

# The 7 TRIGGERS to yes

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## Want Yes? Activate a Trigger!

Life is a challenge. From the minute our eyes pop open in the morning until they close exhausted at night we deal with an avalanche of decisions. Get out of bed now or snooze? What to wear? What for breakfast—stick to the diet or enjoy? Which route to work? Stop for gas now or on the way home? Listen to the news or a CD? Which CD?

At work it's the same—get that report out first or answer the emails and voicemail? Take my calls or let the voicemail pick up? What are the boss's priorities? What are mine? Whose do I execute first?

And don't forget the requests from others. Dawn Hudson, senior vice-president of marketing at Pepsi Cola, says, "Today the average American receives more than 3,000 marketing messages a day!" The family has requests. The boss has more. Your staff needs answers, decisions. How about clients?

All day long, requests and decisions drive our activities. The need to decide is incessant; the issues never stop, never let up.

Dealing with this many decisions sounds like an impossibility. It could be. If we had to use cognitive thinking, if we had to rationally evaluate and think through each decision, we'd be trapped—locked in



place—unable to move in any direction as we analyze, evaluate, contemplate, measure, and critique all of the options. We'd wind up dazed and immobile. We'd go nuts!

### Nature's Triggers to the Rescue

Fortunately, nature, our limbic system, has provided us with a highly effective, simple solution to enable us to easily get

through each decision-making opportunity. That solution is the "navigation system" referred to in the book and PBS series *The Secret Life of the Brain*. This system resides in our brain's emotional center and is activated by our personal databank of internal triggers.

The secret for persuasion success is to find out how people employ their own personalized internal triggers to avoid total analysis paralysis. Often we rely on a single piece of relevant information, a shortcut, to guide us to the right decision. A knowledgeable persuader will learn how a single trigger will motivate the action he seeks. The weird irony of this need for quick, easy triggers is that the more sophisticated and complex our lives get, the more information we have, the more we need and rely on simple ways to help us make decisions and get through each day. The smart manager, leader, marketer understands this need and prepares his requests accordingly.

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Do we all have this capacity to make quick decisions based on our internal triggers? Blink, the book by Malcolm Gladwell, was at the top of The New York Times and other bestseller lists for months. Gladwell refers to this ability to make rapid non-thinking decisions as "thin slicing." Thin slicing refers to rapid cognition, automated, accelerated, unconscious solutions to complex situations. Gladwell states, "Thin slicing refers to the ability of our unconscious to find patterns in situations and behavior based on very narrow slices of experience. The power of knowing, in that first two seconds is not a gift given to a fortunate few." We each have that power. It's our internal guidance system. We'd be lost without it.

Gladwell adds, "Snap judgments take place behind closed doors—they suggest that what we think of as 'free will' is largely an illusion: much of the time we are on automatic pilot."

The person you are trying to persuade will thin slice like everyone else. We just have to activate those "narrow slices," those internal triggers to motivate the decisions we want.

At Arizona State University, Dr. Robert Cialdini puts the process into easy perspective. Cialdini's research discovered that we respond to "a distinct kind of automatic, mindless compliance, a willingness to say 'YES' without thinking first." Cialdini adds a very valuable suggestion, "It will be increasingly important for society to understand the how and why of automatic influence."

### **Activating Automatic Decisions**

How do we generate automatic influence? With triggers.

Your persuasion partner's internal triggers. His personal database that helps him navigate to successful conclusions. We've talked about our self-guidance navigation system and its functional tools, triggers, the tools that activate our partner's decisions and actions. But what is a trigger? What is this powerful tool that initiates "automatic, mindless compliance?" A trigger is any stimulus that will help us make an automatic, non-thinking decision or action. A trigger activates the receiver's immediate response to the persuader's influence attempt. We, each and every one of us, are pre-programmed to comply with

requests when the request activates the appropriate triggers. A trigger is a short-cut to avoid the pain of mental activity, of laborious cognitive rational evaluation.

When a veteran hands us a paper poppy, it triggers an automatic response—we part with a buck. A reasonable request from a trusted friend triggers a positive response. When our kids need new sneakers, they check what their peers are wearing and automatically pick that brand. Conformity is a quick, non-thinking trigger.

Triggers, like memories in the amygdala, the emotional seat of the brain, are indelible, we never forget them. The lesson? Go with the learned database, don't fight it! It's easier, and more comfortable to go with our partner's own tried, tested triggers.

Research has uncovered the "super seven" triggers that we universally employ to help us make quick, easy, non-thinking decisions. The triggers reside in the other person, and when properly activated, will create automatic compliance. These seven triggers powerfully impact every level of communication, every interaction we have with others. Whether you are sending an email, a letter, creating an advertisement, speaking before a group, or conducting a one-on-one chat, the right triggers will save time, effort, energy, and resources. They can produce the results you want.

For the first time we can apply these triggers in a well-framed, powerful presentation that we know can motivate action by working with the brain's natural process. Thanks to the brand new science of watching live, real time brain function, we know for the first time how and why the brain responds as it does to certain stimuli. You can ignore these new scientific findings. You can deny these triggers exist. And yes, it will be hard for some to embrace the newly documented scientific realities. But embrace these findings and you'll be a more effective persuader.

Those who embrace this knowledge, who learn to motivate the right internal triggers, have enormous power over others. They motivate change. They get approvals for new ideas, get funding for projects. They get cooperation. They get people to say, "YES!"