

# Influence Summary

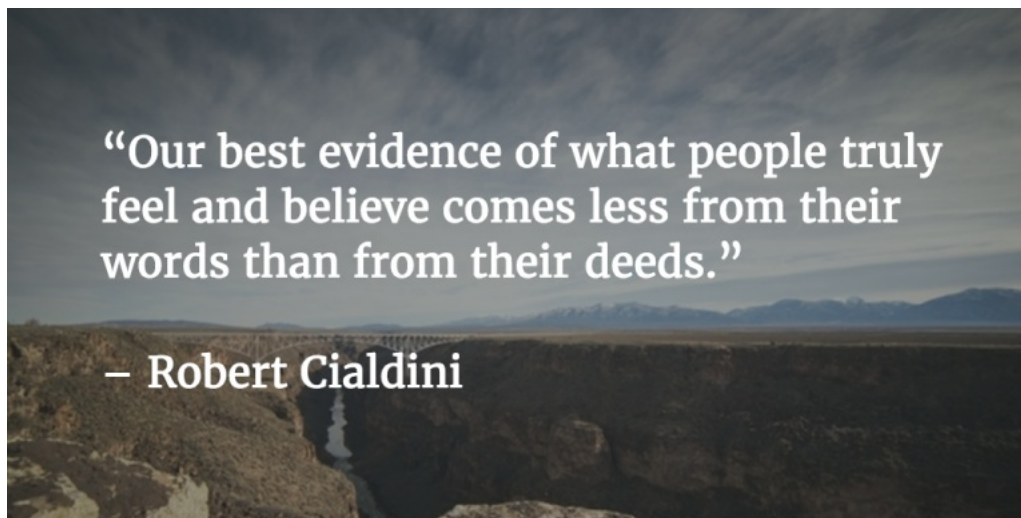
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 [fourminutebooks.com/influence-summary](https://fourminutebooks.com/influence-summary)

**1-Sentence-Summary:** *Influence has been the go-to book for marketers since its release in 1984, which delivers six key principles behind human influence and explains them with countless practical examples.*

**Read in:** 4 minutes

**Favorite quote from the author:**



Another modern business classic, just like *The 7 Habits Of Highly Effective People*, though published even earlier. It's hard to believe that *Influence* is over 30 years old, but yes, that's how long it's been since Dr. Robert Cialdini published it.

The book outlines 6 powerful principles, which influence the way we make decisions. Cialdini calls them shortcuts, which, if triggered, make us jump to conclusions faster.

Therefore, our brains like to use them, even when they're used against us, for example to trick us into buying something.

Here are my favorite 3 of the 6:

1. You can use the reciprocity bias to build up a massive good karma account.
2. The scarcity bias works, because we hate to miss opportunities.
3. Make a small commitment to trigger your consistency bias and reach your goal.

Let's take a closer look!

**Lesson 1:** You can use the reciprocity bias to build up a massive good karma account.

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Imagine caveman Grok would have constantly been worried about his tasty beets. He'd never have shared any with Jane, the friendly cavewoman next door, because he didn't see anything in it for him.

Subsequently, she would have never returned the favor with a late-night cave dinner and neither you, nor I, nor any of us would be here.

So why did Grok share his beets with Jane?

### **Reciprocity.**

He knew that if he gave her food, she would owe him one.

Even though the reciprocity bias is one of the foundational reasons why we're alive, today it's often used against us.

### **We always feel compelled to return a favor, and marketers know this.**

Not only that, we'll usually return a much bigger favor than was made to us.

Consider this study from Cornell University in 1971, where researcher Joe brought some of the participants a 10 cent bottle of Coke (good times).

When asked to buy raffle tickets from Joe shortly afterwards, the people who "owed Joe one" bought 50 cents worth of tickets.

This is not only 5 times as much as the price of the Coke, but also twice as much money spent on tickets as in the scenarios where Joe didn't bring people the Coke beforehand.

It's the same trick the Hare Krishna's have been using for decades by giving people flowers, and marketers often abuse it.

However, you can also flip this around.

Instead of trying to guilt people into reciprocity, why not just do good things without being asked to either way?

**Go out of your way to help other people and you'll naturally build up a massive good karma account. No tricks needed.**

## **Lesson 2: Because we hate to miss opportunities, scarcity makes us act.**

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Don't you hate missing out on a good deal? I know I've beaten myself up over a few Appsumo deals because I didn't act fast enough.

The fact that you get so angry at yourself for not buying those jeans last week when they were on sale, or got that delicious pizza before they ran out for the day, is the reason why the scarcity bias works.

We beat ourselves up a lot for missing opportunities, **regret is a powerful feeling.**

People who were told of a limited time meat sale bought 3 times as much, even more when they learned that only they knew about the sale.

It makes me sad to see all this fake scarcity around the web now, where marketers peddle digital products with countdowns, limited edition labels and deadlines, as if they're rare metals or oil.

So pay attention the next time you sign up for an email list and are offered a "2-day only" deal shortly afterwards. Unsubscribe and re-subscribe, and the loop starts all over again.

**The scarcity bias is one of the most widely abused ones, so try to spot it wherever you can.**

### Lesson 3: When you make a small commitment, it triggers your consistency bias and helps you reach your goal.

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Imagine you're chilling on your towel at the beach, when suddenly, someone steals the radio of the person next to you, while they're away.

What would you do?

If you're honest, probably nothing, like 4 out of 5 people do.

Now imagine for a second that before leaving, your towel neighbor had asked you to watch her things.

Would you just let the thief get away? Most likely, you would at the very least say something.

In a study that tested this exact scenario, 95% of the people who committed to watching another person's things even got up and chased down the thief.

**A small commitment sure goes a long way, because it triggers your consistency bias.**

This bias is very useful, because you can use it in your favor. For example, if you make a small commitment of not hitting the snooze button in the morning, you'll really want to follow through.

Once you're up, you can then use the extra time to develop an awesome morning routine.

**Use mini commitments to jumpstart reaching your goals and then let the consistency bias take you the rest of the way.**

## Influence Review

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Whether you're trying to avoid being influenced, looking for ways to trick yourself into building better habits or have a good message to spread across the world, *Influence* will help you get there.

Thanks to this summary alone, I've avoided many stupid purchases and built better relationships. It lists all the biases with examples, and is more than enough to get started.

I suggest you also watch this speed drawing video, which gives even more context.

I haven't read the book myself, but it's on the list, as I expect many more good examples, which will help remember all the biases.

Two big thumbs up!

## What else can you learn from the blinks?

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- What the rejection-then-retreat strategy is
- How the contrast bias brought down Richard Nixon
- Why The Wolf of Wall Street made insider trading look so sexy
- The little trick Chinese interrogators played on American prisoners to make them cooperate
- What the lowball trick is and how car dealers use it to make you buy a car you don't even need
- Why college frats have drinking initiation rituals and not just community service
- How the social proof bias led to a publicly watched murder in the 60's
- The reason one front-page suicide story in the newspaper kills 58 more people
- When we fall for the halo effect
- Why wearing a doctor's coat is enough to make people believe your health advice

## Who would I recommend the Influence summary to?

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The 15 year old, who just discovered online shopping, the 43 year old manager, who struggles with getting his team at the office on the same page about things, and anyone who can't seem to pick up a new habit.

Learn more about the author

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