

Being A Target Of Persuasion

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A few years back, when I was in school, I found myself caught up in a tough situation with some school friends. The school year was ending, and everyone was busy planning a get-together before the classes ended. It seemed extremely exciting to take part in such an activity as my friends kept coming up with different places that we could all visit during the get-together. However, there was a downside to it, and that was me not being able to attend the get-together as my parents would never allow it. I belong to a traditional family, and there are many restrictions on girls my age, which end when girls turn 18 years old. Therefore, I could not imagine I could not imagine going out with my school friends. I did not tell my friends at first because I did not want to ruin their happiness. However, they got wind of it after I hesitated in showing the same amount of eagerness as them when it came to deciding what to wear and at what time everyone should meet up. As soon as they became aware of my situation, each one of them did everything possible to get me to join them, but I declined each time for fear of upsetting my parents by bringing up such a topic at home since it was known that I could not leave the house till I was old enough.

Moreover, I knew how futile the situation was because even if I did discuss it with my parents, they would never allow it. One day, my best friend and a few others came to me and, after a few moments of hesitation, told me their plan on how I could go out with them. The plan at first seemed extremely risky, as the group wanted me to skip all my classes and go out with them. I denied their offer as soon as I heard it. However, after constant pleading with my best friend and her assurance that we would be back before school time was over, I told her I would think about it. My best friend took it upon herself to paint a picture of how exciting the whole thing would be since she knew that deep down, I wanted to go with my group. In the end, I gave up and went out with my friends on the agreed day.

How I Presented Myself

The way I presented myself in front of my friends, it only seemed evident that I made myself look like a person who desperately needed to be convinced to go out. My parents had never allowed me to go anywhere with friends after school hours. Therefore, the mere thought of it filled my head with all kinds of scenarios, and it must have shown on my face because from the moment my friends figured out the problem, they took it upon themselves to persuade me to change my mind and go with them. Calling myself a sheep in a den of wolves would be more appropriate in this situation. My friends literally acted the part of the wolves in trying to enforce their point on me the whole time. I was extremely upset, but I did my best to hide it during school hours, and even then, it became apparent because I remember getting agitated a lot when asked for opinions. I did not want them to know that I also wanted to be a part of the event because I was trying hard to stick true to the rules that my parents had set for my siblings and me. However, the conflict that I was in throughout those days

became apparent with each passing day because I stopped refusing their offer and instead started expressing how I also wished to join them. My behavior and my conflicting responses must have signaled to them that I wanted to be persuaded, which is why they used different strategies to motivate me.

The Physical And Social Nature Of The Persuasion Setting

The physical nature of the persuasion setting in which I consisted of a classroom where I was among my friends and felt at peace as their presence comforted me mentally. Since it was the last few days of the school session, therefore, we were allowed to spend free time. It provided me with the perfect opportunity to listen to what my friends had to say about the get-together and how everything was to be set out. Being there in the classroom during all of this made me want to spend the entire day at school. The cozy environment of the classroom as I was able to sit next to my friends, made the outing plans seem out of the ordinary. The freedom of getting to spend so many hours of the day in classrooms among friends was compelling enough to draw me in and make me wish that my parents would somehow agree to my request. The more they talked about how we could all spend the day together, the more I started picturing the whole scenario in my head. The time spent in classrooms became exciting as I became a part of their event planning. My friend's laughter and the eagerness in their tone set my heart on going with them at all costs even though I did not express my desires to them because I was afraid that I would get too excited and my parent's refusal would ruin my friend's plan as well. I was among a large group of friends when I was at school, and the planning session only took place during school hours because I could not hang out with them after school.

The Persuasion Tactics Used On Me

The situation I was in and how I ended up going out with my friends, there are a few persuasion tactics and principles that I can now identify which my friends had used on me to persuade me to go out with them. One such persuasive technique is the central route (p. 232). It is one of the two methods of persuading someone to agree with the situation at hand. In the central route, people focus on making strong and motivating arguments so that persuasion happens at all costs. It can be applied to my scenario because my best friend described the day out in such a manner that it became hard to resist. She told me how I could never miss out on such an opportunity because there was a 90% chance of the group parting ways and never being able to see each other again. She also added that the routine after school would get hectic, and we would never be able to make time for one another, so I had to grab this opportunity and avail it before it was too late. The thought of regret after missing out on the outing made me want to go more than ever. My other friends also took part in convincing me by reminding me how the get-together was a perfect opportunity to spend the entire day with the whole group and enjoy it to the fullest without anything interrupting the girls' time

together.

Another persuasion tactic that I identified in my situation was the peripheral route (p. 232). This kind of persuasion tactic is based on the speaker's ability to give attractive cues that motivate the audience to do something without giving it much thought. In my situation, the depiction of the get-together day in a colorful way persuaded me to join them in their plan. I forgot how my parents would feel if they were to find out that, I had gone out behind their back and how much trouble I would get in and instead waited for the appointed day to happen. A principle of persuasion falls into the category of perceived trustworthiness. My best friend insisted that she was doing all this just so we could all get to spend one last day together before we parted ways. Her tone and behavior were convincing enough, implying that the get-together would be better than anything I had ever experienced (Fogg, 2009). In addition to this, credibility is another persuasion tactic that people use to make the argument seem valid and to make the audience believe that whatever the speaker is saying is authentic. My friends presented strong arguments about why I should reconsider my decision because an opportunity like this would be difficult to come by again. Since they had gone out on several occasions, it was difficult not to believe them because each time, they returned after spending a whole day to themselves (p. 235). Moreover, my best friend was seen to be convincing me more than the rest of my friends because she knew that I would give in to her request. She knew my weaknesses and was also aware of the situation I was in (p. 235). They would fill me in on the details of how amazing the whole day had been and what joy it had brought them, as they were free to do anything they wanted and go anywhere they wished to go. My friends were not forceful in their methods, however, they presented a positive image of the event, which was enough to tempt me into joining them (Weiss & Sachs, 1991).

How I Felt While In The Setting

When my friends initially started pointing out the benefits of going out with them on the appointed day, I could not hold back my excitement. Since I had never gone out with friends before and school was coming to its end, I really wanted to spend time with them outside the school premises, and the plan was just what I wanted before parting ways with my friends. I forgot everything that my parents had taught me in that one moment as I was too busy imagining the day out with friends. At that moment, I really wished that there could be a way out of my situation. I did not care about what my parent would say. Every word uttered by my friends made the get-together seem like something extraordinary. The thrill and pure joy of doing something out of the school with class fellows filled up my heart. It is fascinating how someone's words can fill up one's head with numerous images of the setting and place that is to be visited. I did not know much about the place that had been selected, but the only thing that I cared for was going somewhere where it was just me and my group, and no one could interfere in our outing. The thought of such a situation kept me up at night, and I mostly spaced out in class while picturing the whole day.

What I Learned From This Experience

From this experience, what I learned was that I have been weak in my resolve, as I could not uphold the values that my family had imposed on me. I gave in too easily when my friends persuaded me to go out with them for the get-together. All it took for them was to sugarcoat the whole situation and present it in such a way that I could not resist the temptation of going out with them. The feelings that their words instilled in me made it difficult for me to stick to my parent's decisions and I ended up breaking the rules that my parents had set to keep me safe. My friends made the situation seem exciting and portrayed it in such a way that it simply became hard to resist. I did not want to miss out on an opportunity like this, as they made it seem like once in a lifetime opportunity. I feel guilty for being persuaded against my parents' wishes. My experiences show that people can be easily made to do things due to peer pressure. Peer pressure is a harmful thing as it makes you do something that might carry, if not in all cases, severe consequences. My experience shows that there is a reason why parents are strict, especially in cases of the female gender. The society that we live in is not safe and should not be trusted at any cost. Young girls might feel like these restrictions are simply to kill their joy. However, that is not the case. I am quite sure that there will come many more moments when people will try to persuade me, but now that I have experienced it already, I am certain that I will think things through and ascertain the possibilities of why I should do what the other person is saying. In case of any future attempts from anyone to persuade me, I will make sure to counter-argue so that the speaker cannot impose his or her point on me (p. 264).

References

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