Persuasion

Persuasion in Everyday Life
- Who has tried to persuade you in the course of your everyday life?
- Whom do you try to persuade in your everyday life?
- What kinds of things do people persuade other people to do?

Definition
- **Persuasion**: the process by which a message induces change in beliefs, attitudes, or behaviors
- Two Routes to Persuasion:
  - Should you focus mostly on building strong **central** arguments?
  - Should you make your message appealing by associating it with favorable **peripheral** cues?
Two Routes to Persuasion
- **Central route persuasion**: occurs when interested people focus on the arguments & respond with favorable thoughts.
- Leads to more enduring change in behavior.
- **Peripheral route persuasion**: occurs when people are influenced by incidental cues.
  - Visual images – beauty, pleasure,
  - Speaker’s attractiveness
  - Simplicity

The Elements of Persuasion
- **The Communicator**
  - **Credibility**: believable, a credible communicator is perceived as both expert & trustworthy
  - Perceived expertise
  - Trustworthiness
  - **Attractiveness/likability**: having qualities that appeal to an audience.
    - Physical attractiveness
    - Simplicity
  - **Credibility vs. similarity**

The Elements of Persuasion
- **The Message Content**
  - Reason vs. emotion
  - Discrepancy
  - One-sided vs. two-sided appeals
  - Primacy vs. Recency
  - Other things being equal, information presented first usually has the most influence
  - Information presented last sometimes has the most influence
The Elements of Persuasion

- The Communication Channel: the way the message is delivered: whether face to face, in writing, on film, or in some other way.
  - Active experience or passive communication
- Personal vs. media influence
- The Audience:
  - How old are they?
  - What are they thinking?
    - Forewarned promises counterarguing
    - Distraction vs. frame counterarguing
    - Uninformed audiences use peripheral cues

Conformity: Cults

- A group typically characterized by
  1. Distinctive ritual and beliefs related to its devotion to a god or a person
  2. Isolation from the surrounding "evil" culture
  3. A charismatic leader

Case Studies in Persuasion:
Cult Indoctrination

- Attitudes follow behavior
- Persuasive elements
  - The communicator
  - The message
  - The audience
  - Group Effects
Resisting Persuasion: Attitude Inoculation

- Strengthening personal commitment
- Large-scale inoculation programs
- Implications