



INFLUENCE — Discussion Worksheet 3

By Robert B. Cialdini | Application, Ethics & Personal Action Plan

All Six Principles — Quick Reference

- Reciprocity — We feel obligated to return what we receive.
- Commitment & Consistency — We align future behavior with past commitments.
- Social Proof — We follow the crowd, especially in uncertain situations.
- Authority — We defer to credible experts and recognized symbols of status.
- Liking — We comply more with people we know, like, and trust.
- Scarcity — We want more of what is rare or becoming unavailable.

Real-World Applications

Cialdini's principles appear in virtually every domain of life:

- Marketing & Advertising — Free trials, celebrity endorsements, countdown timers.
- Negotiation — Strategic concessions (reciprocity), anchoring, building rapport (liking).
- Leadership & Management — Modeling desired behavior, public commitments in team settings.
- Healthcare — Physician authority, peer statistics to encourage healthy behavior.
- Politics & Media — Expert endorsements, social proof via polls, manufactured scarcity of ideas.
- Personal Relationships — Favors, consistency expectations, social comparisons.

Discussion Questions

Q1 Looking back over all six principles, which one surprised you most — either in its power or in how often you've been influenced by it without realizing it?

Q2 Cialdini argues these principles evolved as helpful mental shortcuts, but can be exploited. How do we balance the efficiency of using shortcuts with the need for critical thinking?

Q3 Discuss an industry or profession (advertising, law, medicine, politics) where you think Cialdini's principles raise serious ethical questions. What guardrails, if any, should exist?

Q4

Cialdini wrote a follow-up book, Pre-Suasion, about setting the stage before a persuasion attempt. Based on what you've read in Influence, what do you think 'pre-suasion' might look like?

Q5

Write down one specific way you will apply a principle from this book — either to become more persuasive or to better resist unwanted influence. Share with the group: what principle, and what action?



Personal Action Plan

Principle I'll Use

Situation / Goal

Specific Action Step

Defense I'll Strengthen
