

INFLUENCE AND PERSUASION

Applied Persuasion and Dialogue

Grenny et al. · Heath brothers · Berger

PAPER 03 / 03

A Furtherance reference compendium on the intellectual traditions behind organisational design, leadership, execution, and culture.

IN THIS PAPER

The series closes by turning principle into practice – the applied craft of persuasion, difficult conversations, sticky ideas and behaviour change. The question it answers: how do you actually move a specific person, team or audience, in the moment?

Grenny and colleagues supply the skill of the high-stakes conversation. The Heath brothers explain what makes an idea stick and a change effort work. Berger shows why things spread and how to change minds by removing barriers rather than adding pressure.

Grenny, Patterson et al. Crucial Conversations, 2002

Dialogue and behaviour change · practitioner research

CORE THESIS

The conversations that most shape outcomes are **crucial** ones – high stakes, opposing views, strong emotions – and they can be handled with a learnable skill set. The goal is to keep dialogue flowing into a **shared pool of meaning** rather than collapsing into silence or aggression.

FRAMEWORK

Move	What it does
Make it safe	Establish mutual purpose and mutual respect
Master my stories	Separate fact from the story I tell about it
State my path	Share views honestly but tentatively
Explore others' paths	Draw out and genuinely consider their view
Move to action	Convert dialogue into decisions and owners

Their **Influencer** model adds a change framework: six sources of influence, crossing personal, social and structural domains with motivation and ability.

METHODOLOGY

A practitioner methodology, refined through training and supported by field research.

SIGNIFICANCE AND CRITIQUE

A highly practical toolkit for the conversations managers most avoid, and the six-sources model is unusually complete. The critique: it is practitioner and commercial, with an uneven independent evidence base.

Chip & Dan Heath Made to Stick, 2007 · Switch, 2010

Communication and change · applied synthesis

CORE THESIS

Ideas that **stick** share a recognisable set of traits, and change efforts succeed by engaging both the rational and emotional sides of people while smoothing the path. Two compact frameworks – **SUCCESS** and **Rider–Elephant–Path** – make both learnable.

FRAMEWORK

SUCCEs – traits of a sticky idea	Meaning
Simple	One core, prioritised message
Unexpected	Break a pattern to seize attention
Concrete	Sensory, specific, not abstract
Credible	Believable through detail or authority
Emotional	Make people feel, not just think
Stories	Carry the idea in narrative

Their change model – direct the rational **Rider**, motivate the emotional **Elephant**, shape the **Path** (environment) – reframes resistance as a problem of clarity, motivation and friction rather than of will.

METHODOLOGY

A popular synthesis of psychology and communication research, illustrated through cases.

SIGNIFICANCE AND CRITIQUE

Exceptionally practical and well-grounded in others' research; the mnemonics travel well into real work. The critique: it is synthesis rather than original research, and the frameworks simplify.

Jonah Berger Contagious, 2013 · The Catalyst, 2020

Social transmission and change · Wharton

CORE THESIS

Things catch on for identifiable reasons, and minds are changed less by pushing harder than by **removing the barriers** to change. Berger supplies one framework for why ideas spread (**STEPPS**) and another for reducing resistance (**REDUCE**).

FRAMEWORK

STEPPS – why things spread	REDUCE – barriers to change
Social currency	Reactance – the urge to resist being pushed
Triggers	Endowment – attachment to the current way
Emotion	Distance – how far the ask is from current belief
Public / Practical value	Uncertainty – the risk of the unknown
Stories	Corroborating evidence – the proof people need

METHODOLOGY

Academic and field research on word-of-mouth, social transmission and persuasion – an unusually strong evidence base for a popular author.

SIGNIFICANCE AND CRITIQUE

The barrier-reduction reframing is a genuine contribution: stop adding force, start removing friction. The critique: some findings are popularised a step beyond the underlying studies.

Synthesis

Contribution	Focus	Framework	Register
Grenny et al.	High-stakes dialogue	Crucial conversations; six sources	Practitioner
Heath brothers	Sticky ideas and change	SUCCESS; Rider–Elephant–Path	Applied synthesis
Berger	Spread and resistance	STEPPS; REDUCE	Academic / field

FOR THE OPERATOR

Applied persuasion turns principle into practice: the skill of the crucial conversation (Grenny et al.), the anatomy of a sticky idea and a change effort (Heath), and the mechanics of contagion and barrier-removal (Berger). For the operator, the through-line is counter-intuitive – persuasion is less about pushing a better argument than about creating safety, reducing resistance, and making the right idea easy to adopt and share. That closes the Influence and Persuasion series, from the foundations of influence, through power and dependence, to the applied craft of moving people.