



Pain vs. Pleasure

Whether it's apparent to us or not, we are being persuaded by those around us on a daily basis. Most of the time, this persuasion is very subtle and rouses our hidden needs, wants and motivations for a more fulfilling existence. When it comes to persuasion, there are several psychological human motivators that must be stimulated in order to open the various channels of persuasion.

A photograph of an iceberg in the ocean. The tip of the iceberg is visible above the water line, while the much larger, submerged part of the iceberg is visible below the surface. The water is dark blue, and the sky is a lighter blue. The iceberg's surface is textured and white with some blue tints.

***“The secret of success is learning how to
pain and pleasure use you. If you don't,
If you don't, life***

The motivations for behavior are similar to an iceberg emerging above the water. Most of the iceberg is submerged, therefore invisible. Like the tip of the iceberg, only a small part of human motivations can be seen. Most of the time, management is concerned with only what is seen—the tip of the iceberg—and attempts to use rational methods to push a new process or change forward. However, they ignore the underlying motivation for human behavior that's submerged under the water.



*to use pain and pleasure instead of having
to that, you're in control of your life.
ie controls you."*

Before discussing human motivators, it's essential to touch on the six critical human needs. On one level or another, each individual is seeking to satisfy as many of the human needs as possible. Anthony Robbins, the life coach behind Unlimited Power, defined the six human needs as certainty, uncertainty, significance, connection, growth and contribution. Each one of these needs essentially dictates how we live our lives, by influencing our daily actions and decisions.²



*“The truth is that we can learn to condition our minds, bodies and emotions to link **pain or pleasure** to whatever we choose. By changing what we link pain and pleasure to, we will instantly change our behaviors.”*

-Anthony Robbins

Pleasure is the most powerful emotional need that drives behavior, decisions and actions. Individuals are motivated to withstand temporary periods of pain for the eventual experience of pleasure, which they see as the light at the end of the tunnel. The following is a list of personal pleasure-centered motivators that persuade people in making specific decisions or taking specific actions.

Absolute Freedom

we want to be in control of our decisions and actions, which support our highest values, goals and objectives.

Achievement

Individuals want to be certain that they will achieve their most cherished goals, as soon as possible.

Financial Freedom and Success

It's difficult to persuade by the promises of wealth, but these individuals can be persuaded by the promise of financial security and comfort.

Hope For A Better Future

People hope tomorrow will be better than today, next week will be an improvement on this week, and so forth.

Cooperating with Others

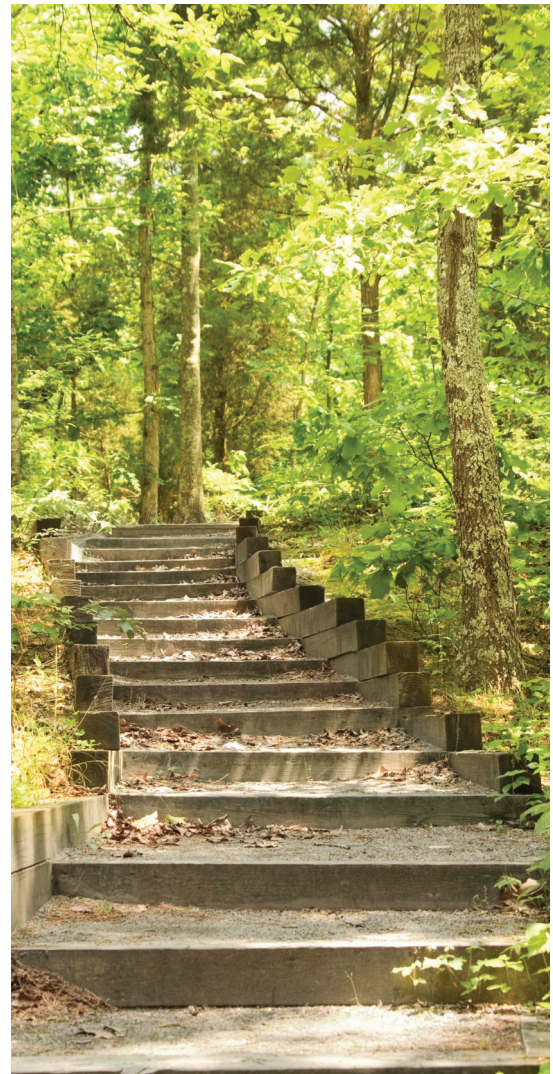
people want to feel as though they belong, and are apart of a group working for a higher purpose or goal.³

On the other hand, pain can have a greater influence on decision-making and actions than pleasure. These people tend to act in ways that move them away from pain, rather than towards pleasure. They're easily persuaded by using some of the following stimulants:

**Fear • Failure • Rejection
Losing Something • The Unknown**

While pleasure represents a nice-to-have benefit, pain stirs up intense negative emotion. In order to tap into the power of persuasion, one must identify what is familiar to who you are trying to reach. By understanding what is familiar to them, you can find a middle ground of shared experience or desire.

When one begins from an area of common ground, it puts the audience in a place emotionally where they will experience familiar feelings and idea. This is the concept of pain in pleasure—the idea that people will move away from pain and toward pleasure. One can build on either positive or negative emotions, depending on the direction in which they want to persuade.



Scenarios of using the pain and pleasure principle on others would be:

Employees—reward employees for working hard or warn them about what happens if they do not.

Sales—have prospects buy your product or service for what it can do, or have them buy it to avoid what happens if they don't.

There are plenty of scenarios involving the pain and pleasure principle, which are most likely running through your mind at this moment.

We are all somewhere on the pleasure vs. pain scale. This is often key to motivating your audience. If they tend to seek pleasure rather than avoid pain, they will agree if the proposed change brings pleasure. On the other hand, if their motivation is avoiding pain, you would want to persuade by saving them pain or discomfort.⁴

Self-motivation is a very powerful tool that most people do not have. Most people rely on external factors when persuading, which will not necessarily always be there. By using the pain and pleasure principle, you will gain a vast amount of leverage with your group. It's simple to apply, as long as you pay close attention to which direction the person you're communicating with is going. The potential for reward or punishment is a potential motivator. Be certain your conversation offers rewards with hopes and wishes. In addition, make sure you mention potential negative consequences if they do not act.



1. Fox, Shaul, and Yair Amichai-Hamburger. "The Power of Emotional Appeals in Promoting Organizational Change Programs." *Academy of Management Executive* 15.4 (2001): 84-94. Web.
2. Robbins, Anthony. *Unlimited Power: The New Science of Personal Achievement*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1986. Print.
3. Sicinski, Adam. "Mastering the Psychology of Persuasion." *IQ Matrix Blog*. N.p., n.d. Web. 26 Sept. 2014.
4. Dawson, Roger, and Roger Dawson. *Secrets*