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Six Tools of Persuasion

What makes us more likely to respond to a request? In 1984, Robert Cialdini published six tendencies of human behavior that tend to result in a positive response. Those same six are still very true today:

- **Reciprocation** – Feeling an obligation to reciprocate when given something.
- **Commitment and consistency** – Once we make a decision, we are reluctant to change.
- **Social Validation** – Following the decisions of others, i.e., relying on what others do.
- **Liking** – Preferring to say yes to people we like.
- **Authority** – Obeying authority figures against our better judgment.
- **Scarcity** – Finding items and information more attractive if they are perceived to be scarce.

Next time you are in a situation where someone is trying to persuade you to do something, stop and identify the psychological tools they are using. Have you been given something for free? Is the individual urging you to stay with an earlier commitment? Are the actions or statements of others being used to validate the decision? Do you find yourself liking the individual? Are authorities cited to support your decision? Is there the threat of scarcity? If you don't buy now, will you be able to later?

If you notice any of the six tools above being used to manipulate your response rather than facts, it may be best to step back and say no until you have a chance to think it over.

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