



The Power of Persuasion: How We're Bought and Sold

By Robert V. Levine

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The Power of Persuasion: How We're Bought and Sold By Robert V. Levine

"An engaging, highly readable survey of the sophisticated methods of persuasion we encounter in various situations. From television to telemarketing and from self-deception to suicide cults, Levine takes a hard look at all the ways we attempt to persuade each other--and how and why they work (or don't). . . . The next time you wonder what possessed you to pay \$50 for a medallion commemorating the series finale of Friends, you'll know where to turn."
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"Levine puts [his] analysis in the service of his real mission--to arm the reader against manipulation."
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"This wonderful book will change the way you think and act in many realms of your life."
--Philip Zimbardo former president, American Psychological Association

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

This valuable and nonacademic guide reveals the extent to which we are surrounded by persuasion, and how we can resist. Levine (*A Geography of Time*), a professor of psychology at Cal State Fresno, opens by demonstrating that all of us (including himself) can be persuaded under the right circumstances. He goes on to study financial manipulation and the use of the sense of obligation (which exists in all cultures, even if it is most strongly visible in Japan), and then proceeds to a nuts-and-bolts analysis of salesmanship by describing what he learned and did (and had done to him) as an automobile salesman. He offers an admirably concise and unemotional analysis of the famous Milgram experiment, involving the (claimed) administration of ever-stronger electric shocks to test the impulse to obedience. Inevitably, he moves to cults, the Moonies and the ultimate persuasion horror story, Jonestown. Not so inevitably, he avoids hysteria and demonization, even of Jim Jones, and points out that brute force is required at the extreme end of the persuasion spectrum. Levine's final chapter offers ways of dealing with unwelcome persuasion while remaining part of a society in which some persuasion is part of almost any social interaction. The final results are bout as far as possible from the shrill Hidden Persuaders tradition or the cult deprogrammers who become cult gurus themselves-and quite persuasive about the author's credentials, common sense and ethics.

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Review

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Review

"If you read this book, you'll be privy to the tactics of those who wish to part you from your money, your freedom, your time. How you use this knowledge is up to you."

—Ellen B. Tabor, M.D., *Psychiatric Services* magazine

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