companies more persuadable, since the appearance of good health of models in the advertising are accepted at face value. When recipients are not committed, they do not have the tools to evaluate both sides of the issue. Without commitment we are likely to believe that any argument is sound (Apsler & Sears,

1968). However, those who are involved and motivated can be armed with counter arguments.

Distraction of any sort weakens our ability to resist persuasion. Distraction interferes with the person's ability to counter argue, to find reasons to resist. That is the meaning of Hitler's parades and rallies. The flags, the music, the hypnotic speakers, prevented most people in Germany from seeing what was obvious to the rest of the world. The real message of the Nazi's was not the power of beauty, but the beauty of power, and most Germans could not resist the seduction (Petty & Brock, 1981). Persuasion is enhanced by distraction when it interferes with our ability to counter argue. The message gets through without the full awareness of the recipient.

4.8 Support and inoculation

The Milgram/Larsen type experiments are discussed in chapter 10. A strong argument in favor of these experiments on aggression was that the participants would be inoculated against future seduction. In the aftermath of the Korean War during the 1950s, some American soldiers chose to stay in North Korea, and not return to the United States. These soldiers were described as having been "brainwashed", persuaded that the North Korean system was better and more just. McGuire (1964) thought that some soldiers were easily persuaded since they were uneducated, and had not previously defended their beliefs about country or politics. McGuire's model for resistance to persuasion came from physical disease responses. Our bodies defend against disease by supporting bodily defenses through good nutrition, vitamins, or exercise. In modern times it has also been possible to defend against physical disease by inoculation, by which the individual builds antibodies through vaccination.

McGuire suggested that these two processes, support and inoculation, could also be applied to persuasion (McGuire & Papageorgis, 1961). In the experiment, one group received support for their positions, another group had their position attacked in minimal ways (vaccination), and the third group received neither treatment. Results showed that support helped a little, but greatest resistance to persuasion came from inoculation. It was reasoned that with inoculation, the participants thought more about their positions, and counter argued. Relative weak arguments against the recipients' position allowed them to come up with many counter arguments. In the process of presenting weak arguments, the recipient learned to counter argue and marshal defenses against persuasion

(Bernard, Maio, & Olson, 2003).

If you want to help young people against being persuaded by peer pressure to smoke, start by role-playing various seductive scenarios in favor of smoking (vaccination), and then offer counter arguments. In one situation the peer might say “smoking is cool”, the counter argument of the recipient may be “it’s not cool to smell bad”. A peer might say “smoking is very relaxing”, the counter argument could then be “well you won’t relax when you become ill”. The inoculation idea is to expose the recipient to persuasion to weak arguments in favor of a given position (“it’s ok to smoke”), and then offer counter arguments so the recipient is less likely to be persuaded.

Methods, support and inoculation, have produced positive results. When the arguments to be learned are simple (no thank you to drugs) a support network may help resistance. On the other hand, when we want people to think of counter arguments and thereby develop their own defenses (Bernard, Maio, Olson, 2003), inoculation has greatest utility.

As we can see effective communication requires attention to the motivation of the recipients, personality traits, age, and ability to analyze the issues. Some people make snap decisions of profound importance to society due to cognitive deficits. Others will make uninformed decisions because they are unable to tolerate ambiguity, and have a need for closure of any debate (Cacioppo, Petty, Kao, & Rodriguez, 1986; Sorrentino, Bobocel, Gitta, Olsen, & Hewitt, 1988). However, we can assist young people in resisting persuasion by the merchants of death through inoculation and support for healthy lives.

5. Persuasion through advertising

The media is used in modern society for a variety of purposes. Media presentations include public service persuasion for better health or useful community practices. The media is also used in political and consumer persuasion. More importantly, the media creates a framework for understanding our world, our changing social reality. Is the world really as dangerous and hostile as television programming would have us think? Is it really desirable that women look like the anorexic models presented in television programming? These are examples of changing social reality produced by modern media in the western world.

5.1 The media in the service of society

Over the years we have seen repeated public announcements that try to reduce smoking in our society, have they been successful? Some studies suggest that few people are persuaded by these means (Tyler, 1984; Schanie & Sundel, 1978, Lynam, Milich, Zimmerman, Novak, Logan, & Martin, 1999). More novel use of persuasion occurs when role-playing scenarios are used to persuade in the use of safe sex practices. Role-playing has proved useful both in terms of self-reported behaviors and also in the rates of sexually transmitted diseases (Jemmott, Jemmott, Braverman, & Fong, 2005).

However, a more recent meta-analysis has tested the effects of the media in substance abuse. The results showed that after sustained campaigns, children developed more negative attitudes toward illegal drugs, alcohol, and tobacco (Derzon & Lipsey, 2002). The campaign also reduced the use of these products, with the vivid media (television and radio) having greater effect than the printed word. The media may be especially effective in reducing use among sensation seeking teenagers, those who abuse drugs for reasons of having high needs for stimulation.

Although complex, how can we deny the power of the media in the development of social and health habits? This can be seen in the rates of smoking for women who rose dramatically when tobacco makers used slogans from the women's liberation movement to promote their products. In the early part of the 20th century, very few women smoked, that changed gradually over the years, and the rate of lung cancer in women now approach that found in men. The tobacco makers cleverly used tobacco ads suggesting that smoking was a way for women to demonstrate gender equality. In the US currently about 26 percent of adult men and 21 percent of adult women smoke. As smoking went down in the US, the tobacco makers moved to Africa and Asia with their lethal products (Teves, 2002).

5.2 Selling to the consumer

There are researchers who claim minimal effects from advertisement on the buying behavior of the public (McGuire, 1985; 1986). Yet each American watches 100 television ads daily, and sees hundreds of ads in the printed media (Pratkanis & Aronson, 2000). Are we to believe that this 200 billion dollar industry has no effect? Curiously, most people believe that other people are affected, but not they themselves (Duck & Mullin, 1995; Vallone, Ross, & Lepper, 1985; Wilson & Brekke, 1994). Still, inferential evidence suggests that people pay attention when

motivated. For example, people motivated by political issues pay more attention to political ads (Iyengar, 2004). People who are not motivated are influenced more by the superficial and peripheral characteristics of a candidate such as looks or status.

Most advertisement seeks consumer attention and establishes product familiarity. It stands to reason that most effects are short lived (Bird, 2002). However, purchasing behavior may be influenced in indirect ways by advertising since both product loyalty and awareness are increased by ads. These indirect influences in turn affect buying behavior. The ad may initially use emotions to gain attention by associating the product with feelings of excitement and happiness. We can see this classical conditioning effort in the worldwide campaign of Coca Cola and Pepsi. The basic idea of these advertisements is to associate the product with human happiness. Nearly all advertisement is that superficial, but people will still be influenced. The telephone company wants you to buy a new cell phone. Instead of arguing the merits of the new product, the ads will show happy young people communicating, or perhaps a son calling his mother. The whole effort is to get to the emotions of the buyer, and product loyalty will follow.

Today tobacco and some alcohol companies have been curtailed in their use of advertisement in parts of the world. The response of the tobacco and alcohol makers is to have their products cleverly inserted into television shows or movies, often by glamorous actors or actresses. When products are glamorized, they have powerful seductive effects.

Despite skepticism, advertisement is effective (Abraham & Lodish, 1990; Wells, 1997; Wilson, Houston, & Meyers, 1998). Advertisers work with television companies and grocery stores to keep track of consumer purchases by means of special ID cards. Results of over 300 such tests show that advertisements encourage purchases, especially of new products (Lodish, Abraham, Kalmenson, Lievelsberger, Lubetkin, Richardson, & Stevens, 1995).

5.3 Selling the political candidate

Many hundreds of millions of dollars are spent on the election of candidates each year in the western world. We might assume that this enormous amount would not be spent unless political ads were effective since we live in societies where people want to get their money's worth. Again the data are complex. Some studies suggest minimal effects from political advertisement (Levitt, 1994). Others suggest that ads affect the undecided voters, those with less involvement

who are searching for a reason to vote (Kaid, 1981).

A feature of all political campaigns in the US and Western Europe is the denigration of political opponents. Many people get sick of listening to these efforts of persuasion and simply refuse to vote (Van der Veer & Herrebout, 1989; Ansolabehere & Iyengar, 1995). Elections in the twin party system of the United States often comes down to a few or fraction of a percentage point favoring either candidate (witness the Bush -Gore Election). Therefore if political advertising affects only a few voters, it may still have profound influence in a system where the winner takes all.

5.4 Subtle effects of the media and acceptable behavior

Influence is a two-process flow in communication (Katz, 1957), where opinion leaders are first convinced and then persuade others. Television may serve a similar process by convincing opinion leaders first on some issue who in turn persuade others. We cannot underestimate the power of the media. The media may influence people in subtle, not easily detected ways by setting cultural limits for behavior, by defining stereotypes, and demonizing enemies. We cannot just switch off the influence of television. What do the popular soap operas teach us about family, drug use, and sexual behavior? There have been great changes in these social behaviors over the last few decades. Perhaps soaps just reflect these social changes, but equally likely they have contributed to new norms.

5.5 Can we affect behavior by subliminal means through the media?

During the 2000 election the Bush campaign produced many negative advertisements against Gore. One Bush ad criticized the Gore medicine prescription plan. The ad was followed by the word RATS which flashed across the screen at one thirtieth of a second. The word was presented too fast for conscious awareness, but not too fast for it to register in the subconscious. Was the Bush campaign trying to influence potential voters without their awareness? The representatives of the campaign denied this, stating that the insertion was accidental (Berke, 2000). Others have argued that advertisers sell products by routinely implanting camouflaged sexual images in print advertisement to affect the mood of the reader (Key, 1973).

Most studies do not support the effect of subliminal messages on purchasing behavior, or the utility of listening tapes for self-improvement (Brannon & Brock, 1994; Pratkanis, 1992; Trappey, 1996). However, some studies from the

experimental laboratory show that subliminal messages affect behavior. In one study people were asked how much they liked a series of Chinese characters. A human face that expressed happiness, anger, or no emotion in turn preceded these language characters. These emotional faces were only flashed for four milliseconds, again too quickly for conscious awareness. Nevertheless the subliminal message affected people's evaluation of the Chinese characters, and those preceded by a happy face were liked the most (Murphy & Zajonc, 1993). Other researchers have found similar results (Dijksterhuis & Aarts, 2002; Strahan, Spencer, & Zanna, 2002). While real life is more complex than the social psychological laboratory, we cannot dismiss the possible manipulation that might occur as a result of slick and well-planned campaigns. In the case of Bush versus Gore it took very little to affect the outcome when who won came down to a few hundred votes in the state where George W. Bush's brother, Jeb, was governor.

5.6 The media and social behavior

The media has other effects besides those discussed above, as it also provides a framework for the socialization of culture and social behavior. The relationship between specific ads and buying behavior may be minimal, but as the ads collect in the mind over time, our views of what is real is affected. Many, perhaps most of us, are influenced by the behavior presented in the media, even when it does not correspond to actual reality. In the western world, we tend to think of the world as a more hostile place than supported by crime statistics. Likewise we may be convinced that the anorexic female form, although it is far removed from normal femininity, is ideal. Through the media, those vulnerable come to believe that smoking is glamorous, and therefore start smoking (Kluger, 1996). Advertisement provides a framework for our social agenda and consciousness, even though we may not be influenced to buy a particular product.

With all the consumer ads we may come to believe that human happiness can be found only through consumption. That conviction is in total opposition to the health of the Earth, which is groaning under all the pressures of modern society. As global warming statistics show, something has to give. Media advertisement may change for the worse our very sense of reality and what constitutes constructive human behavior. Much advertisement is aimed at personal gratification and may therefore also change the underlying values of cooperative societies toward more materialistic and individualistic conceptions?

The very negativity of political ads may lead us to the conclusion that the whole

world is going to hell or at least deteriorating (Eibach, Libby, Gilovich, 2003). The media promotes unrealistic conceptions of reality which effects behavior in a variety of ways, and determines what is considered important issues in society (Dearing & Rogers, 1996). The effect of newscasts in believing that energy dependency is an important social issue was studied in the laboratory. In the control group energy dependency was not mentioned at all. In second condition, energy dependency was mentioned in the newscasts three times, and in the third group six times. Among the participants who watched no news about energy dependency 24 percent still thought it to be among the three most important issues facing the country. Energy dependency importance rose to 50 percent for those who saw three newscasts, and to 65 percent for those participants who saw 6 stories.

Therefore, the mere reporting of news, and repetition of the same messages set the social agenda for many people. News exposure can also translate to political action. If the news is negative at the time of the election, this may be a factor against the incumbent party; if the news is positive it may bring further support.

The world described on television may not correspond to social reality, but it still has the power to convince us otherwise. One group of researchers examined and coded various television programs (Gerbner, Gross, Morgan, Signorielli, 1986). The results showed little correspondence between the world depicted on television, and society. For example although nature created about the same number of males and females, women and girls appeared less frequently in the programs. Other social groups were also under represented, including the elderly and ethnic minorities. When was the last time you saw an old person advertising anything but pain medication? The use of the elderly to sell medication is another distortion of social reality as it suggests that the majority of old people are sick or infirm. The popularity of crime shows causes many people to see the social reality as more dangerous than are justified by crime statistics.

Political candidates also fit broad stereotypes promoted by the political manipulators. For men, they are on the average taller, and must have looks that indicate soberness and responsibility. The best president in US history was Abraham Lincoln who saved the Union and he was a very ugly man. In the modern world of television it is doubtful that he could be elected today. It could be argued that the media form our very conceptions of social reality. It decides what and whom we should pay attention to in a world largely ignoring the real burning

issues of the day!

5.7 Stereotypic threat

Cultural and gender stereotypes are transmitted by the media. Recall our discussion of ideal male and female body types, both being serious distortions from reality. It is not just body types that are reinforced by the media, but the very content of ads suggests that men are active and women more passive (Furnham & Mak, 1999). Women are rarely depicted in roles of real power, but rather in roles of dependency on powerful others. Can these distortions affect actual behavior?

Some researchers have shown that when women think of negative cultural stereotypes, their behavior suffers as a consequence. If women are led to believe that they as a group do worse on mathematical tests, then they actually do worse. Some ads may actually promote these stereotypical anxieties (Davies, Spencer, Quinn, & Gerhardstein, 2002). In the aforementioned study, women acted in typical stereotypical ways in ads (jumping up and down on a bed in promotion of an acne product), or in counter stereotypical ways (showing knowledge about cars). Even though these products were not related to mathematics, women who watched the stereotypical ads did worse on mathematical tests subsequently. So advertisement may indeed have a significant influence in reinforcing negative stereotypical behaviors, and thereby create limits in our lives. If this effect can be found in the laboratory after only a few exposures, what might be the results of constant exposures of stereotypes over years!

6. Cultist persuasion

In modern times we have seen a variety of cults gaining members, and demonstrating a high degree of effectiveness in persuasion. Some cults have even convinced their members to commit collective suicide like the 900 members of the Reverend Jones's Church in Guyana. Another cult believed they would join a spaceship after death and also committed suicide. The Nazi movement demonstrated all the features of a cult, and not only committed collective suicide, but also destroyed much of the rest of the world.

How can these events be explained? What forces are strong enough to convince people to end their lives or destroy others? It seems that cults know how to use the persuasion principles we have discussed in this chapter. In cults people are asked to behave in certain ways. For the Reverend Jones' cult that included giving

up all worldly possessions, and actively working for the Church. For the Nazi's, it meant military training and participating in the persecution of social outcasts. Complying with these behavioral demands, produced acceptance of the ideology by the cult. The established principle from dissonance theory is that people will change their attitudes when changing their behavior. Cult members also seek to reinforce their beliefs by converting others. At first the request for behavioral compliance may be quite modest. In the Jones cult initially, monetary contributions were on a voluntary basis. Overtime the demands grew gradually, until Jones demanded all worldly possessions. We have seen this procedure called the "foot-in-the-door" work successfully in other studies. Eventually the cult members become true believers allowing for few doubts about truth or righteous behavior (Gerard & Mathewson, 1966).

All cults have charismatic leaders who appear credible to members. In their particular realm of persuasion, these leaders are seen as both trustworthy and as having expertise. They may display dramatic insights into life, persons, or scripture convincing to the followers. People who are unprepared or naive are more likely to submit to these appeals and trust the leaders' credibility (Singer, 1979). In this world of uncertainty, people are attracted to messages that offer comprehensive solutions to life's many perplexing problems. The cult followers may have experienced traumas, or perhaps the times are socially challenging. Such upheavals make naive people more vulnerably (Sales, 1972).

7. Some final thoughts about the Yale school of communication

Some final words on the model developed by the Yale school of communication. The Yale school suggests a number of factors significant in persuasion. The approach emphasizes the significance of communicator credibility, likeability, and the importance of reference groups in facilitating persuasion. The nature of the communication was also important as persuasion was facilitated by moderate discrepancy from the recipient. The research also examines motives, and depending on the motivation of the recipient, emphasizes the development of arguments that match recipient positions.

For recipients who rely on or have a need for cognition, rational arguments are most effective. For others whose positions are emotionally based, persuasion must address the underlying emotional needs. Recipient characteristics also affect the persuasion process. Are the recipients of the message ego involved? Those committed to a position are difficult to persuade. Research also shows that

it is possible to inoculate the recipient by exposing him to small doses of the opposing arguments. Persuasion can also be minimized by forewarning the recipient, or by the use of distraction. Once the message is accepted, it may become part of the cognitive responses of the recipient. Persuasion, however, can in the cognitive competent person also unleash counter arguing and thereby be modified. People find arguments consistent with their worldviews to be more credible and acceptable. All of the above processes work together toward a change in the recipients' position, or final rejection of the persuasion. Rejection can take several forms including denigrating the source of the communication. We can also distort the message itself, to make it more acceptable to our position.

8. Theories of persuasion

8.1 Process of persuasion

Kelman (1961) proposed a theory of processes of social influence. His theory is seen as an early effort to understand persuasion. When a person complies with the request of another, he does so in order to obtain a favorable reaction. The preceding chapter 7 on social influence was dedicated to the further understanding of the compliance process. Identification occurs, according to Kelman, when the message is accepted because the individual identifies with the messenger, and wants to maintain a satisfying relationship with a person or group. For example, one person accepts the other's political opinion on war, because he/she wants to continue and foster a relationship that satisfies basic needs. The internalization process occurs when a person accepts influence because the message is congruent with his underlying value system. Internalization can be thought of as "real" attitude change that engages the mind and may therefore be lasting.

8.2 Persuasion routes in the recipient

The two most influential theories of persuasion are the Elaboration Likelihood Model (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986; Petty, Priester, & Brinol, 2002) and the Heuristic-Systematic model (Chaiken, 1987; Chaiken, Wood, & Eagly, 1996). These theories were developed independently, but reflected essentially the same reasoning. From the foregoing discussion, it seems clear that persuasion may take one of two routes depending on the motivation and knowledge of the recipient. In the Elaboration Likelihood Model, people take either the central or peripheral route. In the Heuristic-Systematic Model these same processes are called heuristic and systematic.

Some recipients are motivated by the issue and have some knowledge about it and they take the central route to persuasion. Since the message is relevant to the recipient, appeals to logic and reason will be most effective. Motivated people will think deeply about the message and check it for logic and accuracy. In the process, they will also retrieve from memory all relevant facts, knowledge, and past experiences to use in evaluating the content of the message. This evaluative process involving depth of thinking and prepare the recipient to accept or reject the persuasion. For motivated people, the arguments and evidence presented in the message are all important.

According to theory, when the recipient is not particularly motivated, persuasion proceeds along the peripheral route (which Chaiken calls the heuristic process). The less motivated individuals have little background and knowledge. Therefore the peripheral aspects of the communication become important. The individual attends to the superficial framework of a message such as length of the speech, repetition of a message, the wording of the message and characteristics of the communicator. In the peripheral route, the individual evaluates whether the communicator is likable, and does he/she give the appearance of credibility. Van der Veer & Van den Oosterkamp (2007) showed that charisma and appearance of the communicator might be sufficient for acceptance of persuasion in the peripheral route.

When using the peripheral route of persuasion, the individual employs simple cues in evaluation. These heuristics can be the frequency of the message, or how large a number of people attend a meeting, or the quantity of arguments within the message. In the peripheral route, the recipient does not contemplate, but accepts or rejects on such simple principles. These two theoretical models and the research that followed sought to understand when people would use either route. Results showed that the central route is employed when the issue is of personal relevance, when we have some knowledge, and when we feel personal responsibility for the outcome.

Only a very small sample of the public participated in demonstrations against war or racism, in the past. By their action peace demonstrators express by their motivation to hear messages about conflict resolution. When you are part of such a demonstration, like when in 1981 more than 500.000 people demonstrated in Amsterdam against the stationing of cruise missiles in the Netherlands, you may be tempted to think that the entire population rejects warfare. Unfortunately, it

was only the peace demonstrators who were motivated, had knowledge about the causes for the war, and felt some personal responsibility for the suffering caused. That is called “preaching to the choir” when people have already accepted the message before any communication has taken place. The people who attended peace demonstrations were primed to hear the messages calling for peace.

Even the largest mass demonstrations in the United States included less than 1 percent of the population. Eventually the majority of the other 99 percent also expressed in opinion polls their disquiet with how events were unfolding in Vietnam in the 1960s and 1970s, and today in Iraq. The persuasion followed the peripheral route since most of these people were convinced by prominent political figures like Senator Kennedy in the Vietnam conflict, and popular entertainment figures like the Beatles. These popular figures were seen as both attractive and credible for many in the “silent majority”. In the current war on Iraq, we see a similar peripheral process for most people. Although there were mass demonstrations from before the start of the war, these represented but a small minority of the population. However, they still included large numbers of fellow citizens who appeared in the evening new programs. The apparently large numbers opposing US policies may have presented a simple heuristic to the “silent majority” to reflect more on the war. The demonstrations also suggested that decisions of the Bush government were not uniformly supported in the country. The initial reactions to the war were followed by the protests of many prominent and popular figures from the entertainment industry. Following the peripheral path of numbers and likable persuaders, the majority of the American people are now opposed to the war in Iraq. Similar figures can be reported for Great Britain, the major partner with the US in the war.

In sum, people utilize the peripheral route of persuasion when the message has little personal relevance, when they have little knowledge or background (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993; Petty & Cacioppo, 1986; Petty & Wegener, 1998). When we are tired or the issue is difficult, we are also more likely to go the peripheral route (Kiesler & Mathog; Petty & Wegener, 1998). Some issues are very complex and hard to understand. How many of us understand the new string theories about space and matter? For difficult issues, we are likely to defer our opinions to credible experts. In the peripheral route, it is not the quality of a message that persuades, but source attractiveness, or fame. Likewise simple heuristics like the number of times arguments are repeated or the length of a speech may be

persuasive. Unmotivated people may infer the importance of a message from repetition or length of communications.

8.3 Do most people use the peripheral route on important social issues?

There is an assumption that both of these routes of persuasion are available to all people, and therefore based on our motivation we may respond centrally to some issues and peripherally to others. There probably are issues around survival that motivate all, and about which we all would think deeply. However, based on experiences in the peace movement, we believe that the majority of the people are persuaded peripherally on nearly all issues of social importance. Most people in the United States are relatively isolated from information about geography, history and political science. Intellectual isolation leads to a focus on personal and family survival. Also the US social system encourages a desire for consumption leaving little time for worry about larger social issues like global warming.

This is probably true also in other nations and cultures. When life is difficult the individual's life is burned up by worry over immediate survival. Peripheral people feel that they must trust political, scientific, or religious leaders with getting it right on the larger issues of life. If this picture is accurate, it follows that the condition of humanity can be used both for manipulation or enlightenment. Manipulation can be seen in the use of simple heuristics in political persuasion. National leaders may argue "you are with us or against us in the war on terrorism" as president Bush is fond of saying. Flag waving is a simple heuristic used to create similar categorization of loyal supporters and disloyal dissenters. At the moment, the sheer number of casualties and utter destruction in Iraq, Lebanon, and the Gaza are present simple heuristic ideas that convey emotional messages of victimization that most people understand, and it has convinced many that there must be a better way. Of course, it would have been better for the world if leaders and the people had had the education and motivation to use the central route. Then we could have evaluated in advance what were after all predictable consequences of creating a war.

Research has supported the two-route model (Petty, Cacioppo, & Goldman, 1981). Some messages prompt us to evaluate carefully when relevant to our motivation. Other messages are accepted on superficial cues, since we have little motivation and/or feel that the issue lacks personal relevance. Those interested in peace in the world would like to see the central route used, because only central persuasion is enduring (Chaiken, 1980; Eagly & Chaiken, 1993; Mackie, 1987;

Petty, Haugtvedt, & Smith, 1995; Petty & Wegener, 1998). The lack of central persuasion is the theoretical explanation why people do not learn from history and why they repeat their mistakes. We live in an era of war and calamities, and the people of the world give the appearance of having learned nothing from previous conflicts. The public may now be convinced that the current conflicts are unacceptable, but what of the next war is on the horizon? As long as people are only persuaded peripherally to establish peace, they will always be subject to new manipulations of fears and to appeals to chauvinism.

Summary

Nearly all human interaction involves some form of persuasion. Whether in the family where parents seek improvements in children, or at the work place where the supervisor tries to motivate more productivity, persuasion is everywhere. Persuasion is neither good nor bad; it depends on the goals of the persuaders. When persuasion empowers people to improve life and serves to educate, then persuasion is a positive factor in our lives. However, persuasion can also have very detrimental goals. Persuasion of people can be devoted to develop life-threatening habits, or to manipulate voters, both are examples of negative persuasion.

The Yale school of Communication carried out the early work on persuasion in social psychology. A very systematic program it examined the conditions likely to produce persuasion. The research focused on three aspects of the persuasion process: the who, what, and whom.

The who was referred to as the communicator or source of the communication. An effective communicator displays credibility defined as trustworthiness and expertise. If the persuader can communicate from a point of view of disinterest, people are more likely to believe the message. Credibility is a two way street. Those who are perceived to be credible are more believable, and those who express position closely to our own are more credible. The attractiveness of the communicator is for some recipients the critical variable. We tend to accept positions of those we like. In turn attractiveness can be defined in physical terms and by likable personality traits. The style of the communicator is also important. When the communicator is direct, displays convincing emotion, and maintains eye contact, he is persuasive.

Reference groups promote or limit the persuasiveness of the communicator. People accept or at least lean toward messages that come from the groups with

which they identify. Persuaders who come from accepted reference groups have less resistance to overcome, than speakers from outside the group. Whether the communicator will be effective, depends also on the recipient's motivation. We tend to hold fast to our positions when we are motivated, and discrepant messages are rejected or the communicator denigrated. If the dissonance created is large, we pay less attention to the communicator, and look for all that might be unfair or unreasonable in the message. For those not greatly motivated by the issue, the attractiveness of the communicator is all-important.

The what of a communication refers to the message itself. Effective messages are logically presented, and must establish the relevance of the issue to the recipient. Since the communicator wants change, it is important that the message conveys a sense of personal responsibility. High quality messages allow the recipient to come to his/her own conclusions, often using humor and presenting counter arguments to the opposing side's point of view. Some of the early research sought to examine primacy and recency effects in two sided communications. Which message had the greatest effect, that presented first, or the second message? Findings are complex, but nevertheless have important consequences for trial courts and political debates.

Fear is an important motivation leading to acceptance of the message and behavior change. However, fear is only effective to a point. If it becomes too intense, the anxiety aroused causes the individual to develop ego defenses and deny the message. It is useful to arouse fear in persuading people of the consequences of destructive health habits, but at the same time it is important to offer concrete advice on how to change. Emotional arousal is useful with the less educated, as the emotional approach emphasizes the liking qualities of the communicator. Likewise moods have been found to be important for some recipients. People will often make snap decisions when in a good mood. That may be one reason for president Reagan's ability to get elected, as he supposedly elicited a happy mood in some voters.

If we want to persuade people to change, the message must be somewhat discrepant. If only a little discrepant, the communication will offer no urgency, if too much it will be seen as preposterous. Messages intermediate in discrepancy are most effective. Persuasion does not depend on the message alone. Persuaders seen as credible are able to persuade more discrepant positions.

People who think and have a need for cognition will be persuaded by high quality

messages. Other recipients are, however, persuaded by characteristics of the communicator rather than the message. The communicator's attractiveness becomes more important than the content of the message. Society and culture may also affect the acceptability of a message. Some cultures are individualistic, other societies display cooperative community based values. Effective messages are matched to the underlying cultural values.

Does repetition of the message aid acceptance? Under some conditions repetition increases familiarity and the processing of the message. However, repeated messages may also become tedious and annoying. The answer to the problem is to present the same message, but with varied presentation. Motivation to listen is an important factor in persuasion. Repetition and the length of the arguments may have utility for the uninformed whereas the logic and strength of the message is of greater significance for informed recipients. To motivate depends on our ability to match the message to the underlying functions of the attitude function. Some recipients also have a regulatory leaning that predisposes them to accept messages that either seeks to prevent negative outcomes, or encourage positive goals. Part of motivation is also the cognitive needs of recipients. For those with cognitively based attitudes, logical facts are more effective.

The various media to convey messages can be person to person, using television and vivid media, or in written form like posters. Written communications are only useful with motivated audiences. Simplistic repetition is more effective with the passive silent majority in our society. Some research has indicated, however, that personal influence is effective in both voting behavior, and in improving health habits. Perhaps all persuasion is personal. If we accept Katz's two-process theory, persuasion goes from the media to opinion leaders, and from these to personal persuasion. Personal communication is in any event most effective, as are those communications, which by vividness communicate personal relevance of the issue.

Effective communication depends also on the audience, the whom. All people are persuaded within a latitude of acceptance. The personality, mood, age, and gender are all significant audience characteristics in communication. Some recipients of persuasive messages feel cognitively involved in the issue, others have no interest. Those who get pleasure from thinking, who have a need for cognition, are persuaded more by strong logical and fact based arguments. As we have noted, changing mood of the audience may also affect persuasion. The mood

of fear generated in recent years affects leaders and followers alike, and makes persuasion of stringent security laws more likely. Charismatic leaders know how to manipulate the emotional needs of their followers. They have been able to create mass hysteria, suicide, and destruction on a worldwide scale. The importance of mood on the audience has been shown at more simplistic levels, such as the influence of music on persuasion. Effective communicators match the message to the mood of the audience.

Recipients vary in commitment to positions. Those who are strongly committed will employ dissonance reduction when confronted with discrepant messages. The strongly committed have a narrow range of acceptable discrepancy messages. The level of commitment is based on whether the attitude is learned second hand through the experiences of others, or if the position is based on personal events. Victims of bigotry have stronger commitments to tolerance than those who have only read about our history since tolerance is personally relevant. Again, effective messages have personal relevance. Involved people are not concerned with what others might think since they are focusing attention on the issue and the proposed change.

For the unmotivated, the attractiveness of the communicator affects a variety of behaviors, including persuasion of impulsive voting behavior. Many people lack the background to reflect on issues, and do not have the cognitive skills to evaluate decisions. The political manipulators in society understand these cognitive deficits, and are informed about voter likes and dislikes. If we want to see democracy work, we need to stimulate thinking to avoid the simple heuristic political behavior common to society in the western world. Other audience characteristics also affect persuasion. These include level of intelligence, self-esteem, and authoritarianism. These personality constructs affect whether recipients defer to status and authority.

Advertisement, the practice of persuasion, is central to modern capitalist societies. At times the media can serve the needs of society. Public announcement campaigns have been directed toward the reduction of substance abuse. Success has been observed in a number of studies in which children develop negative attitudes toward illegal drugs, tobacco, and alcohol abuse. At the same time, advertisement by tobacco companies in the US - those advertisements are no longer allowed in most European countries like Netherlands and Norway - has increased the rates of smoking among women. The effectiveness of tobacco ads

depends on the skillful use of the desire for gender equality among women. Some tobacco ads persuade women that smoking demonstrates female equality. The reality is that lung cancer among women in the US is now approaching that of men.

While tobacco consumption has dramatically fallen in the western world, the purveyors of tobacco have opened new markets in Eastern Europe and Asia. Counter arguments can be employed with effectiveness against the tobacco advertisers, and those who cause other problems to health. Also forewarning our children of the seduction of glamorous advertisement has proven effective. Advertisement serves the process of distraction when healthy models smoke to divert attention away from the truly disastrous outcomes of habitual smoking.

Those interested in improving the health habits of society can help young people resist the lure of the advertiser by inoculation and support. A social network can help young people resist. Studies have also shown that the presentation of weak arguments in favor of smoking or other negative habits may encourage counter arguments. The weak arguments are a form of vaccination that inoculates individuals against future persuasion attempts. Role-playing employing the inoculation process has been successful in a number of studies.

Selling the consumer is the object of the billions of dollars spent on ads every year. The purpose is to get attention and establish product familiarity, and is an indirect way of encouraging consumption. Advertisers also use classical conditioning to associate the product with human happiness. As we know, happy moods persuade. Selling political candidates is for power. In the US system, the process is mainly about being elected and then reelected. Many people do not have the background to critically examine political ads. Political manipulators understand this, and they know something about the likes and dislikes in a population. These facts allow for political manipulation on a large scale, so we develop in the course of history the best democracy that money can buy. In close elections, money decides the outcome. The very negativity may discourage voters from participation. Subliminal influences can be a matter of concern, a form of manipulation that we cannot dismiss as the effect has been demonstrated in the laboratory.

The media creates the broad framework for culture and social behavior. Why do anorexic models have such an effect on young women? They are not healthy

looking, and should be pitied for their lack of proper nutrition. Yet the media, both printed and television, have succeeded in making abnormal thinness glamorous and attractive. In a parallel way, the media has also succeeded in making smoking attractive to new addicts, who do not understand the long-term consequences of the habit. The mere frequency of news determines the importance of issues in society. Whether energy dependency is seen as significant, depends directly on how frequently it is mentioned in news broadcasts. The media sets the cultural agenda. Does it set limits on individual behavior? Some research showed that the presentation of negative gender stereotypes inhibited females in unrelated achievement.

Cultist persuasion has been a concern to society during the last century. Some cults have promoted suicide, and political cults like the Nazi's wrought destruction on a worldwide scale. Cults get people to believe by making behavioral demands and encouraging followers to proselyte others. Charismatic leaders are especially effective in manipulating the emotional needs of their followers. The naive are likely to follow, as in this world of uncertainty many people have a desire for comprehensive solutions to life's perplexing problems.

The chapter concludes with a discussion of theories of persuasion. Kelman proposed a theory of processes of persuasion. These included compliance, identification and internalization. In more recent times, we have observed the development of theories of persuasion routing. In the Elaboration Likelihood Model and the Heuristic-Systematic model, people take one of two routes depending on motivation and knowledge about the issue. The central route is taken when the recipient is motivated, and involves depth of thinking and reflection about the issue. The peripheral route is taken by the less motivated. In the peripheral route the recipient pays less attention to the message, and is persuaded more by the superficial framework of communication. What is the length and frequency of the argument, and how credible and attractive the communicator. The peripheral route is taken when people are uninformed, uneducated, tired, or distracted. Those interested in a better society and the health of the world must do what is possible to encourage central persuasion. Democracy and a positive future depend on the success of the effort.