



Powerplay

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Regulars at Gresham College will know that I am a consultant psychiatrist, working in the NHS at the Maudsley Hospital. I want to start by telling you a little anecdote, a true story, about how I ended up at the Maudsley Hospital. Many people have asked me about this over the years, because the Maudsley Hospital is regarded as the premier postgraduate teaching and research institution in psychiatry in Western Europe and so people tend to come to the Maudsley after having spent quite a few years in other branches of medicine and not straight from medical school, which is in fact what I did.

There is a very bizarre story about how that happened. It goes back to my third year at medical school when I was about to start the clinical part of the medical school training, and this was going to involve walking the wards for the very first time. My very first clinical term was going to be Surgery, and I really was not looking forward to this because I was one of these medical students who decided very early on that I wanted to be a psychiatrist, so I did not find Surgery a very appealing prospect. But, being a very ambitious medical student, I thought I would read up on surgery and get a head start on my fellow medical students, so I went to what was then a very famous bookshop that, alas, is now longer there, H.K. Lewis at the top end of Gower Street. I asked them for the fattest, thickest surgical textbook they had. A couple of assistants got down - because this really is a very fat textbook - Bailey & Love's Shorter Practice of Surgery. I have to tell you that I think the term 'Shorter' is meant slightly ironically, because this is such a thick book that if this falls off a shelf and lands on something, that thing does not get up and walk away again! In fact, back then, H.K. Lewis had a policy of whenever anyone chose to buy this book, they would order a cab for you to help you get the book home, because they were worried that if you tried to carry it home, you would end up doing some kind of damage to yourself, perhaps a hernia, and actually need the contents of the book a bit more sooner than you might have realised.

So, I bought the book, got the book home to my study, manhandled it onto the shelf, and there it lay of course, undisturbed, as the months went by, until we come to the night before the start of this Surgical clinical term when, around 11pm, I decided to get the book down for the very first time. I opened the book, and I saw the flyleaf cover of Bailey & Love's Shorter Practice of Surgery which was a wood engraving of a woman from 17th Century France, who has a large, unicorn-like, hornlike object growing out of her forehead. Basically, Bailey & Love's favourite Saturday afternoon occupation was to go around photographing or collecting pictures of people who, unfortunately, had developed rather gross pathology that had grown to enormous proportions as a result of not being treated. This enormous hornlike object growing out of this poor woman's head was apparently a thing called a sebaceous horn, which apparently is a sebaceous cyst which has developed some rather radical complication. But, I took one look at this flyleaf engraving and promptly fell asleep. That is how riveting I found surgery! Having spent the whole night asleep, draped across the book, I woke up the next morning and I looked at my watch with great alarm and saw that I was very late to be at the Surgery Outpatients Department at the Whittington Hospital that morning. I was meant to be there at eight o'clock and it was approaching nine.

I rushed into the Whittington Hospital, in a state of panic and alarm, and arrived in the Outpatient Clinic. The nurses were very concerned about me, because the consultant surgeon was due to be there at any moment, and apparently, he was not a man who suffered fools gladly. He had a bit of a fearsome reputation. I shall refer to him as 'Mr L' for the purposes of this story. They were a bit worried because I was meant to have been there at least an hour earlier, at least seen one patient, got to know them, their

history and then be able to present it to Mr L when he appeared. But because I had only just arrived, Mr L was about to come, and the nurses were really rather worried for me because he had a rather fearsome reputation for losing his temper. They said, 'Okay, what we'll do is get you into this room here and you'll see this lady who's waiting. Do the best you can in the short time you have. We'll try and stall him out here to buy you some time.'

So I went into the room, with mounting panic, and I only had a brief chance to catch a glimpse out of the corner of my eye of an elderly woman sitting patiently in the corner. I just happened to get a chance to notice she had a small bump on her forehead, when all of a sudden, Mr L came striding through the door, with his white coat flapping, followed by about seven million medical students, research doctors and senior registrars. He strode over to his desk, and he did this thing that I notice a lot of surgeons do, which is to make no eye contact with me whatsoever. He shuffled some papers on his desk, and he barked out, 'Right then - what's the diagnosis?!'

You have to bear in mind that, at this moment, I am the most disorganised medical student in the country! Not only have I not seen the patient, but I know absolutely no surgery. I didn't make it past the flyleaf cover of the textbook the night before. So, at this moment, I was forced to say the only diagnosis I happened to know in the whole of surgery. I said, rather plaintively and tentatively, 'Eh - sebaceous horn?' Mr L looked up suddenly, because this answer didn't just seem to be wrong, it seemed to galvanise paroxysms of rage from deep within Mr L. He made eye contact with me for the very first time and he said, 'Sebaceous horn?! Don't be ridiculous! I've been a general surgeon for thirty years and I've never seen a single case! It's incredibly rare, and furthermore,' he waved his finger at me, and he took a brief glance at the patient and then he looked back to me, and then he stopped, and he did a double take with the patient, and he said, 'My God! I think you're right!' He went over, he examined the patient, and lo and behold, it was one of those one in a billion chances - it was a sebaceous horn. At this moment, I was transformed in Mr L's eyes into some kind of surgical prodigy, that on the very first day of the clinical surgical term as a medical student, I should have made a diagnosis of something he had never really seen in his life. He assumed I must be some kind of surgical genius!

So, from that moment on, when we would go on a ward round and we would see a patient, the other eight medical students would gather round the patient, Mr L would say to the students, 'Right then, what are the causes of this particular form of liver disease? Not Raj, because he'll know the answer!' which I have to tell you often came as a bit of a surprise to me! Of course, as the poor other eight medical students would labour away, coming up with the wrong answer, Mr L and I would exchange world-weary glances, and I would go, 'Huh, where do you get the staff?!' Eventually of course, when eight other medical students have had a go at something and have not got it right, you stand a much better chance of saying something semi-intelligent. So unfortunately it became something of a self-fulfilling prophecy, the fact that he wouldn't let me give an answer until the end. When new surgeons would come to the ward to get a second opinion on something, Mr L would meet them at the front of the ward and they would go into a huddle and we would hear them muttering away and Mr L saying, 'Sebaceous horn... on his very first day... so confident he didn't even give me a differential diagnosis!' They would look up in some awe at me, and they were so impressed with me that the unit recommended me for the surgical professorial house job at UCH, which is only ever given to career surgeons. When I applied for the Maudsley Hospital, the Maudsley Hospital were so impressed that me, as a career psychiatrist, should get this professorial surgical house job that they admitted me immediately. So that is the story of how I ended up at the Maudsley!

So, having impressed you with my intellectual credibility, I want to talk a little bit about power. Power, I think, is one of these interesting last taboos. There is a sense in which, as a society, we can talk about sex more now, we can talk about money, but one of these things that we do not really discuss openly is power, having influence on other people, being able to persuade other people of our point of view, to get them to bend to our will. I am very interested in the psychology of power because I have noticed that people who feel powerful in their relationships generally seem to feel better about life, and it seems to be linked, in some sense, to fulfilment - people who feel effective.

A point that I have made to Gresham on many occasions in the past is that at the heart of life is a transaction. We engage in transactions with other people. There are things that we want in life - it might be other people's affection, their attention, it might be a Bentley, but whatever it is we want in life, other people have to give it to us, unless you are very fortunate and are born as an heir to a small fortune. Other people have to give us the stuff that we want and so the central enigma in life and the central problem we have to solve is how do we get people to give us the stuff that we want, and the answer of course is we have to give them something first - there's a transactional nature at the heart of life. We have to give other people

something, and then they will give us something back. One of the interesting questions is whether young people today have fully understood the transactional nature of life, that you have to give in order to get, and whether we have younger generations now who seem to have a strong sense of an entitlement to receive before they have to give anything at all.

We will come back to this point in a minute, but I want to come at the point from a slightly strange angle. Only about a week ago, I was asked to chair an event at a very interesting art gallery in Warwickshire called Compton Verney - I do recommend it to you. I was meant to chair a panel discussion with two other people, with an invited audience of about 150 people, and it was to help launch a new exhibition they have of portraits of naked bodies. I think it is called 'The Naked Portrait', and it looks at the portrayal of the naked body over several generations. What is really interesting of course about the naked body is how powerful an object it is, in many respects. Advertisers of course would say that the female body is one of the most powerful objects in the universe; they use the allure of the female body to sell motor cars, to sell all sorts of products, and the body is certainly something very powerful in terms of gaining our attention. What is really fascinating about this exhibition is also the power of the hidden; the fact that nakedness is something that interests us because it is normally hidden, and therefore the revelation of something that's hidden also seems very powerful. Eventually, if you are going to talk about an art exhibition consisting of nothing but portrayals of the naked body, you get into obviously a conversation about voyeurism. This is because there is the question of why the voyeur or 'Peeping Tom' want to peep, and why do they peep compulsively? In other words, they just do not like to peep once at someone undressing or a couple in the act of sex, but there is a compulsive nature to why they want to peep. The Freudian idea is that the Peeping Tom believes that constantly around him things are being hidden and he wants to get underneath what is being hidden and therefore he must peep, he must look covertly - that's very important, the covert gaze, the idea that other people do not know they are being looked upon, and because they do not know, they are being totally natural and the truth is being revealed.

This is very different from nakedness that is contrived, like striptease, for example. Roland Barthes, a famous social philosopher, has written a very interesting sociological analysis of striptease, and interestingly enough, sociological researchers since then have actually obtained grants to go and study striptease, which is nice work if you can get it! Roland Barthes argued that what is really interesting about striptease is that actually the naked body, right at the end of the striptease, is the least interesting thing about striptease. It is the act of revelation, it is the taking off of the clothes piece by piece. Roland Barthes argued that this taking off of clothes is actually an art form, and it is that which excites and teases the audience. When the stripper has finished and is completely naked before you, that is actually the least interesting part of the striptease. The act ends at that point, the act does not go on for very long, the act is the gradual revelation, and there is a power in that.

If you think about when you go to your doctor's and the doctor asks you to take your clothes off so that you can be examined, what is very interesting from a kind of sociological standpoint, is that you never take your clothes off in front of a doctor. You are often asked to go behind a screen of some description, where you take your clothes off and then you lie on the couch before the doctor comes to examine you. So it is quite interesting that, in a way, it is the taking off of the clothes that is the most embarrassing bit that you are allowed to hide yourself from, and then the doctor comes and views your nakedness.

What is really interesting about this idea of the voyeur, who has to look covertly because he believes that only by covertly seeing can what is constantly being hidden from him be revealed, is we live in a society that increasingly resembles the voyeur. If you think about 'Big Brother', 'I'm A Celebrity Get Me Out of Here', a lot of reality television offers the idea of covert viewing, and therefore it offers the idea that we're going to see something that we don't normally see with the contrivance of everyday life where what is being viewed often is being manipulated. Of course, the difficulty is that we all know that reality television and 'I'm A Celebrity Get Me Out Of Here' is also contrived, and therefore we have difficulty believing that what we see is reality, so increasingly we become a voyeuristic society - we want to peep and observe, but we do not want to be seen to be doing the observing, because that we believe, ultimately, is the ultimate power in that situation. We will come back to point.

But what was really fascinating was, at the very beginning of this event, I made a few opening comments, and all of a sudden, a man in the audience said, 'I don't think we can have a conversation about the naked body unless there's someone here without any clothes on,' and he offered to take his clothes off, right there and then. It was a very surreal experience, I have to tell you, but I thought, 'Hey, I'm in an art gallery, these are all artists, they're slightly off the wall people!' I think he was obviously a naturist and was on a kind of a naturist campaign, but the organisers went into a real panic at the prospect of someone disrobing right

there and then, and they said, 'Oh, I don't think that's a good idea - there's children in the hall. They might walk past. There's a glass door,' and so on and so forth. But I went down the route of saying, 'This man has made a very interesting offer to take his clothes off at the beginning of our session, before we have our discussion. I think we should put it to a vote. I think the audience should vote on whether he should take his clothes off.' The organisers did not like that at all, because they thought it was obvious they were going to vote for him to take his clothes off. We had a few little speeches from the floor, for and against him taking his clothes off, and then we took a vote. Now, there were 150 people there. How many people do you think voted for him to take his clothes off? Anyone want to have a guess?

Less than half? Ten? Twenty or thirty? Well, no one voted for him to take his clothes off. I have to say, I felt sorry for him - it was a bit of a slap in the face! But it was a very interesting moment in terms of the psychology of persuasion, I think, because he wanted people to vote for him to take his clothes off, and in making the offer, he obviously thought he was going to get a slightly better response than that. So something very interesting at a psychological level went wrong in terms of the psychology of persuasion, and that leads me into the topic I want to talk about, which is what should he have done, using the latest research on the psychology of persuasion to persuade us to vote for him to take his clothes off?

I want to offer a couple of possibilities, and I am interested in engaging in a dialogue with you about that, given so many of you here would have voted for him to take his clothes off! Interestingly enough, no one here asked me what did he look like first, which I thought was very non-sexist of you - just what we expect of a Gresham audience!

One of the research paradigms that psychologists use to explore the psychology of persuasion is what is referred to by the American term, panhandling. What that is is people go and beg on the streets for money; you set students the task of begging on the streets for money and to see what various techniques you might deploy. From this you get very nice, hard feedback data about how persuasive you have been, which is how much money did you collect when you were out begging on the streets. There are various different approaches to this, but there is a couple of papers with a very interesting technique, and it is called the pique technique. The pique technique is that what most people do, when they're not deploying the pique technique, is 'Can you spare a dime?' 'Can you spare 50p?' - 'Can you spare...?' a standard amount of money. The pique technique is to say what you should so is ask for an unusual amount of money, say, 'Can you spare 37p?' I think that is actually one of the titles on one of the papers - 'Can you spare 37c?' Not, 'Hey buddy, can you spare a dime?' 'Hey buddy, can you spare 37c?' It is called the pique technique, and by it, if you ask for an unusual sum of money, you end up collecting significantly more money than if you said, 'Buddy, can you spare a dime?'

It is called the pique technique because the idea is it piques your interest. The theory is we have what is called a refusal script. People are often begging from us on the street and we have a refusal script which is a standard procedure of dealing with someone trying to get money off us often this is hurrying by them or turning away, and other people have different refusal scripts, but it is about the idea that a lot of our life is patterned around scripts, because we do not want to spend a lot of time thinking about what we do. We often want to devote ourselves to thinking about other things, so we have scripts by which we lead our lives. So, stimulus appearing on the horizon - person begging for money; refusal script comes into play - look the other way, walk quickly past. But, if someone asks for an unusual sum of money, your interest is piqued and it breaks through the refusal script, because now you are wondering why he asked for 37p. So, it raises a question in your mind, and people are more likely to stop and ask why are you asking for 37p, and the minute they stop and ask, you become a human being and human interaction has formed and you are more likely to end up giving some money as a result. So here is some very interesting and powerful psychology: ask for an unusual sum and it breaks the refusal script, people engage in conversation, and you are more likely to get some money.

Okay, using the same panhandling paradigm, another set of experiments have discovered that there is a particular place on the high street, outside a particular kind of storefront, where if you stand when you panhandle, you are more likely to get significantly more money. Anyone want to take a guess as to where you should strategically place yourself on the high street in terms of what kind of store or store front?

A bank? Good thinking, maybe people have got money if they are near a bank because they have gone to get some. Bookies? Charity shop? Newsagents? Well, you're not going to believe this, but the researchers found that the best place to stand is outside a funeral parlour. Why a funeral parlour? Because people are reminded of death as they walk past. It makes them re-orientate themselves in terms of core values; about what is really important in life. Therefore they think about what is really important,

they think about being good at that moment, they are maybe thinking about the afterlife, and so you are likely to get significantly more sums of money out of people if you panhandle outside a funeral parlour. That is the psychological theory. It is called terror management theory in psychology and it is about the idea that when you remind people of death, they manage their terror in a certain way, and one of the ways they might manage it, if they are in anxiety of thinking about death and so on, is about returning to core values, about what it is to be a moral, good person.

These are all persuasion techniques, and therefore power techniques, and we will come back to where they come in the power universe in a moment. Another standard technique that you see a lot of charities using now, although they may not be fully aware of the psychology behind it. It goes back to a famous experiment in psychology where people went to a suburb, knocked on doors, and asked people to put up a massive poster that would block out most of the light of their living room window in support of a local cancer charity. When they approached people and asked them to put up this massive cancer charity poster that would block out all their light, most people, understandably, refused. In the next condition of the experiment, you go to knock on people's doors in the suburbs and you ask them to wear a small cancer charity badge. Most people accept the badge to wear, because it is a fairly innocuous thing to do and it is a fairly worthwhile cause. If you come back a week or so later to those people who have accepted the badge and ask them to take the big poster, the same size poster that blocks out all the light, significantly more people accept the poster. You have persuaded them to do something they would not normally otherwise do, simply because they took the small badge first. Why? What's going on to do with the psychology of persuasion? Anyone have a theory about that?

You feel obliged to? Okay. Ownership - well, that is the word you are using, but we would use in psychology the word 'identity' which is linked to that. But let's go with the obligation, I think that's an interesting point. In other words, having said yes once, it is tougher for people to say no the second time, because, in a way, why are you saying no the second time? You said yes the first time, because you thought supporting this cancer charity was a good thing. All they're asking you to do is to continue with your thinking and continue supporting the cancer charity. For some reason, having said 'yes' once, saying 'no' now does not seem to make so much sense. So that goes back to a very interesting theory in psychology, which is that we like to see ourselves as rational, consistent people, so getting people to say yes to a small thing makes it much more likely they will say yes to a much bigger thing later, because it is more difficult for them to think, 'Why am I saying no now when I said yes before?'

But the other interesting theory mentioned was about ownership or identity. In other words, in accepting the badge, you have now identified yourself as someone who supports this cancer charity, and if that now becomes part of your identity - the way you think about yourself, as someone who supports local cancer charities - again, it begins to conflict with your sense of identity to refuse the big poster.

So, there is a lot of fascinating psychology going on here, but a nice tip you can take away, if you want to persuade people to do something, is come in with a small ask first in preparation for the bigger ask later.

There is almost an opposite technique. The first technique is called the foot in the door approach. The second technique is based again on a famous psychology experiment, which is you go onto the streets and you say to people, 'There's a blood transfusion van around the corner. We want you to donate a pint of blood.' If you go to people in the streets and ask them to donate a pint of blood, very few people agree to do that. However, the second condition in the experiment is that you go into the streets and say to people, 'We're on a new blood transfusion drive, and we want you to donate a pint of blood every month for a year.' That is a big ask, and of course, most people say no to that. But then you say, 'Okay, I'm sorry to have asked you that, I know it's a big ask, but the blood transfusion van is just round the corner - why not just donate a pint of blood now and we won't ask you again for several years?' More people say yes to that question than if you had just made the initial approach for the one pint in the first place. Why are more people persuaded to say yes when you come in with the enormous, impossible to fulfil, big request first and then come in with a follow-up small request? What is going on psychologically?

What a psychologist would say is there is a natural human tendency to want to appear reasonable? Now, someone's come in with a big request and you have said no, and they appear to have made a concession. They have said, 'Okay, sorry about the big request,' and they come back with a smaller request. They appear to have made a concession. It is natural, if other people have made a concession, to reciprocate with a concession from your end. That only seems reasonable: they made a concession; you should reciprocate with a concession. You said no first, they lowered their offer or they lowered their request, so it seems reasonable to come in and say yes. So again, there is fascinating psychology going on there. It is

the opposite of the foot in the door, but it is a very interesting idea, which is that, in appearing to make a concession, you are more likely to get another concession out of people, but of course you never made a concession because you never really wanted the big thing in the first place, and that is why of course it is quite a manipulative power technique, and we're going to come onto this in a moment.

Let's talk about another persuasion technique which, again, famously comes from the world of the secondhand car salesman. Imagine that you want to buy a secondhand car and I am a secondhand car salesman. You are in my secondhand car lot and we are walking around and I am waxing lyrical about my second hand cars. However, I am going to have difficulty selling you a car because you realise it's my job, I am a salesman and I am out here to flog cars, so you do something that every natural, intelligent customer does - you take what I say with a pinch of salt. I have what we would call a credibility problem. A lot of people, including politicians, don't realise that when you have a credibility problem, it is very difficult to sell or persuade in that situation. So, what I have to do is fix my credibility problem before I can persuade. How do I fix my credibility problem? Well, here's how I might fix it? All of a sudden, you see a car that you quite like. You go over to the car, and you say, 'I quite like this car. Tell me about it. I might buy this car.' I come over as the salesman and I say, 'I'm sorry, but I would never sell you this car,' and then I proceed to point out a whole series of faults on the car that you would never have noticed. Now you are thinking, 'Mmm...this Raj Persaud, he's very different from all the other car salesmen. He's pointed out all these faults on this car that I would never have noticed. He must be different to the other salesmen - he must be trustworthy,' and now, because I have done something you never expected a salesman to do, I have rebuilt my credibility in your eyes and now I can sell you a car. That is why every psychologically sophisticated car salesman has at least one car on his sales lot he has never any intention of selling. It is only there for all the faults on it to be pointed out as a way of getting you to think he's doing you some kind of favour in pointing out the faults. He never intended to sell that car; that car is not there to be sold. It is there for the faults to be pointed out, to change his credibility in your eyes. So if you are going to persuade, one of the things you have to do as a step before persuading, and to be powerful in a relationship in getting people to bend to your will, you have to alter your credibility in their eyes.

One other persuasion technique you need to think about is the powerful use of words; how words alter people's thinking and can be very influential in persuasion. Of course the famous example, and this often seems to come up at Gresham lectures, is 'weapons of mass destruction'. This was a very powerful phrase which seemed to persuade a lot of people! One of the reasons it was so powerful was because it was very difficult to be specific. What was 'a weapon of mass destruction'? The problem was it was so ambiguous and vague, it hid its specificity. If we were talking about a specific weapon of mass destruction, like a nuclear weapon, we could ask the question, 'Does this country have nuclear weapons?' Obviously, if you ask a specific question, you're more likely to get a specific answer back - either they do or they don't. If you go vague and you say it is a 'weapon of mass destruction', then it's more difficult to prove a country does not have a weapon of mass destruction because, by definition, you are being really vague, but also, you are being really frightening, because this mass destruction phrase is in there. This is a very frightening set of words, so it is a very powerful persuasion technique.

Here is an example of where this is used every day in clinical practice. A family will come to you and they are outraged because some doctor somewhere said they were dysfunctional and need family therapy. They will say, 'We're not dysfunctional! We don't need family therapy. That other doctor was crazy, Dr Persaud.' I will say to them, 'Well, you know, it does sound a tad harsh, but I'm wondering, why don't we do this other thing instead' We won't do family therapy, but what we'll do is meet once a week, all of you will come as a family, and we'll talk about stuff.' Then they say, 'Yeah, that's a much better idea than this ridiculous family therapy idea!' So changing the language you use changes the way people think about things and is much more likely to be persuasive.

Another key point about persuasion is who the person is doing the persuading. In a way, we have hinted at that in terms of credibility - you have got to be a high credibility source in order to persuade people. It is interesting that there are three key personality characteristics, and these are called the dark triad in personality theory. They seem to be the group of people or personality characteristics that are most likely to be persuasive to us in the short term. These are also the same three personality characteristics of the type of personality characteristics that seem to end up as being our leaders, because they are very powerful at persuading us to vote for them. The three dark personality types are, narcissists, Machiavellians, and psychopaths, and basically, most political leaders are either narcissists, psychopaths, or Machiavellians, or a combination of the three. This is known as the dark side of personality theory.

Narcissists are people named after Narcissus, who fell in love with his own reflection and then dived into the water to embrace himself. A narcissist is very convinced about how wonderful they are, or how beautiful they are, and so they have a strong sense of entitlement. A recent paper, which uses a thing called the NPI, the Narcissism Personality Inventory, which measures how narcissistic you are, gave this to a group of celebrities, people who actually appeared over many years on a chat show, and also gave this to some people who appeared on various reality TV programmes, and found - lo and behold! - celebrities and reality TV stars score much higher than the general population in narcissism. The reason why narcissists tend to end up running things or becoming celebrities or famous is their strong sense of entitlement: they believe they are marvellous, wonderful and great to look at, therefore they believe they should be running things or should be the centre of attention. That is why they put themselves forward for reality TV shows and so on. A narcissist is great on a first date, because they are very engaged in the process of getting you to fall in love with them, so they're very witty and charming and they look great. They are fantastic and you will fall in love with a narcissist on the first date. The problem is the self-love and self-obsession over many dates begins, after a while, to be a bit of a pain or a turn-off. Again, this is the trap we fall into with our leaders: they are very engaging and seem wonderful during the election campaign, which is a bit like a first date, and of course, once they are in power for a few years, their self-obsession and self-involvement becomes very wearing. So beware of the narcissist, and especially because they are very persuasive.

Then there is the Machiavellian. The Machiavellian, at their core, is about someone who sees other people not as ends in themselves but as means to an end. So they are constantly thinking when they are dealing with you, 'What can I get out of this person? What's the point in having a relationship with this person?' If there is no point, if you are not going to get them further along in their career or what they are after in life, they will drop you or they will dump you because they are not interested. A classic test of a Machiavellian in an organisation - you can think about applying this wherever you work - is that Machiavellians are hated by the people below them, because Machiavellians think, 'These people are not going to be any use to me, so I'm not going to give them any of my time,' but they are loved by people above them, because Machiavellians are constantly thinking about their careers, they are being very seductive to their bosses and running around and doing all the things that will make their bosses love them. So a Machiavellian praises you and says, 'Oh, what a marvellous bit of work you just did!' even though they think the work's terrible, because they are trying to manipulate you into a situation where they can get something from you in the long run. There are personality scales that measure how Machiavellian you are. They divide people into High Mac and Low Mac, 'Mac' being the abbreviation for Machiavellian, and you can now use this as a coded language to friends when you say, 'I think that person is a bit High Mac,' and the person won't know what you are talking about! But of course my favourite is the Big Mac, with lies - 'Would you like that with lies, Sir?' as we say in psychology!

And finally, there is the psychopath. The psychopath is someone who has no remorse and no guilt, so they do not mind harnessing you towards their ends. They don't mind starting a war and having lots of people die if it advances their political career.

So, narcissists, Machiavellians, psychopaths - these are people who often end up persuading us of things, and it is dangerous, because although they can be very seductive and persuasive in the short term, it is dangerous in the long run.

There is one other group of people that we should be very wary of who are very persuasive, and these are attractive people. Physically attractive people win more arguments. They are much less likely to get convicted in a court of law. So they are very persuasive. And a lot of people think attraction is in the eye of the beholder, but it is not. We have, somewhere in our brains, a brain programme that actually means that we are very drawn to certain physical characteristics, and there's an evolutionary theory behind why that might be. For example, if you show faces to someone, and you show them so briefly that the brain may not even register whether it's actually seen an image or not - we are talking about in a matter of milliseconds - the brain is still able to reliably decide whether that picture is attractive or not, and the brain makes a decision about how attractive a face is at the order of 100 milliseconds. So there is something very powerful going on when it comes to physical attraction, and there's a brain programme somewhere that makes this decision. Clearly, it must be making this decision for a reason, and the evolutionary theory is that we are biologically programmed to see attraction as a signal for fit genes because evolutionarily it makes sense for us to want to mix our genes with genetically fit genes. Because of this, it means that the people that we produce in the future, are more likely to pass on our genes. Young babies, as young as a few months old, spend more time looking at attractive faces than unattractive faces, so this brain

programme is in play from a very early age.

To give just one final example of this, there is a term that is going to become very fashionable, so it is great to be aware of it now - it's called Medial Canthal Tilt. Remember that - the Medial Canthal Tilt, because this is going to be the buzz cosmetic surgery word of the next ten years. Medial Canthal Tilt refers to the fact that the shape of an eye is normally horizontal, but if you have Medial Canthal Tilt, your eyes are slightly tilted up on the outside, giving them something of a slightly feline, cat-like look. Medial refers to the middle bit of the eye, Canthal refers to the corner of the eye, and Tilt refers to this tilted inwards. The research evidence is that people who have just a few degrees of Medial Canthal Tilt are found significantly more attractive than the rest of us who do not have it. Again, one of the theories about that is that when babies are born, they have slightly more Medial Canthal Tilt, and maybe we are biologically programmed to be attracted to this. This is because it makes evolutionary sense that we find babies attractive and want to be with babies, to look after them and therefore pass on our genes to future generations. There are cosmetic surgeons out there now who will offer to produce Medial Canthal Tilt for you, and I am sure that is going to be one of the big cosmetic surgery buys in the future.

But my point is this: that attractive people are more persuasive and there is a biological programme that explains why we are drawn and seduced by attractive people and we need to beware of that, because one of the things that is happening is that psychologists believe there are two key channels by which persuasion occurs. There is the more obvious up-channel. Let's say, if I was trying to argue one way or the other on the abortion debate, I might provide a logical or rational argument or evidence, and you can think about that argument and come up with a rational refutation of it. So the up-channel is one that you become aware of the persuasion technique and you can defend yourself against it. However, there is a down-channel, a channel you're not so aware of, where it might be that as an attractive person, you are being drawn to my persuasive technique, and these other channels. Because you are not aware of them, you cannot defend yourself against them. That is where real power lies, because if I am trying to exert power over you and you are aware of the fact that I am exerting power over you, you can defend yourself against it - if it is a persuasion technique, like advertising for example; but if it is a manipulation technique, it is a technique where I persuade you of something but you don't realise I am persuading you of that thing and therefore you can't defend yourself against it. That is why manipulation is the most powerful of all of the power tactics.

The least powerful, in a sense, is what we might call coercion. I might pull a gun out on you and ask you to go to a Gresham lecture. I am using coercion by waving a gun at you. The really interesting thing about coercion is it often works for a while, but there is a problem - it builds up resentment. What all dictators find after a while if they use coercion is the population eventually rebels.

Then we have persuasion, which we've been talking about, like you see in advertising, but if you are aware that persuasion is going on, you can defend yourself against it. But the ultimate power tactic is manipulation, which we have talked about briefly.

But, it is very interesting that there are certain things which it seems impossible to persuade people of, no matter how much you try. A classic example in the psychology of advertising is seat belts. Trying to get people to wear seat belts has long been something that Government has employed advertisers to do, and they ran advertising campaigns. What they have found is these campaigns always failed. People never used to wear seat belts as a result of these campaigns, and eventually as a result they therefore brought in laws - they said it is the law that you have to wear a seat belt. They went down the coercion route. They said if you don't wear a seat belt, you're going to get into trouble; you are going to break the law, and you are going to lose points on your licence. There is one group of people you don't have to persuade to wear a seat belt and they are people who have been in car accidents, because once you've been in a car accident, no one needs to persuade you of the benefit of wearing a seat belt. The argument about why advertising does not work is that most people do not have car accidents. Most people get in their cars, drive safely to Point B, realise it was a safe journey, or felt it was a safe journey, so they do not see the point of seat belts, and since most journeys are relatively safe, it is very difficult to persuade people.

So, the point is that you have to use a different power tactic depending on the context that you find yourself in, and there will be some situations, like the wearing of seat belts, where there is absolutely no point going down a persuasion route and you may well have to go down a coercion route.

One other point I want to make about power, and there is a famous paper written by an economist called 'The Paradox of Power', where he asked the question why is it that sometimes very powerful countries, like the United States, enter a war with an obviously much less powerful adversary, like in the Vietnam War or

in the Iraq War, and end up losing? What's going on? It does not make sense. On a pure analysis of power, the USA should have won the Vietnam War or should win the Iraq War easily. At this precise moment in time, the USA spends as much, if not slightly more, on arms than the rest of the world put together, so it is a really overwhelming imbalance of power on a military standpoint in terms of arms. So why is it the USA lost the Vietnam War, and why is it they appear to be losing the Iraq War?

The Paradox of Power Theory is that it is not about who is most powerful, it is about what matters to you, and the argument goes something like this: if you are an Iraqi insurgent, then the thing that matters most to you is getting America out of Iraq, so you will devote yourself 24 hours a day to getting America out of Iraq. What is it that matters most to most Americans? It is probably not being in Iraq anymore. They have got other stuff that they are worried about and they want to get on with their lives, and so this thing about being in Iraq becomes a massive irritant and problem to them when there are other things they want to do with their lives. The trouble with powerful people is, precisely because they are powerful and successful, they have a lot of other stuff they want to do, and people who have very little power or no power at all, if you do something to them and they want to fix it, it is the most overwhelmingly important thing to them in their lives. They will devote themselves to that, as the Vietnamese did, and if they devote themselves to it 24 hours a day, day in, day out, then actually, after a while, the more powerful person gives up the fight, because it doesn't matter that much to them.

So, one of the interesting things to think about when it comes to power is 'how much does it matter to you?' Gandhi, who a lot of people think of as being someone who believed in pacificism, was actually a very, very brilliant military strategist and realised this point. He realised that if governing India became too much of a pain to the English, or the British, they would eventually think, 'This just isn't worth it! We've got other stuff we want to do with our lives than run this very difficult to run country.'

But the other thing that Gandhi did, and it was brilliant psychology, was that he realised that at the heart of power is the notion of consequences. What consequence can I make for you and what consequence can you make for me? He realised that if he was going to get the Indians to rebel successfully against the British, he would have to take away what the most powerful consequences the British could impose upon the Indians. The key consequence the British could impose upon the Indians is if you protested, you would go to jail, and going to jail was a very bad consequence. People did not want to go to jail, and also, it was very shameful and embarrassing to many Hindus, for example, to be in jail. So Gandhi turned it on his head: he said, 'If you've not been to jail, you're not a proper Indian. It's a badge of honour to have been in jail' so they filled the jails! People went willingly to jail. The jails became full, and the British then ran out of options, because once the jails were full, there was no consequence that could be imposed.

So, one of the most powerful things you can do is work out what is the consequence my enemy can do to me, take that consequence away from them, and then you disarm them. One of the very powerful things about enemies, for example, who do not mind losing their lives or do not mind going to jail is, if they have taken away all the consequences you can do to them, you need to realise you've got a very powerful adversary, particularly if there are lots of consequences you personally want to avoid. So do not think about it in terms of just sheer military spend; think about it in terms of consequences - what can we do to them, but what can they do to us?

One final point I want to make is that one of the problems of course with this power analysis is that it seems rather unfortunate that we seem to live in a world where we have to think about power and how to wield power when, within intimate relationships, people that we are in love with, we hope that this doesn't matter. We hope that consequences like this do not matter. We hope that in intimate relationships that being able to invoke a consequence upon the other person isn't the issue, that the only consequence we should invoke upon someone we truly love is that they are loved even more no matter what they do. There is, however, a problem, in that if we live in a society where outside the front door power is a key skill we need to learn in life, what happens when they come through the front door and enter the intimate relationships of our spouse or with our family? Is there a problem? Is there contamination? Is this something we need to be aware of?

Well, some fascinating research, which I have written about in my first book, *Staying Sane*, done by some people in America, looked at testosterone levels in men. In a competitive situation that men often find themselves in at work, testosterone levels go up, so high testosterone men are often in a competitive situation, and they are more competitive as a result. Testosterone goes up in response to competition and makes you more competitive as a result. What the researchers found was that if you blood tested men and noticed a rise in testosterone, this predicted a divorce in two years' time? So, what was fascinating was the

idea that being quite competitive and aggressive might have made you successful at work, but it wasn't so hot within the marriage, to bring the competitiveness and the aggression home with you. So one of the really interesting balancing acts we have to is that although power is a key art and skill in life, we also have to be able to let it go. - I'm going to leave you with that final thought. Thank you very much indeed.

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