

Secrets of the Darkside

By Jason Clarke, Minds at Work

Speaker's Notes

Preshow intro	
<p>Thank you for your time ladies and gentlemen.</p> <p>I'm flattered that so many of you made it here tonight but I'm not surprised... after all, I'm here to reveal some of the secrets of manipulation and seduction and <u>I wouldn't be much of a practitioner if I didn't know how to draw a crowd.</u></p>	Title
The truth is that no-one can resist a good secret – I guess that's the first secret.	
Forgive me if I continually refer to my notes. I was going to give do this workshop off the top of my head but those of you who know me realise that would mean we'd never get out of here alive... the notes are here to keep me on time and better still, on track.	
<p>Actually, tonight is a really a sequel to an earlier address given at the AAEE conference in January and I guess like all successful sequels it should begin with a quick recap of what went before.</p> <p>So, if you missed the first instalment, I'll give you a quick digest of what was covered... if you've heard it before then I beg your indulgence for the next few minutes.</p>	
<p>Ok, so here's the gist. Our brains are organisms, natural adaptive networks designed to rewire our behaviour in response to a changing environment. In that sense, we are capable of rewriting our own software, an ability that has allowed us to live just about anywhere, do just about anything and digest just about everything.</p> <p>We are born to wonder, to dream, to learn, to explore. We are thinking beings. It is a fundamental part of who we are. In the first six years of it's life, a child masters at least one language with no form of tuition, a learning feat that he or she would be hard pressed to repeat in later life.</p>	Kepler Mind image
But all that changes when you feed a mind into an industrial system of education. Plutarch said that the mind was a fire to be sparked, not a vessel to be filled, yet ask any teacher what they spend their time doing and you see that the fill and drill method of education is bigger than ever.	Plutarch school
It's a system that we trace back to the industrial revolution, the moment when the principles of standardisation, centralised control and streamlined processes sent the world on a one-way conveyor belt to mass production. Our schools were created to feed the factories and offices, to deliver certified, quality assured wage slaves into a social machine.	

<p>How to think for ourselves becomes less important than how to pass tests, how to beat the exam. Assessment hijacks fulfilment, conformity suppresses curiosity. We become praise junkies, addicted to success, terrified of failure.</p>	
<p>As a process for producing corporate lawyers and mechanics, orthodontists and actuaries, business development managers and quantity surveyors it can't be beat.</p> <p>But if you want to see what it does to a working mind, just sift through the reject pile sometime.</p>	rejects
<p>Einstein thought it was nothing short of a miracle that modern methods of instruction didn't completely destroy our curiosity... and although I believe in miracles I don't think we should count on 'em.</p>	quote
<p>You can see how easily please the teacher becomes please the boss. Score points. Attract praise, deflect blame.</p> <p>Don't challenge authority, don't question the system and <u>for god's sake don't stand near the fan</u>... and thus another generation of robots marches off to work the great economic machine.</p>	lessons
<p>From that point on, they will swim in a mainstream of advertising and marketing. Through careful application of a handful of principles of human psychology, an elite of manipulators will create in us irrational desires for stuff we don't need. To afford them we'll need money we don't want, so we'll work jobs we don't enjoy for people we don't like.</p>	consume
<p>And at the end of each day at the treadmill, we'll comfort ourselves with more white goods and happy meals and other lifestyle options. Sure, it means consuming the planet, but hey, I work hard for a living, don't I deserve the very best?</p>	
<p>Education sets us up, advertising sell us up the river. Once every century or so, a tyrant comes along and takes us to the brink of insanity and we follow, because we are all but incapable of independent thought.</p>	
<p>In short, our proposition was this: this roomful of people and one or two roomfuls like it maybe the only sentient, thinking organisms available, at least in the foreseeable future. Our attempts to reform education, while essential, will not bear fruit for another generation by which time there may be no future left. Even then it is questionable whether today's young minds will survive the triple onslaught of adolescence, peer pressure and global brand merchandising.</p>	summary
<p>The battle for the public mind has never been fiercer and it is a battle the environmental educators are losing... not surprising since they don't even know how the game is played.</p>	5 mins
<p>Ok, so that's the story so far. Now let's understand the Power of the Dark</p>	Power

Side.	
<p>Every time you upgrade your computer software, the upgrade is programmed to search out all previous versions of itself and erase them to avoid unnecessary conflict and confusion.</p> <p>Unfortunately, our brains are the result of a very long software development process spanning several million years. In fact, we have at least three different brains, one bolted on top of the other, any one capable of cancelling the other two out given the correct stimulus.</p>	brain
<p>At the base of our skulls is the reptilian or 'R' complex. A tiny hamburger patty of brain stem just big enough to handle the <u>four Fs – feeding, fleeing, fighting... and the other one</u>. It covers survival and basic issues of territory and hierarchy. <u>In strictly software terms this is Windows 140 million BC.</u></p>	
<p>Of course, the software was being improved all the time, but major breakthroughs had to wait for larger skull sizes, usually in response to other environmental triggers. The limbic system sometimes referred to as the 'mammalian brain' grew out of the primitive reptile brain and brought with it emotions and the first signs of social tribalism, notions of family and friends.</p>	
<p>40 million years ago we launch the top of the line – the neocortex, or 'new brain'. Seat of intellect and knowledge, home to our imagination and abstract thought, it is our crowning achievement and the secret of our success as a species.</p>	
<p>140 million years of software development in a 2.5 litre brainpan – a mess of conflicting programming and obsolete subroutines. While the system is under no particular stress, the higher functions provide the command structure for the rest of the network. But as soon as the brain feels itself under attack the older, more primitive servers hijack the entire program architecture.</p>	
<p>What Abraham Maslow identified as the 'Hierarchy of Needs' gives professional manipulators a control panel of buttons to push... and we obey.</p>	
<p>What makes these master switches so powerful is that we refuse to believe that they exist. I'm not sure why this is, but I suspect a lot has to do with the Old Testament notion that humans were somehow separate and superior to animals... it's been over 100 years since Ivan Pavlov demonstrated automatic behaviour in dogs but social scientists are yet to admit that the same phenomena is alive and well in human beings.</p>	
<p>Mind you, advertisers were right onto it from day one.</p>	3 mins
<p>Let's see how these controls work. At the base of the brain is the master override switch – the Survival button. This was Hitler's favourite, guaranteed to get people's attention.</p>	?
<p>The famous Nuremberg trials of the 1950's, set up to bring Nazi war criminals to justice found itself ensnared in a much thornier question – what did it take to turn happy, ordinary people into raving homicidal xenophobes?</p>	?

<p>Unfortunately, the answer seemed to be: not very much. If anything, the Nazis had proved once and for all that while everything is fine all men are brothers... but at the first sign of trouble it's you against me... and frankly I don't like your chances.</p>	
<p>And here's the terrifying truth of it all – the first sign of trouble could be just about anything, in this case a falling deutschmark and spiralling unemployment. In short, an economic downturn triggered by a punitive Treaty of Versailles gave the Nazis the excuse they needed to take the world to the brink of insanity.</p>	
<p>The real power of this button lies in the fact that you can abstract the concept of survival from your own personal issues of life or death and expand it out to include your family, your tribe, your nation... even the symbolic 'survival' of a football team can stir up extraordinary outbursts of territorial violence.</p>	
<p>Whereas nature has repeatedly taught us that we are all the one entity, subtle and interdependent, the survival switch deep in our crocodilian brain separates us into sub-humans and master race, whether the issue at stake is the division of Europe or the outcome of a soccer match.</p>	
<p>In 1969 El Salvador and Honduras actually went to war after their two teams clashed on the soccer field. The war went for three weeks, destroyed airports and cities in both countries and left over 2000 people dead. Don't ask me who won the match... I don't want to get 'em started again.</p>	
<p>You have to use this button sparingly – it's the Atomic Bomb of psychological triggers. Adman Siimon Reynolds used it when he single-handedly set our understanding of AIDS back 3 decades and advertisers have been hitting the doomsday switch ever since... subsequently reducing its impact.</p> <p>If you drink and drive you will die. If you smoke you will die. If you take drugs you will die... the campaigns get more gruesome and the target audience more and more resistant.</p>	start
<p>Almost as powerful as the survival button but capable of repeated use is the Security button. Wired directly to our paranoia and uncertainty, it's used to sell everything from insurance and superannuation to locks, tyres and even sugared breakfast cereals.</p>	
<p>Are your kids getting enough Riboflavin? You know, if they're heading off to school without a proper breakfast it may result in lower concentration levels, reduced performance and ultimately, lower grades. Of course, that means they'll be unemployable...</p>	
<p>Will you have enough to retire on? Do you know where your kids are right now? Is your food safe? <u>Tonight on Today Tonight, the report no parent can afford to miss.</u> It's a trigger we can push over and over again...</p>	

<p>Once someone has taken care of their survival and security issues, the next thing on their mind is human Companionship and of course, Sex. If you've ever wondered how the three major women's magazines can run the exact same story month after month then you'll know how this works.</p>	
<p>Actually, a sealed section called 'sex secrets of the stars' is a sure fire hit, because secrets trigger the insecurity button, while sex pushes the switch above it. The love and sex button can be hit indefinitely, and we fall for it every time. The people we use to add sexuality and the promise of love to almost any product, be it a car or a dream kitchen are called 'models' and it's an interesting symptom of the power of this trigger that we revere these people for their part in our seduction.</p>	
<p>This is also where the notion of 'cool' probably sits... perhaps one of the strongest mass triggers of the post war world.</p>	
<p>All the really successful religious dogmas of history have spared us all the trouble of having to think for ourselves by presenting us with a simple dualism of Good verses Evil. Label something Good and we rush to do it. Condemn it as Evil and we repent.</p> <p>Consumerism is just the latest version of the same old story.</p>	
<p>In this new opium of the masses Right and Wrong are reinterpreted into Cool and <u>So</u> Not Cool. But unlike concepts of Good and Evil, these new opposites are interchangeable and can be flicked on and off as fast as you like.</p> <p>Yesterday's Cool is today's Daggy... and tomorrow's Wicked.</p>	
<p>As we travel up into the brain we discover 'Status.' Much weaker than sex, but easily linked to it for more appeal, especially for men. Status is the basic territorial instinct but supercharged on steroids – the notion that everything is simply not enough.</p>	
<p>As long as you see yourself as somewhere in between the dirt poor and the filthy rich you are susceptible to an endless parade of glittering new objects of desire.</p>	
<p>Why do people sleep outside cinemas just to be the first in their street to see the latest movie? And why is the movie itself little more than a 90 minute commercial for a new line of merchandising? This school holidays we've got Tomb Raider, a movie-length ad for a video game and Pokemon, a movie-length ad for a range of swap cards and action figures.</p>	
<p>We'll drive our kids to the multiplex cinema in an all-terrain urban assault vehicle, keeping our eye on the time using a watch designed for use on the moon. We'll drive around looking for the closest parking spot because even though the kids are wearing Olympic track shoes computer-designed to trim 8/100ths of a second of the world sprint record, they can't be stuffed walking.</p>	

<p>Be the first. Be the best. Have the most. Shop 'til you drop. This is the easiest button to press and the best bit is that you can hold it down for as long as you like.</p> <p>We are participants in a way of life that represents 20% of the world's population yet devours 80% of its resources, and it seems the more we hear about third world starvation the hungrier we get for our next Happy Meal.</p>	
<p>The last switch represents the ultimate need for all human beings – the need for Meaning. Why are we here? What's the point? What am I for? This is the part of brain that lights up when a child asks 'what is the Dark made out of?</p> <p>This is the highest of the functions but it is a button that never gets pushed, and for good reason. In a culture that insists – in the words of one global marketer, 'Just Do It' – the last thing anyone wants is to answer tricky little questions like 'why?'</p>	
<p>A thinking culture would have no need for casinos or celebrity gossip, no irrational desire for cosmetic liposuction or self-help books, no insatiable hunger for imported sports cars or <u>euro-dance megamix hiphop...whatever that is.</u></p>	5 mins 33
<p>And we are willing participants in this process of addiction, for we have embraced the concept of convenience as the ultimate expression of status – there is nothing that we will not sacrifice for convenience. Shake 'n bake, heat 'n eat... sure it tastes like styrofoam but it was so quick!</p> <p>Even the marketing gurus at McDonalds might be trying to tell us something with their latest offering... say it out loud and listen to what you're ordering.</p>	McWrap
<p>If we'll eat McCrap because we can't be bothered cooking, what will we swallow if we can't be bothered thinking? Perhaps freedom from thought is the greatest convenience of all.</p>	Hitler
<p>Few people appreciate the massive investment behind our consumer culture. In 1907, economist Simon Nelson Patten declared: "The new morality does not consist in saving, but in expanding consumption"</p>	
<p>40 years and two world wars later, retailing analyst Victor Lebow suggested: "Our enormously productive economy demands that we make consumption our way of life...that we seek our spiritual satisfaction in consumption. We need things consumed, burned up, worn out, replaced and discarded at an ever-increasing rate."</p>	
<p>We have discarded just about everything except this particular way of thinking. In 1953, the Chairman of President Eisenhower's Council of Economic Advisors stated: "The American Economy's Ultimate Purpose is to produce more consumer goods."</p>	

20 years ago Lawrence Summers, the Chief Economist of the World Bank announced: “There are no limits to the carrying capacity of the Earth.”	
And this just in from the White House... Bush administration spokesman Ari Fleischer said earlier this month, and I quote:	
“The president believes that high energy consumption is an American Way Of Life and that it should be the goal of policy makers to protect the American Way Of Life – the American Way Of Life is a blessed one.”	2 min
The global advertising budget is currently around \$100 per minute for every single person on earth. Anyone in here earning \$100 a minute? Didn't think so.	
That kind of money will get you each of us exposed to 2000 messages, brands and slogans in any 24hr period.	
That's a lot of messages. What are they saying? You don't have enough. You don't get enough. You aren't enough.	
What's more, the Adspend is outgrowing all other forms of world economic growth by one third. And with good reason. David Lubars, senior honcho with the Omnicom Group explains why: “Consumers are like roaches. You spray 'em and you spray 'em and they get immune after a while.”	
And think about this: As more and more of us are replaced by microchips from Taiwan, the need for producers will be economically rationalised into oblivion. The first personal computer took 3 years to build. The most recent one comes off the assembly line in a little under 3 minutes, untouched by human hands.	The machine
Already the US light globe industry - the entire industry mind – employs just three people... and I think one of them is a casual.	
When the work is all gone, what are we for then?	
If all this sounds like bad news then let me offer you a ray of hope. There is a weakness to the Dark Side, and it is this: although you cannot hope to match it for sheer size and spending power, its secrets are easily mastered and harnessed for good as well as evil.	
So here goes. Are you ready?	
	secrets
The secret of Reciprocity – known in the sales game as the old give and take...and take...and take.	Start

<p>This is the trap of mutual obligation that has us all sending virtual strangers the same Unicef greeting card they sent us. It underpins our Christmas and holiday shopping, fuels every instance of political pork-barrelling and vote buying.</p>	
<p>It's the reason why women know not to trust any man who offers to pay for their drinks.</p>	
<p>Reciprocity is the law that says 'I do you a favour and I own you'. But is it really as powerful as all that?</p>	
<p>The Hare Krishnas had a problem. When they took their religion to the streets in the early 70's they discovered that while they were good at attracting attention they were hopeless at attracting donations. People enjoyed the bells and the dancing but only at a safe distance. Of course, the krishnas realised this but weren't in a position to dress or behave differently... the gods would never forgive them.</p>	
<p>Then they hit upon a strategy that was guaranteed to get donations, even from people who didn't like them. Here's how it works.</p>	
<p>A sole devotee approaches you in a public space, say an airport. Before you can say a word they offer you a small gift, either a copy of the Bhagavad Gita or a simple flower quickly pinned to your lapel.</p> <p>Try as you might, the devotee refuses to take the gift back, and with good reason. For having unwittingly received a gift in full view of a room full of strangers, you are now bound by the rule of reciprocity by which you must either publicly demonstrate your ingratitude or respond to the devotees suggestion of a small donation.</p>	
<p>Studies conducted at Chicago airport showed that people almost invariably accepted the gift, however reluctantly, offered a handful of loose change (if only to make the embarrassment go away) then tossed the gift into the nearest bin... where it was retrieved and recirculated by a waiting devotee.</p>	
<p>Think about that. The power of reciprocity is so great that it can be triggered by a gift so unwanted that it gets chucked into the nearest bin.</p>	
<p>Charities use the unsolicited gift tactic through junk mailing – by redefining what is essentially promotional merchandising as gifts, they not only exploit the rule of reciprocity, they get a healthy tax break as well. The Disabled American Veterans organization reports that while an ordinary appeal letter usually produces an 18% response rate, the inclusion of a cheap token – even a handful of adhesive personalised address labels – pushes the response to 35%.</p>	
<p>Retailers have employed a similar strategy for decades. The free sample/cooking demonstration tactic is a proven method for boosting sales, particularly if the sampling involves some physical evidence of the sample – say, a plastic cup or plate or even better, a toothpick. Left holding physical</p>	

<p>proof that you have enjoyed the generosity of a stranger you are forced to accept your obligation, especially since the friendly salesperson has deliberately not provided any kind of bin to throw away the evidence.</p>	
<p>A supermarket owner in Indiana pushed this idea further by inviting customers to slice off their own sample in front of the salesperson. He found that the added sense of moral obligation could sell up to 1,000 pounds of quite ordinary cheese in a single afternoon.</p>	
<p>The Amway manual describes a free sample hamper called the BUG. The hamper is left with a potential customer for up to 72 hours, with no obligation to buy... at least officially. Their research shows that at the end of the trial period customers buy around half of the contents of the BUG.</p>	
<p>And here's the kicker... the Amway rep actually tells the prospective customer that that's what's going to happen... and we take it as his confidence in the quality of the product.</p>	
<p>His confidence is genuine enough... but has less to do with what's in the product and more to do with what's in the prospect's head. Free termite inspections, free home-safety appraisals, free investment seminars are probably the fastest growing scam of the new millennium.</p>	
<p>A study conducted by Cornell University in the 1960's measured how a small favour could be used to ask for a big one.</p> <p>Two students are left alone in a room to fill out a form. During a short break, one of the students (actually an undercover research assistant) leaves the room and returns a short time later to resume the work. At the end of the assignment the research student asks his colleague for a favour – to buy a book of raffle tickets at 25 cents a piece. This process is repeated over and over with a large sample group.</p>	
<p>The experiment is then repeated with a second sample group, but this time there is a slight difference in the process. The research student returns from his break as before, but this time he is carrying two bottles of Coca Cola... one for him and one for his colleague, if he or she wants it. There is no further conversation and in all other respects the experiment continues as before.</p>	
<p>The study looked at the number of raffle tickets the research student was able to sell in each study. The first result was that students from the 'Coke' sample consistently bought twice as many tickets as the first group. In an exit study, both groups were asked to rate how much they liked or disliked the research student and it was discovered that although the 'Coke' group liked him better than the first group did, there was no correlation between the degree to which they liked him and the number of tickets that were bought.</p>	
<p>That means that even people who did not like him at all bought just as many tickets as those who did like him – the tickets were bought in response to an unsolicited favour.</p>	

<p>It's interesting also that no-one refused the Coke – after all, the guy had already spent his money. Yet all the genuinely free choices belonged to the researcher. He defined the initial favour – the Coke – and the return favour – the raffle tickets.</p>	
<p>But get this. The experiment was conducted in the 1960's when the price of Coke in the US was 10 cents. The raffle tickets cost two and half times that much each, yet the average student bought two tickets and some bought as many as seven.</p>	
<p>That means the difference between the unsolicited favour and the return favour represented an average return of 500%... not a bad profit in anyone's language.</p>	
<p>Girl guides use a subtle variation of this principle during their cookie drives. The girl guide is trying to sell you tickets to a special fund raiser – not only will this cost more than you are prepared to give, but it means writing off a perfectly good evening. Not everyone has the courage to refuse a small child, but on this occasion you somehow manage.</p>	
<p>By rejecting the offer, you have unwittingly set yourself up for another reciprocal ambush known as the Reasonable Concession. 'Gosh darn' says the guide 'Well if you don't want to come to our special show, would you at least buy some cookies?'</p>	
<p>She's gotcha. Through the mechanism of the Reasonable Concession, she's done you a favour – she's offered you an out.</p>	
<p>Psychologists call this the contrast principle. We perceive everything only in comparison to other things... so whoever controls the comparisons controls the perception.</p>	
<p>And it works for more than just cookies. Let's consider something that costs big bikkies – like a house. Probably the biggest single purchase you'll ever make.</p>	
<p>Real estate agents use the contrast principle by keeping a few run down properties on their books. Called 'spoilors' these dumps are first houses shown to a prospective buyer with the comment... "Well, that's about typical for your price range in this area I'm afraid..."</p>	
<p>You're then shown some nicer homes that sadly are a good deal more expensive than you can afford. A surprising number of people buy at this point, fearful that things will only get worse.</p>	
<p>If however you have the intestinal fortitude to keep looking, the agent might be lucky enough to stumble onto the perfect house – much nicer than you had come to expect and although it costs more than you have its nowhere near as pricey as the last places you saw.</p>	
<p>Not only does the contrast principle kick in here, but you're also feeling obligated to the agent who had to work that much harder to find some sort of concession for you.</p>	

A Canadian study went looking for volunteers to participate in community service. One group were asked to make a one-off donation of two hours help in a community mental health agency. 50% of those who volunteered showed up.	
The second group were asked to make the same two hour donation every week for at least two years. Almost all refused. Only then were they presented with the one-off option as a concession. 85% of those who volunteered showed up.	
Blood banks have used the same 'big ask, little ask' strategy to boost repeat donations from 43% to 84% but for me the most powerful example was an experience I had at the hands of a master manipulator.	
This guy was a bagman, scrounging money from people wandering up and down a fashionable street somewhere in the latte belt. He starts predictably enough with "Excuse me mate, I'm in a bit of trouble..." but what comes next is a stroke of pure genius.	
He says "I need some help with my colostomy bag... I think it's burst." He lifts his shirt to show me what I suspect is a vacuum cleaner bag but to be honest I don't want to look too closely.	
Suddenly I realise I am in the presence of greatness. Not only has he understood my deepest desire not to think about this particular aspect of life, not only has he understood that I would do almost anything to make him and his story go away, but he has set up the dread of a really big ask without actually asking for anything. Brilliant.	
So imagine my incredible relief when his next words are "So if you could spare me a few bucks for the tram..." I gave him money for the tram, some extra for a cup of coffee and a roll of sticky tape.	
So, in summary: A little favour is almost impossible to refuse A little favour can demand a big favour in return A big ask is the perfect set up for a little ask It works no matter how big or small the issue It works whether or not people like you	
What is the big ask in environmental education? Is it to care? To think? To get involved? What little ask could easily be switched in its place? How many ways could someone commit to environmental action whether they give a stuff or not?	10 mins
The secret of liking	
I said the rule of reciprocity works even if people don't like you. That's not to say it doesn't work better if they do.	start
After all, that's how we buy everything from used cars to world leaders. There are literally hundreds of studies which show that a candidate's tie and	

<p>hair style are much bigger determinants of their political success than anything they might actually say.</p>	
<p>The political analysts who predicted a Nixon landslide in the 1960 US Presidential election based their conclusions on careful polling after Nixon's famous debate with young hopeful John F Kennedy. All research showed that Nixon was the more intelligent, eloquent and informed of the two men and that the majority of people polled declared a clear win to the Republican.</p>	
<p>What the researchers failed to take into account was the fact that a greater number of Americans watched the debate on television, still something of a novelty in 1960. The TV audience gave the debate to Kennedy, though none could really say why.</p>	
<p>Of course, we know why. For although Nixon had coherent policies and a clear vision for the future, JFK had lovely hair, a nice smile and a much better tie.</p>	
<p>In short, the radio audience didn't see how Nixon could lose because they didn't see Nixon.</p>	
<p>One of the reasons why issues of attractiveness and likeability work so well is that we refuse to acknowledge them. Surveys in Canada have shown that attractive political candidates receive two and a half times more votes than plain looking ones... yet 73% of Canadian voters strongly reject any suggestion that physical appearance influenced their decision.</p>	
<p>Psychologists have extensively documented exactly the same thing in job interviews, corporate appointments and even in the legal system.</p>	
<p>A Pennsylvania study rated the physical attractiveness of 74 male defendants then tracked their progress through the courts. The good lookers got lighter sentences and were twice as likely to escape prosecution as the uglies. A separate study not only showed that good looking people get bigger payouts when damages are awarded, but that this bias was universal for both male and female jurors.</p>	
<p>Even if you're not particularly pretty, the power of like can work for you. All you need is a point of similarity with the person you're trying to con.</p>	
<p>Tests done in the 70s showed people were more likely to lend money to someone dressed the same as them in more than two thirds of all cases. The same is true with petitions – antiwar protesters were twice as likely to sign a sheet offered by someone wearing similar clothes, often without bothering to read the petition first.</p>	
<p>I saw this first hand at an Australian Dairy Corporation AGM, where a roomful of angry shareholders, many of them dairy farmers were looking to vent their anger at recent hikes in the milk levy. The meeting began badly</p>	

<p>and went downhill from there, but the lowpoint was the sneak preview of an aggressive new marketing campaign designed to boost milk sales and thereby save the industry.</p>	
<p>The farmers sat and watched in horror at the Big M girls. Perky pneumatic nymphs jumped around on the beach dressed only in shoelaces while pouring brightly coloured milk over their breasts.</p>	
<p>Far from sharing in this buoyant display of joyful innocence, the farmers were ropeable. So when the presenter of a popular ABC rural issues program walked onto the stage in dry-as-a-bone, moleskin pants and Akubra hat the organisers were expecting a bloodbath.</p>	
<p>The effect was if someone had thrown a switch. A roomful of seriously pissed-off farmers settled own to listen intently to a badly scripted monologue of no-nonsense, straight talkin'... country style.</p>	
<p>It seems we trust our friends and even people who dress like our friends.</p>	
<p>No matter what the time, every 2.7 seconds a Tupperware is party is just beginning somewhere on this planet. On any given day over \$2.5M of resealable food containers are sold in chummy little get togethers between friends and friends of friends – which is why it works so well.</p>	
<p>Salespeople try to be your friend. Tupperware and other party plan empires are built on the concept that it's easier and cheaper to turn your friends into salespeople.</p>	
<p>Many use the 'Endless chain of friendship' method whereby a satisfied customer is given the opportunity of expressing their appreciation by providing the contact details for ten friends who might also enjoy the product or service.</p>	
<p>It's a powerful trick, because it's almost impossible to refuse a sales rep armed with the name of a friend who referred him. According to the sales manual of a major door-to-door pyramid, the ability to drop the name of a friend accounts for about 50% of their sales success.</p>	
<p>When you think about it, the cult of celebrity is just an abstract extension of the liking principle. We develop very powerful relationships with very famous people who have no idea that we exist... look at the incredible outpouring of personal loss that came with the death of Princess Diana.</p>	
<p>A referendum in California asked citizens to decide about the need to limit smoking in public spaces. The issue attracted fierce lobbying and many celebrities. As one LA woman summed it up: "It's a real tough decision. They've got big stars speaking for it and big stars speaking against it. You don't know how to vote."</p>	

<p>So in summary;</p> <p>Pretty people are more influential than ugly ones People who look and talk like us are more influential than aliens Our friendships and networks are beyond rational examination Successful people are like big friends who we trust</p>	
<p>Who are the pretty people representing the planet? Are there any 'normal' respectable people involved or is everybody feral? How come you never see well dressed people defending the environment? Why is the cause always expressed by bad street theatre and uni students dressed as wizards?</p> <p>Is there a party plan for the environment? Are any of my friends involved? Is anyone seriously famous or successful involved? Who can I trust?</p>	6 min 30
<p>The secret of social proof</p>	
<p>It seems no-one in this country knows how to design an effective ticketing system. No matter what you want to do in this town it seems you have to queue up to do it.</p>	go
<p>I can remember a time when the special ropes and poles you see defining the waiting lines in banks were only brought out when the system broke down or when too many people showed up for some reason.</p>	
<p>These days they're a permanent feature, as if to say 'look how long the queues can get around here!'</p>	
<p>The Melbourne Aquarium had a lot of teething problems with its ticketing system – even when it worked it seems to take forever. On really bad days you could see the queue stretching out the door and into the street, often wrapping around the building itself. In the days when I was working on the project I'd catch a cab into the aquarium and it was always a good opportunity to see what the cabbies had heard about the place.</p>	
<p>Every driver gave me the same response. "I haven't been in yet, but judging by the length of the queues it must be pretty fantastic."</p>	
<p>To my surprise, what I saw as a failure of the ticketing system was seen by others as the triumph of a great attraction. Yet just up from the aquarium, on King Street, we see the same principle applied each and every night as a long line of upbeat partygoers wait their chance to impress the bouncers at a string of seedy nightspots. The more dismissive the bouncer, the longer the line, the more people want to get inside.</p> <p>I've actually seen it happen that a club can have a massive queue outside but absolutely no-one inside... and if the people outside knew there was nothing happening inside they wouldn't be in such a hurry to get in.</p>	
<p>You can't get a better demonstration of the power of our third secret, the secret of social proof.</p>	

<p>International sales guru Cavett Robert describes it this way: “Since 95% of people are imitators and only 5% are innovators, people are persuaded more by the actions of others than by any other proof we can offer.”</p>	
<p>This is the secret behind the world’s leading brands, the power that drives the some of the largest corporations on the planet.</p>	
<p>In an unconscious civilization like ours we look to the pack for affirmation. People consistently choose the number one selling product for no other reason than that it is the number one selling product... thereby fulfilling its claim.</p>	
<p>If we’re not sure whether or not we like something, we look around to see what other people like. This is the reason behind the Oscars, the Emmys and the Logies – once we’ve all decided on the most awarded film, album or celebrity we rush out and buy it, to be part of its success.</p>	
<p>We look for what everyone else is into so we can be into it too. This is why you’ll never see an empty collection plate at a church or an empty tip jar at a bar – the managers of these establishments know the best way to trigger off donations is to secretly throw the first few bucks in yourself, thereby creating the impression that everyone else is doing the same.</p>	
<p>It’s why fashionable Parisian opera houses of the 1820s employed professional clappers, people who could trigger an avalanche of applause at any given moment, simply by starting it off. Today virtually every TV comedy uses canned laughter and applause to assure us that what we are watching is indeed truly funny.</p>	
<p>No-one likes canned laughter, no-one believes in it for a second and many of us actually hate it, yet the evidence is irrefutable. It works. Look what happens when a comedy program has the courage to make a show without it.</p>	
<p>The first series of ‘Frontline’ was almost over before people outside of the media industry realised it was a satire. People actually jammed the ABC switchboard to complain that Frontline was the worst current affairs program they had ever seen.</p>	
<p>It happens at racetracks – the more money being bet on a horse, the better its odds are thought to be. Because the tote boards display the odds pretty much up-to-the minute, a smart operator can place a large bet on a poor horse and thereby artificially improve its odds. People see this shift happen on the tote board and rush to put their money on this horse, making it the favourite. Then all the operator has to do is bet heavily on his true pick, which is now been down rated in the rush. If it wins at these downgraded odds the operator makes a much healthier return on his bet. Its an old scam but it works every time.</p>	

The global stock market that powers the world economy works in precisely the same way, with everyone trying to predict what kind of mood Alan Greenspan might be in today. Technology stocks surge wildly up and down if any of a handful of people within Silicon Valley decide to change jobs.	
But just as social proof can stir us into action, it can also paralyse us completely,	
In 1964 the world was shocked by what became the most intensely studied murder of the century. In March of that year a young New York woman named Catherine Genovese was walking through Queens at night, when she was attacked and stabbed for no apparent reason.	
As cold blooded as it sounds, the murder was typical enough of others that year and even that night. What made it so special was that 38 of her neighbours watched it happen... over the space of half an hour. Twice the woman escaped her attacker, yet no-one even called the police until she was dead.	
The murder introduced criminologists to a concept that psychologists had known for sometime – the notion of social inertia.	
When confronted with an emergency of almost any kind, single bystanders will take action 85% of the time. But if the same emergency unfolds to a group of five or more you should expect a response only 31% of the time.	
75% of individuals who witness smoke billowing from beneath a door they happen to be passing will report it. But repeat the situation to groups of three and it gets reported only 38% of the time.	
When someone does decide to do something, we all join in, often falling over ourselves to outdo each other. But if no-one makes the first move then no-one makes any move at all.	
This tendency to adapt our behaviour to the human landscape that surrounds us took on a whole new significance in 1977.	
On November 18 th of that year 910 members of the People's Temple Sect, under the leadership of the Reverend Jim Jones quietly and methodically poisoned themselves at their compound in Guyana, apparently without any coercion.	
Survivors from the Jonestown Incident, (the most incredible demonstration of social obedience of our time) describe the scene as calm and orderly. Jones ordered the mass suicide as a 45 gallon drum containing a cocktail of cyanide and strawberry flavoured Kool-Aid was rolled into position.	
The first sect member was a young woman who calmly gave the drink to	

her baby, drank one for herself and then lay out in the field to die. Witnesses say she was followed by others who modelled themselves on her example with the same composure and dignity.	
Slaughterhouses are operated on this exact principle – the slaughterman gives great attention to the first few animals in the line, ensuring they are calm and contented before entering the chute. If he gets that bit right then whole herds will politely shuffle past him all day.	
Whereas it's easier to imagine shouting, screaming and gun fire, all the eyewitness accounts agree that the group seemed to accept the suicide as appropriate behaviour. This would also explain the bizarre tidiness of the tragedy – images from Jonestown show orderly rows of bodies like so many parked cars.	
With no-one left to drag them into position it seems they arranged themselves that way while waiting for the poison to kick in.	
So, let's see what we have: A big crowd means I'm missing out on something cool Only 5% of people innovate, the rest imitate We look for affirmation from others in the know We are socially inert, acting or not in response to others We will follow the leader, even if he or she is barking mad	8 min 22
If this is true, how can we attract crowds to environmental issues? Who can we follow? Who are the innovators? Are there leaders in the community... and if so, where?	
Now before we move on, it might be a good idea to consolidate what we have covered already before we get onto the really spooky stuff.	
You've probably been wondering why you're seated the way you are... well, here it is. It's so you can spend the next few minutes talking to the people in your cluster about what you've heard so far.	
Specifically, I'd like you nominate one of the three secrets we've discussed so far for a little exercise we're going to run shortly. When you've agreed on a secret you'd like to explore a little further, choose someone in your group to be your spokesperson.	

The secret of authority	
J Edgar Hoover was a stickler for neat typing. While he steadfastly refused to investigate the Mafia he was ruthless when it came to any typographic errors or kerning problems that passed his desk.	
Reviewing a draft of a letter he had just dictated, Hoover scratched some red pencil corrections for his typist including one that concerned the narrow use of the margin. The correction said simply 'P.S. Watch the borders'	

<p>Unfortunately, the typist took this to be part of the letter and for the next three weeks the FBI were on full alert patrolling the Mexican and Canadian borders for reasons they could not imagine.</p>	
<p>Studies have shown that 10% of all cardiac arrests in US hospitals are caused by medication errors that should have been picked up by a second pair of eyes but were ignored for fear of challenging a superior.</p>	
<p>Researchers in the Midwest made phone calls to 22 nurses stations in surgical, medical pediatric and psychiatric hospital wards. The caller identified himself as a hospital doctor and ordered the nurse who happened to pick up the phone to administer a dangerously excessive dose of an unauthorised drug to a specified patient. In all cases the nurse had never met, seen or spoken to the voice on the other end.</p>	
<p>This request violated four hospital safety codes, yet the study showed that 95% of nurses carried out the instructions until they were stopped by a research assistant.</p>	
<p>Professor Micheal Cohen of Temple University cites the example of a man admitted to an outpatient ward with severe ear ache. The physician on duty wrote out a prescription for eardrops to be administered in the right ear.</p>	
<p>But, in classic doctor shorthand the instruction read 'insert in R ear' which is why the duty nurse administered the prescribed number of ear drops into the patient's rectum.</p>	
<p>Bizarre but true. But the real mystery is why didn't the nurse question her instructions? Didn't the patient feel sufficiently motivated to challenge the treatment? According to Professor Cohen, this is the power of authority, a mental trigger that places qualified information above question, turns supervisors into gods and subordinates into robots.</p>	
<p>In post war Japan, a man dressed in a white lab coat and stethoscope and holding a clipboard walked into a busy Tokyo bank, accompanied by several similarly dressed assistants armed bottles of medicine.</p>	
<p>Identifying himself as the Chief Surgeon to General Douglas McArthur (now acting head of Japan since the surrender) the man announced a deadly outbreak of 'atomic flu' and produced a pink form which he said was an order for immediate inoculation of the entire bank and its customers.</p>	
<p>The medicine was quickly administered and within a few minutes everyone save the 'medical team' were dead from strychnine poisoning. The 'team' then robbed the bank and wandered off with a record haul.</p> <p>In short,</p>	

<p>We trust uniforms and all other symbols of authority We stop thinking when orders are given We act against our own best interests when we are told to</p>	
<p>The issue here for the environment may well be – if your audience isn't listening to you... who will they listen to?</p>	
<p>The secret of consistency</p>	
<p>One of our strangest mental triggers is our irrational desire to appear consistent at all costs. If we make a mistake, we will defend it literally, to the death.</p>	
<p>As early as 1957 studies by Festinger and Krugman showed that attitudes tend to follow behaviour, not the other way around, and nearly 40 years of relentless merchandising seems to agree.</p> <p>Ads for luxury cars are designed to confirm attitudes after the purchase has been made. Having blown an obscene amount of money on a status symbol, the buyer needs to be reassured of the statesmen like wisdom of his purchase.</p> <p>In other words, the behaviour shapes and confirms the attitude.</p>	
<p>Studies of people at racetracks and casinos show how our commitment to a decision increases dramatically after we've placed our bet. Having made a choice, no matter how insane, having taken a stand no matter how ill-informed, we will do just about anything to defend it.</p>	
<p>Look at New Age Cults. This world is ending, a new one is beginning and all we have to do to be saved is to renounce our worldly possessions to a certain PO Box number and wait for the flying saucers.</p> <p>And when the apocalypse doesn't come? When the flying saucers get held up in traffic? Do the chosen ones slap their foreheads and say 'Boy, do I feel like a putz'? Almost invariably, they commit suicide. It seems we'd rather die than change our minds.</p>	
<p>Joseph Goebbels said that instead of wasting time trying to change people's attitudes the successful propagandist worked to exploit popular prejudices and opinions so they could be harnessed and directed, a trick advertisers have sworn by ever since.</p>	
<p>The consistency principle seems to have been the secret weapon used by the Red Chinese in converting almost all American POWs into passionate communists.</p>	
<p>During the Korean War it became an incredible source of embarrassment that America's finest GIs could not withstand the interrogation methods of their Chinese captors...which was strange because the methods seemed to be friendly chats and essay writing competitions.</p>	

<p>Terrible war Very unfair on little people Many problems with my country America must be wonderful Oh, there are problems? What are they? Fascinating... we have much to learn from you You should enter our essay competition Guess what! Your people are calling you a traitor They have abandoned you You are welcome to join with us We will look upon you as a leader and a role model</p>	
<p>It seems once we commit our ideas to writing we tend to defend them at all costs. And once we are labelled something - see how Tim McVeigh lived his evil madman label right to the end - we modify our behaviour to confirm the label.</p>	
<p>Call someone an eco-terrorist, a polluter, an exploiter and see how they live the part. Call someone a hero, a role model or an inspiration and what them shine.</p>	
<p>This is why manufacturers want you to write in 25 words or less why you love their product. It's why Amways ask customers to fill out their sales agreements in their own hand.</p> <p>This is why Red Nose Day works as well as it does. Because we are forced to commit our integrity to public scrutiny and we will do anything to protect it.</p>	
<p>Phone surveys conducted by market researchers in Indiana asked people to predict what they would say if they were asked to volunteer three hours of their time to knock on doors for the National Cancer Council. Not wanting to seem mean-spirited, almost all responded that would volunteer.</p>	
<p>When, by the strangest coincidence a representative from the NCC arrived on their doorstep to ask that very question, the result was a 700% increase in volunteers! Amazing!</p>	
<p>Both the US Hunger Relief Committee and the MS Association of Connecticut have used the same scam, with similar results.</p>	
<p>Of course, you can use it just as easily to rip people off. The 'Chevrolet Lowball' is a good example.</p>	
<p>It begins when I offer you a very good price on a car. Say I'm going to drop the price by \$1000. you decide I'm the kind of guy you can do business with and suddenly all other competitors are out of the picture. You are mine.</p>	
<p>Then, we close the deal. You go through a whole ordeal of papers and</p>	

<p>authorisations, during which time the beautiful new car becomes your special reward at the other end. I let you drive it for a few days while the deal is finalised by the bank. You show it off to all your friends. You have no hope of escape.</p>	
<p>Then I call you. There's a problem. The bank has found a \$1000 shortfall in the price – maybe its stamp duty, maybe it's the air-conditioning – either way its my fault. I've begged my boss to let it slide but he's not budging. So, sorry, the deal's off. You better bring the car back in after all that.</p>	
<p>Then again, \$1000 isn't much compared to how much you've already outlaid – at very worst you'd get the car for the same price as my competitors were offering. So what do you want to do? Maybe I can offer you a good deal on your old car as a trade in, to sweeten the deal.</p>	
<p>So we go ahead. We get together to sign the final round of paperwork but this time you're dealing with my boss who notices the inflated trade in price and corrects it, apologising for the mistake. Now you feel guilty for trying to rip this guy off so you sign the papers and get the hell out of there before he realises.</p>	
<p>Dr Micheal Pallak used this trick to convince homeowners in Iowa to reduce their energy use. Here's the deal:</p>	
<p>I come to your place and offer free advice on cutting those expensive winter fuel bills. You promise to your best but when I return in a month's time there's no real change.</p>	
<p>We try it again with a different group but this time I offer another incentive. If you make a concerted effort I will take out a full page ad in the local paper and print your name in a list of responsible, environmentally friendly citizens.</p>	
<p>When Pallak made these two different offers to selected suburbs in Iowa, the 'newspaper group' saved an average of 422 cubic feet of natural gas apiece.</p>	
<p>Unfortunately, due to unforeseen legal problems the offer of a public statement had be withdrawn. Sorry. But guess what? The families had by now discovered other benefits to fuel efficiency and by the end of winter most were conserving more fuel (15.5%) than they did within the first month. (12.2%)</p>	
<p>So what do we have? We will do anything to be consistent</p>	

<p>Our attitude is shaped by our behaviour We'd rather die than admit a mistake We play up to people's picture of us A public commitment is a very powerful contract We will honour commitments even to those who cheat us We discover our own incentives for change</p>	
<p>The secret of scarcity</p>	
<p>This is the irresistible lure of the limited edition, the collector's item, the forbidden fruit. This is why we panic buy telescopes every time a comet arrives from deep space and then consign the thing to the cupboard for the next 10,000 years.</p>	
<p>CABBAGE PATCH STORY Scarcity + commitment + consistency</p>	
<p>This is why the anti-poaching laws set up to protect endangered animals may actually be accelerating their demise – the rarer and harder it is to get rhino horn aphrodisiac the higher price it fetches on the black market.</p>	
<p>Sometime in the early 80s the city elders of Dade County, Miami passed an ordinance that forbade the use and or possession of laundry products containing phosphates.</p>	
<p>Almost overnight, the people of Miami took to smuggling the banned laundry powder from neighbouring counties. Underground stashes appeared – some residents boasted 20 year supplies of the stuff.</p>	
<p>But more interestingly, consumer survey showed the people of Miami rated the phosphate products as gentler, more effective in cold water and better on stains.</p>	
<p>You see this every time the catholic church declares a book or a film morally offensive. Priests and nuns line up outside the bookshops or cinemas, unwittingly creating a super trigger – think of it, the excitement of the forbidden topped off with a bizarre variation of the bouncer effect!</p>	
<p>So in summary:</p> <p>The scarcity of a thing heightens our fear of missing out on it We often value scarce commodities beyond their true worth Forbidden fruit is the sweetest of all</p>	
<p>Let me see if I can wrap this all up in a nice pretty bow.</p> <p>Education is a transaction between open and active minds. It can shape the attitude of a thinking person, who is then likely to translate that into a behavioural shift... which in turn feeds back to their attitude and so it goes.</p>	

<p>If enough of these people change the way they live, then our relationship with the environment changes and we never need worry about the planet again. Except there aren't enough of those kind of people.</p>	
<p>There's another group who couldn't make it here today because they're busy producing and consuming everything in sight.</p> <p>This group doesn't have time to think and so respond to other cultural and social influences.</p> <p>Their feedback loop seems to be between their environment and their behaviour and the outcome of this loop seems to mould their attitudes.</p> <p>Their behaviour is more Pavlovian in nature, an automatic trigger response that is all too easily exploited for private commercial gain... at great social and environmental costs to us all.</p>	
<p>Two very different audiences, each in need of special attention and care. To date we have focussed only on people like us, ignoring the huge mass who make up the unconscious society, which is why we have yet to make the impact we need.</p>	
<p>Here's the last secret for the evening: There is no Dark Side. The journey we make, the one we want others to join us on is the voyage from selfishness to selflessness.</p>	
<p>To quote Bill Bernbach, one of the legends of modern advertising “Too many good causes fail for want of expertise in communicating with the public. And too many evil ones succeed for having it.”</p> <p>Ladies and Gentlemen, education will only take us so far.</p> <p>It's time to abandon our illusions about human nature and take a good look at these organisms for what they are.</p> <p>Maybe then will we have a chance to change the way they think.</p> <p>Thank you</p>	