

Hidden Tricks for Getting People to Do What You Want

I was totally confused. I saw 18-year-old Ronny walking outside his house carrying a guitar case, but I knew he didn't play the guitar. I asked him if he was starting to take lessons. He said, "No, but I'm planning to find a date for a party. And I just learned three tricks to do that, and one of them uses a guitar case." Then he told me about the three interesting experiments.

Researchers sent a very handsome guy to a shopping mall in France to ask women for their phone number so that he could call them for a date. He stood in front of different types of stores (for example, a bakery, a shoe store, a café) and as they walked by, he approached them. However, he wasn't very successful. Only 13% of the women gave him their numbers when he stood in front of those shops. Surprisingly, however, he was twice as successful (26% of the time) in front of one particular shop: a flower shop.

The researchers had a theory about these results. In human minds, flowers are connected to romance. However, these women didn't realize that their minds were making this connection.

Later, when the researchers asked the women who gave him their number if they were influenced by the flower store, all the women said no. They said that they just decided to give him their number. In other words, they weren't aware that something caused them to do this.

Researchers conducted a similar "dating" study. This time the 20-year-old guy walked up to 300 women between 18 and 22 years old. He told them they were very pretty and asked them for their phone number. For the first 100 women, the guy carried a sports bag. For the next 100 women, he had a guitar case. Finally, he had nothing in his hands when he talked to the last group of 100 women.

The results showed that 31% of the women gave him their numbers when he carried the guitar case. When he carried nothing, only 14% did, and even fewer (9%) gave him their numbers when he carried a sports bag.

The researchers explained that a man with a guitar case can look both intelligent and like someone who has many interests. Also, he might remind them of a famous, successful musician they see on social media.

Researchers ran a third study to test something different: whether having a dog changes people's responses. I wasn't too surprised about the results from this third experiment. In this one, half of the time the man was walking a friendly-looking dog on a leash, and half of the time he was walking alone. As he did in the other experiments, he asked some women to give him their phone number. When he had a dog with him, 28% of the women did, but only 9% did when he was alone.

Now, if my neighbor, Ronny, asks me to let him take my dog for a walk, I think that I'll know why he wants to do that.

Hidden Tricks for Getting People to do What You Want

Comprehension Exercise

Directions: Write T (true) or F (false) next to each sentence.

- ___ 1. Ronny was a professional guitar player.
- ___ 2. The women who gave their phone number worked in flower shops.
- ___ 3. The women didn't realize that they were influenced by the nearby flower shop.
- ___ 4. If a guy wants to get a date, it's a good idea to carry a guitar case.
- ___ 5. The women preferred to give their phone number to the man who was walking alone.
- ___ 6. The research shows that we often don't realize what is affecting our decisions.

Paraphrasing Exercise

Directions: Imagine that you have this conversation with a friend.

You: I just read this interesting article.

Friend: Oh yeah. What did it say?

Write what you would tell your friend. Include as many details as you can.

After you finish writing a first draft, you can re-read the article and revise your draft.

However, don't look at the article while you are writing. You can use some of these **key words** in your paraphrase.

Key Words

• Ronny • guitar case • shopping mall in France • bakery, shoe store, café, flower shop • 13% 26% • all the women said no • 300 women between 18 and 22	• guitar case • sports bag • nothing • 31% 14% 9% • the reasons • dog on leash • 28% 9%
---	---

Reflection Exercise

Directions: Write a reflection about the article. Try to write a paragraph with several sentences. In your reflection, your first sentence can be one of these:

- *I found some interesting/important information in this article.*
- *After reading this, I now would like to (learn more about /read more research about /...)*
- *There is some information in this article that I could apply to my life.*
- *I agree / disagree with the author about something.*
- *This article reminded me of (me/ my family/my friend).*
- *I was surprised by something in this article.*